

FEBRUARY 14, 2025

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ON THE H O R I Z O N

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industry updates

**CROP &
MARKET**
INDUSTRY INFO





MARKET UPDATES

ROMA TOMATOES

Roma tomato availability out of Florida continues to be strong this week. However, we expect overall supply to lighten up for a few weeks as there will be less acreage in production. Although most growers will see lighter numbers, Lipman's harvests are expected to remain steady. Quality has been excellent and sizing is on the larger end of the spectrum. West Mexico farms are in mid-season form with good volumes projected from now until early March. Sizing is on the larger side but there is a good mix available. East/Central Mexico is also providing light to moderate volumes of romas through Texas. Mexico's quality has been strong, but we could see some hit-or-miss concerns in the coming days due to recent border delays.

ROUND TOMATOES

South Florida farms are providing strong volumes of round tomatoes this week. Yields have been solid and weather has been favorable, leading to nice-quality fruit and bigger sizing. Barring any weather concerns, production levels should be consistent for at least the next few weeks. Looking to Mexico, we're also seeing strong volumes of round tomatoes with the bulk of the fruit coming from the Sinaloa area. There's a good mix of sizing available, although there's more large fruit (4x4's-5x6's) available than other sizes. East/Central Mexico also has rounds and will continue in a light to moderate mode for the next several weeks.

TOMATO ON THE VINE (TOV's)

Mexico continues to have a solid supply of TOV's with good quality. Movement has been slow, so we are watching for condition on inventoried product.

ORGANIC ROMA

Organic romas are readily available this week with fruit coming out of both Central and West Mexico. Overall quality is just okay as there is a lot of high-color inventory in the pipeline.

GRAPE TOMATOES

It would be a great time to promote grape tomatoes, as both Florida and Mexico have plenty of product to go around. South Florida farms have been experiencing strong, consistent production and expect that to continue for the immediate future. Although the Culiacan area has the strongest harvest numbers, there are also grape tomatoes available in both Baja and Central/East Mexico. Volumes and quality are expected to remain strong.

ORGANIC GRAPE TOMATOES

Organic grape tomatoes continue to be readily available with strong supplies coming from the Culiacan area. Movement has been relatively slow, so there's a modest amount of fruit with high color around. We expect the strong production levels to continue for at least the next several weeks, barring any weather concerns.

MINI SWEET PEPPERS

After a period of strong supply, cooler weather has slowed mini sweet production down to more moderate levels this week. Quality is good and sizing has been mostly consistent.

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GREEN BELL PEPPERS

Florida's bell pepper production is steady with all growers active this week. Sizing is heavier to 2X and jumbo as there are a lot of new fields in production. Quality is good from the newer lots but lesser on anything from older plantings. Mexican farms are also bringing strong volumes and good quality fruit into the US. Production should continue at current levels for the next several weeks as long as growers can make the depressed market pricing work for their operations.

COLORED BELL PEPPERS

Red, yellow, and orange bell pepper supplies are on the lighter side this week as Central Mexico crops wind down and West Mexico continues to feel the effects of cooler temperatures on production levels. Cool weather is expected again for the coming week, so it looks to be 2-3 weeks before harvest volumes pick up. Overall, quality has been nice with no major concerns reported. Looking ahead, we will start our crops in Eastern Canada in 6-7 weeks, although we could see others get going in about 4 weeks.

CHILI PEPPERS

Now that Plant City is finished up for all practical purposes, South Florida is the sole point of Eastern chili supply. There are good volumes of jalapenos and habaneros but the other items (poblanos, serranos, Cubanelles, etc.) are in a light volume mode. Quality has been a little hit or miss as much of production is now coming from older fields. Mexico has moderate and adequate supplies available on most all chili items. Overall quality continues to be good as long as the fruit is fresh.

YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH

New fields have come online in Florida, bringing zucchini volumes back to more moderate levels. Yellow squash is still shy as they are running 7-10 days behind the zucchini. The zucchini from new fields is nice, but the yellow squash from older fields is challenged. Look for stronger fruit when the new yellow fields are up and running. In the West, Mexico has good volumes on zucchini and low to moderate volumes on yellow squash. New fields and warmer temperatures have helped to improve both volume and quality. Yellow squash production looks to pick up in another 10-14 days.

GREEN BEANS

With warmer weather in play, Florida's green bean production is back to more consistent levels out of Homestead, Immokalee and the Lake areas. Quality has been good from recent harvests. In the West, Sinaloa and central Mexico's crops are also seeing stronger numbers and sound quality.

EGGPLANT

Florida farms continues to have very light Winter production levels of eggplant. Most of the eggs are coming from older fields, so quality can be hit or miss. We don't expect any significant change until April when spring crops get underway. Mexico's eggplant volumes are low to moderate after cool weather. With cool weather projected for the next several days, it will likely be another 10-14 days before volumes pick up. Quality is varied but nice fruit is available.

CUCUMBERS

After a transportation related interruption in the early part of the week, Honduran cucumbers are coming in steady, moderate to strong volumes. Quality is average with some lots showing the extra days in the supply chain. While Honduras is the only point of major supply in the East now, we should start to see Florida come back into production in early March with volumes by the middle of the month. Mexico has strong volumes of cucumbers again this week, with the majority of the volume coming from Sinaloa. Quality has been good with nice, dark green color and solid fruit.

ORGANIC VEG

YELLOW AND ZUCCHINI- With new plantings online, organic zucchini is plentiful this week. Yellow squash's availability has also improved but not as strongly. Overall quality has been good as most everything is coming from new fields. We anticipate solid levels of supplies for the next several weeks out of Sinaloa. BELLS- Organic green bell supplies are declining as the Sinaloa crops wind down a little earlier than usual. Sizing is smaller with the majority of availability in the medium size range. Quality is not great as we are seeing soft and shrivel concerns. This item's availability is likely to be limited until California starts in May/June. CUCS- Cooler weather has slowed down production levels, but there's still an adequate supply of organic cucumbers coming out of Sinaloa. Quality is good.

HARD SQUASH

Honduras is bringing butternut and spaghetti squash into the East. Quality has been nice on their butternut, but just fair on spaghetti. The Sinaloa region in Mexico has strong volumes of acorn and spaghetti available, with light to moderate levels of butternut. Quality continues to be nice on all varieties. Production will remain in the Sinaloa area until late March/early May when it will transition back to Sonora.



2025 BRINGS A CREATIVE BURST OF NEW FLAVOR TRENDS TO THE FOOD INDUSTRY

[SUPERMARKETPERIMETER.COM](https://www.supermarketperimeter.com)

FEBRUARY 11, 2025

This year should be a turning point, said Maeve Webster, president of Menu Matters — not only in flavor trends, but in the food industry as a whole. “I think we’ll begin to see real innovation start to happen in 2025. People are ready for optimism, change and something to look forward to after some very hard years.”

That means more breakthrough products, more transformative innovation — and, thankfully, Webster said, operators and manufacturers should finally start to move away from nostalgia and comfort, the dominant trends of the post-COVID period thus far. “With renewed focus on transformative, versus iterative, innovation, we should see renewed interest in foodservice among consumers, which should lead to increased traffic. That will force retailers to continue to up their game, which should make things very interesting and really exciting for consumers.”

Consumers have a higher “set point of fear”, said Suzy Badaracco, president of Culinary Tides Inc. That means that, although many are demonstrating cautious behaviors, they’re not panicked. “They want to experience strong flavors, new flavors, global flavors,” Badaracco said. “That’s why comfort food hasn’t resurfaced as a consumer driver. Flavor exploration is a psychological driver — it offers optimism, control, learning, reward, and distraction.”

As cultural exchange accelerates in the digital age, consumers are increasingly seeking adventures through global flavors. The demand for authenticity and boldness is reshaping how flavor trends emerge. These trends are not just about new experiences but also reflect a deeper exploration of regional and authentic culinary experiences.

A category with another interesting name is “fresh, bold, bright,” according to Badaracco. This could include balsamic blueberry salsa, chimichurri, orange ginger vinaigrette and mojo BBQ. Consumers can also expect to see new and different takes on sweet plus something else. For example: Swicy: sweet + spicy; Swokey: sweet + smokey; and Swalty: sweet + salty. In the Swicy category, look for mango habanero to have a big year.

As always, ethnic trends will play a huge role in what flavors get good play in the coming year. Ethnic fusion should be huge, Badaracco said. Some examples include English+ Indian (Yoshuku); Japanese + Italian: (Wafu); and fusion fried chicken from Korea, Mexico and the Philippines. Other fusion products should see significant uptakes in 2025 include tikka sauce wings, birria ramen and sashimi tostadas.



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HOW TECH IS TRANSFORMING THE PRODUCE AISLE

[THEPACKER.COM](https://www.thepacker.com)

FEBRUARY 11, 2025

With 75% of purchase decisions happening in-store, fresh produce remains one of the most personal and carefully considered grocery purchases. Still, as digital advancements reshape the retail landscape, technology is playing an increasing role in influencing consumer choices in the produce aisle. From artificial intelligence-powered promotions to digital shelf tags that help reduce food waste, retailers have new tools to engage shoppers and optimize sales. Ibotta founder and CEO Bryan Leach shares his insights on the latest tech-driven trends and what they mean for the future of retail fresh produce.

As many people know, shopping for produce is an incredibly personal experience. Most shoppers do not trust anyone but themselves to select their produce for them, especially when it comes to food items like avocados and bananas. This creates a unique opportunity for brands to lean into this personal shopping experience that customers have and develop incentives that match the intimacy of this experience. Ultimately, the No. 1 driving factor for shoppers when making purchasing decisions is price, so the more grocers can optimize pricing and promotions, the more success they'll have with consumers.

Increasing consumer incentives, particularly for fresh produce, is important knowing there are natural challenges and resistance shoppers face, as outlined above, when it comes to shopping for produce online. For example, if there is a promotion running where shoppers receive a discount for ordering produce items online versus in-store, it lowers the risk for shoppers, and in turn, they are more inclined to take the chance and go the e-commerce route. By doing that once, and having a successful experience, shoppers can feel more confident in building a new online shopping routine.

Retailers can lean on a variety of digital tactics, in addition to promotions, to achieve this — from offering shoppers visuals to pick out their own produce through an app, to the ability to request a “sell by” frame when choosing their items, to offering personalized promotions around certain produce options that brands are trying to sell.

By leveraging key tactics like these, retailers can better tap into consumers' desire for convenience, affordability and high-quality produce, driving more business to this category.



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UPCOMING EVENTS:

MARCH 6-8, 2025

SEPC'S SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

ORLANDO WORLD CENTER MARRIOTT
ORLANDO, FL

www.seproducecouncil.com/eventsnetworking/southern-exposure/

APRIL 10-12, 2025

VIVA FRESH EXPO

MARRIOTT MARQUIS HOUSTON TEXAS
HOUSTON, TEXAS

<https://vivafreshexpo.com/>

Come see us at booth 539!

TOMATO SNAPSHOT

SHARING IS CARING, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT IS THIS GOOD! THIS SAVORY GALETTE IS THE PERFECT DISH FOR TWO THIS VALENTINE'S DAY. WITH COLORFUL CHERRY HEIRLOOMS AND A BUTTERY PARMESAN CRUST, YOU WILL TASTE THE LOVE IN EVERY BITE.

CLICK THE IMAGE TO FOLLOW THE RECIPE

