

DECEMBER 6, 2024

LIPMANFAMILYFARMS.COM

ON THE H O R I Z O N

*Reliable &
Consistent*

Bringing you your
weekly industry
updates

CROP & MARKET INDUSTRY INFO





MARKET UPDATES

ROMA TOMATOES

Florida's roma production is at very minimal levels as we wait for new crops to get started. By mid-December we expect to see a few growers/fields slowly come online, but normal production isn't expected until January when the Naples/Immokalee area gets going with new crops that were planted after Hurricane Milton. Mexico's volumes are also on the light side with most of the fruit coming from Central Mexico where quality has ranged from fair to good. For the most part, Baja is winding down with most growers expecting to finish during Christmas week. However, we have started to see a few romas from Sinaloa begin to cross. Production will really get kicked off later in the month, with stronger volumes after January 1st.

ROUND TOMATOES

Although supply remains very limited in Florida, we're getting closer to the start of round tomato crops that weren't affected by October's hurricane. Unfortunately a shot of cool weather is slowing growth and maturity, but we are expecting to see some of the first begin harvests right on top of Christmas. Several growers have announced that they won't move into post-storm plantings until after the 1st of the year, so return to seasonal volumes may take a week or two longer than originally anticipated. In the meantime, supply will remain limited from light, scattered harvests of storm-affected crops. Moving to the West, Mexico's supplies have been light over the past week. Baja's supplies will be limited to one area after next week and Central Mexico continues to work through the seasonal decline. There could be a little fruit come online in Culiacan earlier, but most growers are scheduled to start harvests by the end of December with seasonal volumes after the 1st of the year.

GRAPE TOMATOES

Eastern grape tomato production continues to be very light this week as limited harvests are coming from storm-affected plantings with significantly lighter yields than normal. New crops are on tap to start in a light way over the next 10-14 days with volumes picking up after Christmas. Mexico's volume are also low. Central Mexico and Baja crops are in a light spot, as we wait on the Culiacan area to get rolling. So far, we've seen a very small amount of new fruit coming into Nogales but expect those volumes to begin picking up gradually over the next few weeks.

ORGANIC GRAPE TOMATOES

There's very limited supply of organic grape tomatoes this week as both Baja and Central Mexico growers are in the seasonal decline. Sinaloa anticipates coming online in late December, although we don't expect moderate or stronger volumes until after January 1st.

ORGANIC ROMA TOMATOES

Availability of organic roma tomatoes is decent this week, but there's definitely no oversupply. The majority of the fruit is coming from Central Mexico, although Baja still has a few. Quality has been good, despite some issues with green fruit at receiving. Sinaloa is on tap to start in early January, so expect supply conditions to remain similar until then.

GREEN BELL PEPPERS

Thanks to a frost/freeze, Georgia is now completely finished with bell peppers, leaving Eastern production up to Florida. Several growers in South Florida had been working crops that were impacted by the hurricane with low yields, etc. but are now in a skip as they wait for new crops to start. A shot of cool weather has delayed start dates on new crops to somewhere between December 15th and 20th. In the meantime, there's a slight bit of acreage being harvested on the East Coast, but volume is relatively minimal. Unfortunately, with a delayed and slow start expected, it could be after Christmas before there's any substantial volume in Florida. In the West, Coachella still has fruit now, but should be finishing up over the next 7-10 days. The transition to Mexican production is occurring slowly so far, as the volume coming into Nogales is light with larger sizes especially snug. However, the early quality has been nice. Look for more growers to gradually come online with volumes after December 25th.

CUCUMBERS

Cold weather has slowed any cucumbers that were in process in Florida, leaving supply even shorter than we normally expect during this low-production time of year. There will be a few here and there in Florida as we move forward, but no significant volumes until Spring. In the meantime, a few Honduran import cucumbers are coming in but we don't expect volumes until January. Mexico has good numbers available with fruit coming mostly from Sinaloa and Central Mexico and a few still coming

CUCUMBERS... continued

out of Baja and Sonora. Production is in the midst of transition from Sonora to Sinaloa and we should see volume pick up a little more in the next few weeks as more growers in Sinaloa get up and running. Quality continues to be strong on new crops, although the fruit quality from older plantings is beginning to wane.

GREEN BEANS

Florida has light volumes of green beans this week, but we expect to see things pick up in the next 7-10 days as we and other growers come online with post-storm plantings. Our crop looks good and should have normal yields. In the West, a few more growers have come online out of the Sinaloa area, edging volume up closer to moderate levels. More fields are expected to get started next week so volume increases are on the way. Quality has been fair to good on the start-up harvests and should continue to improve as production moves further into the crops.

YELLOW AND ZUCCHINI SQUASH

Although cooler weather has slowed production in Florida, there's adequate availability of yellow and zucchini squashes in the East. Plant City has had some late, re-planted crops come online and South Florida is also in production. There's more yellow available than zucchini for now and quality has been mostly good. In the West, harvests are transitioning from Sonora to Sinaloa. Although there's still fruit in Sonora, Culiacan and Obregon have now started with nice quality and should see volumes continue to pick up in the coming days.

EGGPLANT

Eggplant is readily available in Florida this week with good quality. Plant City's eggplant fared the hurricane better than other crops and they have moderate supplies. South Florida farms are also in consistent production despite the blast of cooler weather they are currently experiencing. Supply is also good in the West. Coachella will go for another week but Sinaloa farms are already in full swing with nice-quality fruit.

GREEN BEANS

Florida has light volumes of green beans this week, but we expect to see things pick up in the next 7-10 days as we and other growers come online with post-storm plantings. Our crop looks good and should have normal yields. In the West, a few more growers have come online out of the Sinaloa area, edging volume up closer to moderate levels. More fields are expected to get started next week so volume increases are on the way. Quality has been fair to good on the start-up harvests and should continue to improve as production moves further into the crops.

CHILI PEPPERS

Eastern chili pepper production continues at minimal levels, with small pockets of product mostly in South Florida. Yields have been very light and availability is hit or miss, especially on Cubanelles. There won't be much change in current production levels until new plantings come online in mid-late December. Fortunately, Mexico has moderate, consistent volumes available with most of the fruit coming from Central Mexico and Sinaloa. Habaneros are still on the snug side, but most other options are available on a consistent basis. Quality is mostly good, although there have been some challenges on tomatillos. Baja is still in the game, but volume and variety options are lessening as they are in the latter stage of the season.

HARD SQUASH

Eastern hard squash production has wound down with only a little storage crop available here and there. As Honduras imports aren't expected to get going until February, demand will shift to Mexico until then. Mexico has good supplies on all varieties coming from both Sonora and Sinaloa. Overall quality has been clean with minimal scarring. There's also some storage fruit available in California, but the quality is not as sharp.

RED, YELLOW & ORANGE BELL PEPPERS

Cooler weather and shorter days are impacting Central Mexico's production of colored bells. Supply has been light and looks to continue in that manner for at least another week. We've started seeing minimal supply out of the Sinaloa area as a few growers get started in a light way, but there's no volume yet. By Christmas or shortly thereafter, we anticipate good, consistent volume from the West Mexico area. Current quality is still solid, but there are some greening concerns here and there.

MINI SWEET PEPPERS

Mini sweet pepper supply is showing some signs of life as a few growers in Western Mainland Mexico have started in a light way. Availability will likely remain snug through the holidays as demand is strong, but should improve significantly after the 1st of the year. Quality on the new crops is looking good so far.

ENGLISH CUCUMBERS

Mexico has consistent and good volumes of English cucumbers available this week. The majority of production is coming out of the Sinaloa area, although there are also pockets of product in other Mexican locations. Quality has cleaned up from last week as growers worked through any inventoried product. Canada's down to its Winter production under lights, which generally stays local due to pricing and transportation constraints.

ORGANIC GREEN BELL PEPPERS

Several growers in Mainland Mexico have now started organic green bells, but yields and supply have been light so far. There's not a lot of larger sizing with mostly medium to large-sized fruit available at this point. Quality has been hit or miss.

ORGANIC YELLOW AND ZUCCHINI SQUASH

Organic yellow and zucchini squashes have slightly better availability this week, but there's no oversupply. Sonora is still in production and we're now starting to see Sinaloa start in a light way. Aside from some light scarring and scuffing, quality has been mostly good.

ORGANIC CUCUMBERS

There's moderate supply of organic slicer cucumbers this week. Fruit is still coming from Baja and Sonora, but Baja is winding down. Quality varies by grower- there is nice fruit around, but also some with soft ends and firmness issues.

WATERMELONS

Light watermelon production is underway in the Immokalee/South Florida region. Fruit quality has been good, especially for a Fall crop, and there's been a mix of 45 ct and 60 ct sizing. These harvests look to finish up in the next 10-14 days, then domestic supply will go dark until Spring crops start back up in March.



SNAP HOUSEHOLDS SPEND 32% MORE THAN NON-SNAP HOUSEHOLDS

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

NOVEMBER 26, 2024

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households spend 32% more per buyer than non-SNAP households, according to a new report.

That number is up 1% year over year, according to the report, "Understanding the Resilience of SNAP Shoppers," from Circana.

The report explores the behaviors of SNAP consumers, highlighting opportunities for consumer packaged goods (CPG) manufacturers and retailers to better support this group. While SNAP shoppers make 22% more trips to the store than non-SNAP households, their spending per trip remains lower. Given the program's restrictions on eligible purchases, these shoppers buy a higher percentage of food and beverage items and demonstrate a preference for convenience and functional hydration.

Despite a slight decline in SNAP participation (-1.7% year over year), the group retains significant influence over 20% market share, predominantly in value-based channels. While private brand spending among SNAP shoppers remains close to non-SNAP levels, their higher frequency and dollar spend on name brands underscore brand loyalty within this segment.

"SNAP participants have shown incredible resilience over the past year, even in the face of continued economic challenges," said Sally Lyons Wyatt, global executive vice president and chief advisor, Circana. "With one in eight Americans relying on SNAP for their nutritional needs, this group represents a critical segment for retailers and manufacturers. We expect to see growth in many food and beverage categories driven by SNAP shoppers throughout the next year. Successfully attracting, retaining, and re-engaging them will require thoughtful planning and targeted strategies."

While SNAP shoppers demonstrate a preference for name brands, co-promoting "occasion deals" that include both private and name brands can help increase basket sizes and provide greater value to these households. Affordability remains a year-round priority for SNAP consumers, highlighting the demand for accessible meal solutions that meet their needs.

For products or stores losing both dollars and trips, careful pricing strategies and precise timing of promotions are essential to retain shopper loyalty. Categories gaining both dollars and units should incentivize purchasing multiple items through discounts and connect with shoppers through social media campaigns. Aligning local marketing efforts with payment schedules can further enhance buy rates and frequency.

Meal and appliance ideas tailored to the "just-in-time" purchasing habits of SNAP shoppers will align with their need for convenience. Leveraging United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) SNAP education materials can help shoppers find cost-effective ways to maintain their well-being while managing their budgets. By focusing on the right assortment, pricing, and store placement, retailers and CPG brands can support SNAP consumers while unlocking significant growth opportunities in the food and beverage categories.



WHY GROCERY STORES ARE STARTING TO LOOK LIKE QUICK-SERVICE RESTAURANTS

SUPERMARKETNEWS.COM

DECEMBER 3, 2024

I have been working in retail and more specifically with grocers, restaurants, convenience-stores, and big box retailers for close to 25 years. Never have I seen such a crossover between these verticals. Have you noticed how your grocery store feels more like a restaurant these days? Salad bars, made-to-order sandwiches, and fresh pizza slices are becoming as common as aisles of canned goods. At the same time, quick-service restaurants (QSRs) are adding healthier menu options and expanding their reach into neighborhood locations once dominated by grocery stores.

The lines between grocery stores, convenience stores, and QSRs are blurring, driven by changing consumer preferences and industry competition. This is not just a passing trend—it's a seismic shift in how we eat and shop.

Blurring the lines

The U.S. grocery industry is worth an eye-popping \$1.5 trillion, and fresh-prepared meals now account for a significant slice of that pie. This segment exploded during the pandemic, when 57% of Americans increased their takeout orders for safety and convenience. Grocery retailers quickly stepped up, offering fresh-prepared, grab-and-go options like MTO (made-to-order) sandwiches, meal kits, and ready-to-eat meals.

Meanwhile, QSRs are riding their own wave of growth. The global QSR market is projected to reach \$1.6 trillion by 2027, fueled by rapid location expansion and the rise of specialty chains.

Even gas stations are getting in on the action. Today, they compete directly with QSRs and grocery stores, offering fresh salads, customizable pizzas, and even artisanal sandwiches.

Remember Clark Griswold from the National Lampoon's Vacation movie? (The original version starring Chevy Chase, not the disappointing remake!) Clark has been in the car for so long that he says, "I'm so hungry I could eat a sandwich from a gas station." Well, Clark wasn't wrong back in 1983, but I think he would be now.

The consumer factor

Why the shift? It boils down to three consumer demands:

1. Convenience: Busy lifestyles have increased the need for quick, high-quality meal options
2. Value: Rising dining-out costs make fresh-prepared meals at grocery and convenience stores a more attractive choice
3. Health: Shoppers want healthier, fresher alternatives to traditional fast food

Today, the average American spends \$1,200 annually on QSRs, continuing to demonstrate a strong appetite for this category. Grocery stores are leaning into this opportunity by integrating foodservice offerings, while QSRs are doubling down on convenience and expanding into grocery-like offerings such as meal kits and fresh produce.

Opportunities for growth

The company I work for, NexChapter, has been working with our retail clients on this convergence of grocery, QSR, and convenience retail as the potential growth in this area is enormous. For retailers looking to thrive in this space, focusing on the following areas is critical:

- Made-to-order (MTO) meals-MTO sandwiches, salads, and pizzas are growth drivers, meeting consumer demand for fresh, customizable options. Adding MTO offerings can significantly boost basket sizes while appealing to on-the-go shoppers
- Upselling opportunities- The "fresh food halo" can drive additional sales. For example, a shopper grabbing an MTO sandwich might also pick up a drink, chips, or dessert, increasing the overall ticket size. How about adding a cup of coffee or a donut to a curbside pickup from your grocery store. Huge increase in revenue
- Loyalty programs- A seamless digital experience—mobile ordering, personalized offers, and rewards—is key to retaining customers and driving repeat visits
- Inventory optimization- Leveraging AI-powered forecasting ensures fresh food is available without creating waste.

The role of technology

Large or small retailers have no excuse not to be investing in technology in order to improve their chances to grab a piece of this market. There are plenty of technology providers out there that can help retailers get to market faster and many are inexpensive compared to the return. None of this would be possible without technology. Retailers must invest in:

- Integrated order fulfillment platforms: Streamline operations for grocery items and fresh-prepared foods
- Mobile apps: Enable easy ordering, payment, and loyalty rewards
- AI forecasting tools: Minimize waste by accurately predicting demand
- Ecommerce systems: Handle everything from online grocery shopping to made-to-order meal customization

What's next?

As grocery stores, convenience stores, and QSRs continue to blend, competition will intensify. Success in this landscape requires more than just great food—it requires innovation, personalization, and a relentless focus on the customer experience.

The next time you grab a sandwich from a grocery store or notice fresh produce in a QSR, think about the transformation happening in retail. These blurred lines aren't just reshaping what's on the menu—they're redefining the entire industry.



UPCOMING EVENTS:

DECEMBER 10-12, 2024

**NEW YORK PRODUCE SHOW &
CONFERENCE**

SHERATON NEW YORK TIMES SQUARE HOTEL
NEW YORK, NY

www.nyproduceshow.com

JANUARY 13-14, 2024

GLOBAL ORGANIC PRODUCE EXPO

JW MARRIOTT MIAMI TURNBERRY RESORT
& SPA

ADVENTURA, FL

[www.events.farmjournal.com /gopex2025](http://www.events.farmjournal.com/gopex2025)



Lipman Family Farms

December 2 at 12:19 PM · 🌐

Step aside, Thanksgiving—the winter holidays are here! 🌲 🍅

Our festive twist on the classic Caprese salad features juicy Lipman tomatoes and creamy mozzarella, arranged with holiday flair. We love getting creative with our favorite fresh ingredients!



#LipmanFamilyFarms #HolidayEats #GoodFromTheGroundUp