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CROP & MARKET INDUSTRY INFO





MARKET UPDATES

ROMA TOMATOES

The only romas available in the East are coming from the Quincy and South Georgia areas where supplies are limited and their short seasons are winding down. Eastern supply typically shifts to the Ruskin/Palmetto area for November, but growers faced major crop loss and damages, which will result in a salvage-type crop with light volumes of mostly #2 and small fruit. The Eastern supply situation looks to be dim until late December when South Florida gets going with crops and plantings that were planted after the storms. In the West, supply is in Mexico's hands, as the California crops have now finished up. Baja's volume has decreased as summer crops come to an end and Fall acreage has been slow to get going. East/Central Mexico farms also have product available, though this area is past its peak production window. Mexican supply is likely to remain at or near current levels until new crops begin in Culiacán in late December.

ROUND TOMATOES

Eastern round tomato volumes are extremely limited and are expected to remain so for the intermediate future. The Quincy area has mostly finished crown picks but will keep going with limited volumes and sizing on 2nds and 3rds as long as markets and quality allow. There are also a few in south Georgia but plantings are light and volumes have been further limited by the effects of the first hurricane, Helene. Ruskin/Palmetto is typically the primary supply area in November, but the significant damages from Hurricane Milton have reduced this area's supply to a salvage deal, which looks to be mostly appropriate for processing purposes. South Florida crops also experienced storm damages, which will provide a slow start to the season. With no further weather disturbances, we should see production levels return to more normal levels at the end of December/early January. Looking to the West, California's season is finished up for all practical purposes which puts even more pressure on the light Mexican supply. Baja is still transitioning from Summer to Fall crops. The Summer crops are expected to go for another two weeks, but the Fall crops haven't kicked into gear yet due to some recent cooler temperatures. Central and Eastern Mexico volumes are declining as cooler weather and seasonal decline take hold. We do not anticipate significant changes from Mexico until new crops begin in Sinaloa in late December or early January.

GRAPE TOMATOES

Florida's grape tomato supply is significantly lighter than usual for this time of year due to crop losses and damages, particularly in the Palmetto/Ruskin area. Early South Florida crops are underway but are harvesting less than 1/4 of usual volumes as a result of Milton's impact. New areas will start in about a month, but initial volumes are also expected to be lighter due to damages to early plantings. Weather impacts have affected quality and packouts, but the end result is a nice pack. In the West, Baja's older crops are winding down while new crops are off to a slow start due to cooler weather. We should see things pick up in this area over the next few weeks. Central Mexico is also contributing to the supply with light to moderate volumes for at least the next few weeks, pending weather. Quality from both Mexican growing regions is fair to good, depending on lot and grower.

GREEN BEANS

Although there are a few more available this week from a new Georgia crop, green beans continue to be limited in the East. We'd normally transition into Florida crops soon, but both the Lake area and South Florida were severely impacted by the Hurricane Milton, resulting in lost acreage and plantings. Recovery isn't expected until mid-December, although we may see a few crops come online a week or two earlier. In the West, availability is similarly limited. While there are a few green beans coming from Sonora and Central Mexico, the volume has been sporadic and light. With prior high heat levels pushing back crops, we do not anticipate seeing stronger volumes from Mexico until Sinaloa begins production right around Thanksgiving. This situation underscores the need for careful planning as supply remains constrained.

COLOR BELL PEPPERS

Canada continues to have colored bell peppers, though sizing is trending smaller and availability is extremely snug on reds this week. The season is expected to wind down by the end of November, which will leave colored bell pepper supply up to Mexico and other import deals for the Winter season. Central Mexico's production will continue to be light but fairly steady for the next 4 weeks, then pick back up around December 1st. We are starting to see some growers harvest bells as greens to capitalize on the elevated green bell markets, which will also having some effect on availability in the next several weeks.

GREEN BELL PEPPERS

The bell pepper situation continues to be challenging. The majority of what's available in the East is coming from Georgia, where volumes and quality have been impacted by prior weather. With the current market situation, they'll go as long as possible, possibly until Thanksgiving or the first freeze, whichever occurs first. Multiple regions in Florida were affected by Hurricane Milton, leading to losses and damage. While there will be some very light volumes available in the next few weeks from damaged crops, there will be more significant quality issues than usual. It's likely that Florida will experience a gap after that until new crops come online in December. In the West, the Coachella, Oxnard and Fresno areas have fruit available. This volume would normally be adequate, but pressure from the East has made this fruit in high demand. Fresno looks to go another week or so, while Oxnard will continue for another 1-2 weeks beyond that. Coachella is in full production mode now. Despite some reports of silvering from the new desert crops, overall quality is good on the California fruit. There are a few peppers available in Central Mexico, but significant volumes won't emerge until Sinaloa starts production in December.

YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH

Yellow and zucchini squashes are available in good supply! It's available in Georgia and a couple areas in Florida, with overall good quality. We're seeing more squash than other veg items because growers that lost fields to weather can replant this item and have product in about 30 days. In the West, supplies are solid out of Sonora. Crossings should remain steady for the next few weeks, then we could see a slight decrease for a short term due to bloom drop from prior extreme heat. Culiacan looks to get started in a significant way at the end of November/1st of December.

CUCUMBERS

Cucumber volumes are limited in the East. Georgia's volumes are winding down as their season nears the end. They will continue harvesting for another few weeks but supply and quality are on the decline. There have been some sporadic light volumes available in South Florida; however, the state's overall volume and quality are expected to remain limited for the next month and a half due to the impacts of Hurricane Milton. Currently, Mexico is providing moderate cucumber supply, but demand is very strong for their product. Fruit is available from Baja, Sonora, and Central Mexico with a few coming in from early Sinaloa crops. Quality and color have improved out of Sonora, as cooler weather has helped reduce plant stress. We'll see volumes pick up in December when Sinaloa's crops kick into gear.

HARD SQUASH

There's a little storage crop remaining out of MI, but the bulk of the East's hard squash is now coming from the Northeast. Several growers are now in full swing, ready to tackle the holiday demand. No major quality issues have been reported which should bode well for the upcoming demand. In the West, the situation remains steady, with California maintaining solid supply and good quality across all varieties. Sonora has also started in a very light way with some varieties and is expected to come on with volume and complete the product mix in another 2 weeks.

EGGPLANT

Eastern eggplant supply remains light this week. There are small pockets of product in Georgia and South Florida but no significant volumes. Quality has been hit or miss on what's available, but

there is some nice fruit around. We anticipate that South Florida will see a few more eggplants coming online in the next few weeks, which should help bolster supply to some extent. In the West, California's production is limited with one main grower going in Oxnard. They'll transition to the desert area in the next week or so. We are starting to see some eggplant come into Nogales from Culiacan and Hermosillo but volumes are limited at this point. We expect full production levels by the end of November when shadehouse growers start.

CHILI PEPPERS

Eastern chili pepper supply continues to be limited. Typically, we would be looking to Plant City for supply, but expectations are low this season due to the impact of Hurricane Milton. There are a few jalapenos in South Florida, but that and Georgia's light volumes are pretty much all that can be found in the East. In the West, chili pepper availability is moderate with product coming from Baja, Central Mexico and a few just starting in Sonora. Baja has the full line and continues to have good quality. At this point, we're mostly seeing jalapenos, poblanos and anaheims in Nogales. Serranos and tomatillos should follow in the next few weeks. The Culiacan area (Sinaloa) will see a few growers start in the next two weeks, but seasonal volumes will come by December.

ORGANIC ROMA

Organic roma tomato supply continues at light to moderate levels, with product available in Baja and Central Mexico. Quality has been solid out of Central Mexico, but only fair out of Baja. Supply could be lighter in the coming week as one grower in Central Mexico experiences a brief gap between plantings.

ORGANIC GRAPE TOMATOES

Although there are light volumes available in Central Mexico, Baja continues to be the primary spot for organic grape tomatoes. Some growers have extended plantings which are expected to continue through December, easing the transition to Mainland Mexico's season later in the month. Quality has been good overall on the Baja fruit.

ORGANIC MINI CUCUMBERS

There's a few more organic mini cucumbers available this week, but availability has been a little sporadic. Supply is coming from both Baja and Central Mexico. Quality has declined a notch this week and we are experiencing lighter packouts. We should see more consistent availability and quality improvements as we move further into November.

WATERMELON

Now that South Carolina and Central Florida have concluded their seasons, Eastern domestic watermelon production is coming out of South Florida. Acreage is light and availability is snug right now but we should see more acreage come online in 2-3 weeks. Quality is average and sizing is heavier to 60 count fruit.



PERIMETER FRESH SEES SLOW DOWN

[SUPERMARKETNEWS.COM](https://www.supermarketnews.com)

As inflation and other economic concerns continue to put pressure on consumer spending, sales momentum in perimeter fresh categories has slowed, according to the results of [our 2024 Supermarket News Fresh Foods Trends Survey](#).

Many of you said food-price inflation was a significant factor driving negative sales trends, leading consumers to rethink their purchasing habits throughout the store. You also cited economic conditions in general as contributing to a slowdown in perimeter sales.

Some third of this year's respondents — about 32% of you — said you expect sales to remain flat, and 12% said you expected sales to decline.

Despite the overall slowdown in perimeter fresh, many of you said your fresh departments performed well

during the past 12 months, being given a boost by prepared foods and high-quality produce assortments.

As retailers continue to grow their prepared foods offerings, they find themselves increasingly competing with some of the leaders in restaurant, like Panera Bread, Chipotle, and others. In fact, 54% of retailers said fast-casual restaurants such as those were their No. 1 competitor for prepared foods sales, and 39% said traditional fast-food restaurants such as McDonald's and Chick-fil-A were their top competitors.

The landscape is shifting and 2024 is wrapping up. We'll have more forward-looking trend pieces for you as we approach the very futuristic-sounding 2025. Stay tuned.



EGROCERY SALES SURGE 14% YEAR-OVER-YEAR IN Q3

[PRODUCEBLUEBOOK.COM](https://www.producebluebook.com)

OCTOBER 21, 2024

Barrington, Ill. – October 21, 2024 – Online grocery in the U.S. experienced robust growth in the third quarter of 2024 (3Q24), with total sales rising by 13.8% to \$27.4 billion compared to \$24.0 billion for the same period in 2023.

This increase was largely propelled by significant year-over-year growth in Delivery according to the U.S. eGrocery Market Share Report – 3Q24, powered by data from the monthly Brick Meets Click/Mercatus Grocery Shopping Survey.

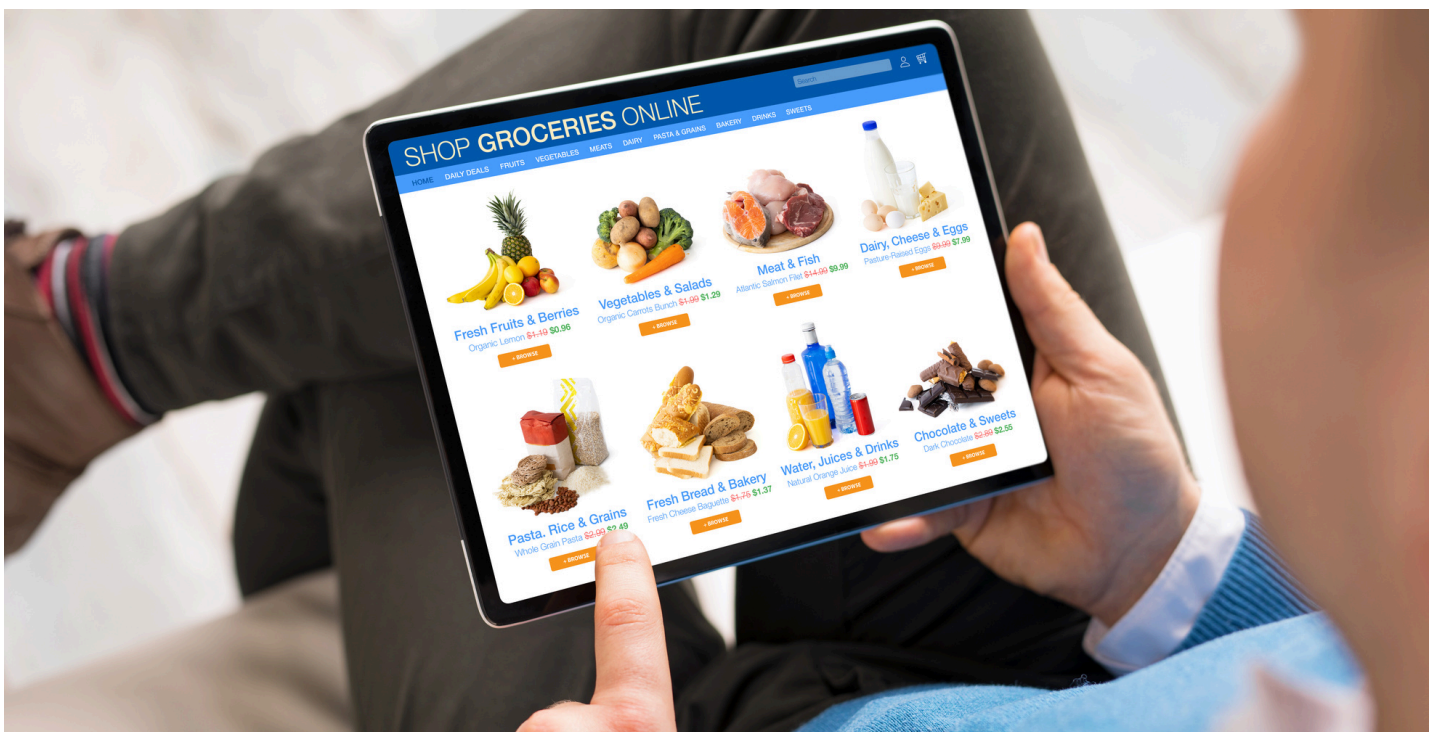
All three receiving methods – Delivery, Ship-to-Home, and Pickup – contributed to the overall growth for 3Q24 but to varying degrees. Ship-to-Home posted a gain of 15%, and Pickup gained approximately 5%. Most of the increase was driven by Delivery, which had 25% year-over-year sales growth after posting a nearly 6% decline during the prior year.

In terms of overall eGrocery sales, the Mass format continued to gain market share, driven by the Delivery and Ship-to-Home segments, as Supermarkets wrestled with ongoing declines. In Delivery, Mass increased its sales share by 390 basis points year-over-year, reaching 52.7% in 3Q24, while Supermarkets slid 250 basis points to just under 38%.

Mass also improved its position in the Ship-to-Home segment, growing its share by 150 basis points to 16.4%, mainly at the expense of Amazon, which finished at 50.1%, down 100 basis points from the previous year. For Pickup, Mass' share slipped slightly as it fell 70 bps versus 3Q23, capturing 56.1% of the method's overall sales, likely due to the membership push by Walmart that is boosting demand for Delivery.

"The strong 3Q24 results for eGrocery underscore the importance of strengthening the customer value proposition to align better with the evolving expectations associated with shopping online for groceries," said David Bishop, partner at Brick Meets Click. "Mass, and Walmart in particular, have demonstrated the value of better understanding online shoppers' preferences while also leveraging its vast store network and digital reach to grow faster than the overall market."

The monthly active user (MAU) base, which includes all methods and retail formats, grew from 54% last year to 56% this year, helping to drive eGrocery's sales gains. In addition, the proportion of MAUs that spent 25% or more of their weekly grocery budget online increased by over 3 percentage points versus 3Q23.



UPCOMING EVENTS:

JULY 9-10, 2025

ORGANIC PRODUCE SUMMIT

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