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ON THE H O R I Z O N

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**CROP &
MARKET**
INDUSTRY INFO





MARKET UPDATES

ROMA TOMATOES

After facing several months of limited production due to hurricane impacts, Florida's roma volumes have finally stabilized to more typical levels for this time of year. Lipman is actively harvesting in Naples and Labelle. Other growers are also contributing to supply from south Florida and the Ruskin/Palmetto area. We do expect the northern romas to wind down over the next 7-10 days. With both crown and later picks in the mix, there's a good range of sizes, predominantly in the jumbo-to-large range. While there were some fog and rain-related quality issues last week, conditions have improved, and overall quality is now quite nice. However, a stretch of cool weather could temporarily slow harvests and reduce supply for the short term. In Mexico, Sinaloa's roma tomato crops are off to a slower-than-usual start this season, though some farms are underway with moderate volumes. Supplies are expected to strengthen within the next 7-10 days and continue building through January. Meanwhile, Baja and Eastern Mexico are seeing lighter supplies as their seasons wind down. Quality from these regions is mixed, with newer fields producing higher-quality fruit compared to older growing areas.

ROUND TOMATOES

Round tomato production is relatively steady and nearing normal levels in Florida. Lipman is harvesting some 2nd's and 3rd's in Labelle, but has moved into Naples for the bulk of its harvests. There are some other growers that are about a week away from new crops, so we should see overall volume pick up in the coming weeks as long as cool weather doesn't slow things down too much. Quality has been very good and the size profile is nicely distributed. Western round tomato numbers continue to be relatively light as Central Mexico and Baja wrap up the season with limited volumes and Sinaloa has been a little slow to get going due to cool weather. Volumes are expected to pick up as we move through January and more crops come online. New crop fruit quality is reported as good, while there are some concerns on anything from older fields/growing areas.

GRAPE TOMATOES

Grape tomatoes are readily available in Florida. Although production could lighten up over the next week or so due to a cool snap, supply should still be adequate to meet demand. There were some quality concerns last week due to fog and weather, but that has cleaned up nicely in this week's harvests. Looking to the West, Culiacan has started and should see volumes increase over the next few weeks. There are also light volumes available in Baja and Central Mexico.

TOMATO ON THE VINE (TOV's)

Mexico's TOV supply is on the light side, as is the norm during this time of year when light levels and daylight hours are at their minimums. Supply is expected to slowly and gradually improve, reaching stronger levels by mid-February.

COLOR BELL PEPPERS

West Mexico's new crops have been slow to get going and most houses in Central Mexico are in the final stages of the season, leading to snug supply on red, yellow and orange bell peppers. Warmer weather is in store next week, which should help bring along more new crop volume. At this time, reds have the best availability, followed by yellows, but oranges are very limited. Overall, quality is nice but we have seen some greening as a result of the cool temperatures.

YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH

With the East out until Honduras imports get going in February, hard squash is a Mexico deal. Sonora is at the tail end of its season and Sinaloa expects to pick up the slack with its new and increased production levels. However, we are currently working through a 7-10 day gap on acorn squash. Butternut levels are also a little lighter during the transition, but there are adequate volumes of butternut, spaghetti and kabocha to meet demand. Aside from scarring on some lots of spaghetti, quality has been good on all items.

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CUCUMBERS

As Florida's cucumber crops wind down for the Winter, Honduras import volumes are kicking in as all growers are up and running now. Quality had been poor because inventories had gotten backed up, but fresh fruit is coming this week, which should provide a marked improvement in quality. Expect Honduras to provide supply for the East until Florida comes back online in March. In Mexico, volumes have been reduced from the strong levels of oversupply to more moderate numbers. Some growers stopped shipping due to low market prices which has helped reduce some of the inventory backup. Quality is mixed- anything fresh is nice but there's still some aged inventory in the pipeline.

GREEN BELL PEPPERS

Bell pepper supply is at moderate levels in south Florida this week with all sizing/grade options available. Quality has been average, as the recent fog and rain caused some stem decay. However, this looks to be clearing up as we move further past the weather event(s). Aside from a blast of cooler weather slowing production for a short term, we anticipate steady supply for the next several weeks. Mexico is also in full production mode with moderate to good volumes available daily. Quality has been strong and sizing options are good.

EGGPLANT

Eastern eggplant supply is on the light side, as is the norm for this time of year. There's a mix of older and newer fields in production and quality varies accordingly. After the cold weather passes, we expect consistent, but light levels of production until the Spring. Mexico's growers have chosen to lighten the production levels after a long period of excess supply and low market pricing. However, there's still an adequate amount of product available with good quality.

CHILI PEPPERS

With Plant City still harvesting and south Florida's new crops fully online, there's a moderate amount of chili peppers in the East. Most varieties, including habaneros, are available and quality has been mostly good. West and Central Mexico are providing moderate to good volumes on all chilies except for Anaheims, which are still in a light production mode. Weather has slowed things down a little, but volumes are adequate and quality is really nice from both areas in Mexico.

HARD SQUASH

With the East out until Honduras imports get going in February, hard squash is a Mexico deal. Sonora is at the tail end of its season and Sinaloa expects to pick up the slack with its new and increased production levels. However, we are currently working through a 7-10 day gap on acorn squash. Butternut levels are also a little lighter during the transition, but there are adequate volumes of butternut, spaghetti and kabocha to meet demand. Aside from scarring on some lots of spaghetti, quality has been good on all items.

ENGLISH CUCUMBERS

Adequate volumes of HH cucumbers are available this week, with the majority of the production coming from the West Mexico region. Canada's Winter production is in a lull, which will shift some of the northern demand down to Mexico and could make supply a little shorter over the next few weeks.

MINI SWEET PEPPERS

With all of Sinaloa's growers now up and running, mini sweet pepper supply is at good levels. Cooler weather has resulted in a little greening but overall quality is solid.

MINI CUCUMBERS

Mini cucumbers are plentiful in Mexico. Quality varies but is mostly good. Expect supply to remain consistent for at least the next few weeks.

ORGANIC ROMA

Organic roma production is transitioning to the Sinaloa area, where fruit quality is much better than what we've seen from Baja's late season fruit. Baja is still in production for now, but looks to wrap things up over the next 7-14 days. Expect to see volume build from the new growing area over the next few weeks.

ORGANIC COLORED BELLS

Organic colored bell supply is gradually improving as more crops start to come online in Western Mainland Mexico. Quality is good, but there has been a significant amount of green cast (especially on reds) due to both cooler weather and strong demand. Central MX is still going in a light way for another 2-3 weeks.

ORGANIC GRAPE TOMATOES

Organic grape tomato availability is improving as more growers come online in the Sinaloa area. Meanwhile, Baja looks to stay in the game for another 2 weeks before finishing up the season. Quality has been solid from both areas, although it is a bit better from Sinaloa's new crops.

ORGANIC VEG

YELLOW AND ZUCCHINI- Organic squash production levels in Sinaloa are lighter than in recent weeks, but remain adequate to meet demand. Yellow squash is a little more snug than zucchini and quality is also stronger on zucchini.

BELLS- Sinaloa-area growers have good supplies of organic bell peppers at this time. Quality is very nice and all sizing options are available. Expect the supply situation to continue at similar levels through February.

CUCUMBERS- Both supply levels and quality have been strong from the Sinaloa crops.

ORGANIC MINI CUCUMBERS

Mini cucumbers are plentiful in Mexico. Quality varies but is mostly good. Expect supply to remain consistent for at least the next few weeks.



STUDY: RETAILERS DEPLOYING MOBILE APPS WILL DOUBLE BY 2026

[THESHELBYREPORT.COM](https://www.theshelbyreport.com)

JANUARY 8, 2025

The “2025 Connected Retail Experience Study: Mobility is Driving Associate Productivity” by Incisiv, conducted in collaboration with Verizon Business and Cisco, shows that retailers are shifting their priorities to focus on digital solutions to help improve associate productivity and offset ongoing macroeconomic factors like labor shortages and pressure on supply-and-demand efficiencies.

The annual study, now in its fourth year, identifies four major trends reshaping the retail landscape:

- **Critical labor challenges drive technology investment:** Staffing remains the most pressing operational challenge, with 98 percent of grocery retailers and 88 percent of specialty retailers struggling with hiring and retention. This ongoing pressure has driven 81 percent of retailers to prioritize technology investments that improve associate productivity for 2025.
- **Mobile technology becomes critical for success:** Mobile solutions are emerging as the foundation of retail operations. By 2026, 42 percent of retailers plan to implement mobile apps with in-store features, up from 19 percent currently.
- **Personalization at scale remains a big opportunity:** Understanding that personalization is the key to success, retailers struggle with the ability to scale this “segment of one” approach. Only 13 percent of retailers are satisfied with their current personalization strategies, as most lack the capabilities for individualized personalization and are limited to basic segmentation tactics.

- **Artificial intelligence (AI) is prioritized for high-value use cases:** Retailers are taking a more focused approach to AI, prioritizing use cases with clear return-on-investment and strong organizational demand. Ninety percent of retailers believe AI adoption will be necessary to compete in the future, and 49 percent are actively testing or implementing AI solutions. Top priorities include workforce optimization to address labor shortages and enhance inventory management.

“Retail is at a turning point,” said Gaurav Pant, chief insights officer at Incisiv. “The focus on convenience, driven by labor challenges and changing consumer expectations, is fundamentally reshaping how retailers approach technology investment and customer experience.”

Sabrina Gonzalez, global retail marketing at Cisco, said, “As retailers venture further into their digital transformation journeys, the focus is increasingly on creating powerful, modular and intelligent solutions that enable new functionalities, smarter insights and faster decision-making.”



CONSUMERS WANT DEALS, CONVENIENCE FROM PERSONALIZATION, SURVEY FINDS

[RESTAURANTDIVE.COM](https://www.restaurantdive.com)

JANUARY 6, 2024

Personalization can take many forms, but simply letting customers know you recognize them can have an outsized impact.

The power of recognition often goes underappreciated in personalization and loyalty efforts, according to Mark Abraham, global leader of BCG's personalization business. Personalized deals are an undeniably powerful tool, but brands shouldn't underestimate the impact small touches can create.

"When you're talking about really nurturing these long standing relationships — the data definitely confirmed it in this report as well — simple acts of recognition can go a long way," Abraham told CX Dive.

These acts can change depending on the brand. BCG's study highlighted baristas writing names on customer's cups as an example of the way personalized interactions can build loyalty on the individual level.

However, the human-centric approach won't work for every company, according to Abraham. Some kinds of companies can truly turn human interaction into sales and loyalty, but for others a more automated approach will deliver results for a fraction of the investment.

"I always advise clients that while there may be a general trend that, yes, the human touch is valuable, there's also obviously a massive cost, and it only makes sense for certain segments to invest in that," Abraham said.



UPCOMING EVENTS:

JANUARY 13-14, 2025

GLOBAL ORGANIC PRODUCE EXPO
JW MARRIOTT MIAMI TURNBERRY
RESORT & SPA ADVENTURA, FL
WWW.EVENTS.FARMJOURNAL.COM/GOPEX2025

MARCH 6-8, 2025

SEPC'S SOUTHERN EXPOSURE
ORLANDO WORLD CENTER MARRIOTT
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www.seproducecouncil.com/eventsnetworking/southern-exposure/



TOMATO SNAPSHOT

DID YOU KNOW?

TOMATOES WERE RATED THE HEALTHIEST FRUIT BY THE CDC. RICH IN VITAMIN C, VITAMIN K, AND POTASSIUM, TOMATOES ARE PACKED WITH ANTIOXIDANTS LIKE LYCOPENE WHICH GIVES TOMATOES THEIR RED COLOR.

