

FEBRUARY 28, 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

Florida expects somewhat lighter roma volumes over the next few weeks as growers transition back into Spring production. However, Lipman's Naples farm has been steadily harvesting, with yields and quality both looking strong despite a brief rain delay in harvests. Our fruit is trending larger, though the industry has a good mix of sizing. Mexico continues to produce strong roma volumes, primarily from Western Mexico, though supplies are expected to lighten up slightly moving into March as some growers planted less for the second wave of the season. Overall quality has been good as long as the fruit is fresh.

ROUND TOMATOES

Round tomato production in Florida has remained strong and steady following a brief rain delay earlier in the week. While yields have declined slightly, harvest numbers remain solid, providing ample supply. Sizing has trended smaller across the industry, with fewer jumbos available and a greater share of 5x6 and 6x6 fruit. Quality has been excellent overall, aside from some minor, short-lived bruising caused by the rain. Lipman's Naples farm will continue harvesting for several more weeks, with first picks at the Estero location expected in 2-3 weeks. In the West, Mexico is producing strong volumes as they progress through peak season. Quality at harvest remains good, though slower market movement is leading to age-related issues on some inventory. Supply is expected to remain consistent in the near term, but later plantings are lighter, which could result in a little less product in the coming weeks.

ORGANIC GRAPE TOMATOES

Organic grape tomatoes are still readily available out of West and Central Mexico. Supplies are expected to remain consistent for at least the next several weeks. Quality is good unless there is age on the product.

GRAPE TOMATOES

Grape tomatoes are readily available in Florida, though cooler weather has slightly slowed production over the past week. Lipman's Naples farm has been affected, but with warmer temperatures expected, volumes should return to normal within 5-7 days. Production has also begun at the Estero farm, ensuring steady supplies for our partners. In Mexico, strong supplies continue, with Culiacán leading production and additional fruit coming from Jalisco and Nayarit. Volumes should remain consistent for the next several weeks, though a slight dip is possible later in the season as many growers planted heavier in their early fields due to water concerns.

ORGANIC ROMA

Organic roma tomatoes continue to be available in good supply out of the Sinaloa, Mexico area. Quality can be hit or miss, as there are some lots with shrivel, high color, and decay. As long as the fruit is at a lighter color stage, quality has been acceptable.

TOMATO ON THE VINE (TOV's)

There's not much change to the TOV situation- Mexico has consistent supply and demand is soft so there's plenty of supply. With potential inventory backups, we are watching closely for product freshness. We could see some growers pull crops in the coming weeks, which would lighten up supply until Canada comes onboard later in March.

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GREEN BELL PEPPERS

Florida's bell pepper production is currently steady, with a good overall supply of peppers. However, availability of XL and L sizes remains somewhat limited as growers are harvesting from newer fields, which tend to produce a lot of jumbo and 2X fruit, or from older fields that are yielding mostly choice and smaller-sized peppers. As farms move further into harvesting new crops, we can expect to see an increase in the retail-preferred sizes. Meanwhile, Mexico is offering moderate supplies this week, but the volume has decreased slightly as some growers have opted to keep their fruit in Mexico due to the depressed markets. The quality of Mexican peppers is varied—while some lots feature nice fruit, there are noticeable quality issues in others, leading to inconsistency.

CUCUMBERS

Honduran farms are continuing to work cucumber crops, but volumes have lightened up due to a reduction in acreage for the later part of the season. They expect to have cucumbers available through March before wrapping up for the season. Fortunately, the quality has improved in recent weeks. On the domestic front, Florida is set to see its first cucumbers of the season in the coming week, with volumes gradually building to reach seasonal levels by mid-March. In Mexico, although some growers have stopped harvesting the sizes and grades with lighter demand, supply remains solid and consistent. Mexican cucumber harvests are expected to continue until May, providing a steady supply of generally good-quality cucumbers throughout the period.

GREEN BEANS

Florida has strong green bean supplies this week, with multiple regions in production. Due to weak demand, some growers had been harvesting to order, but they have now returned to regular picking schedules. Harvests in South Florida and the Lake region are expected to continue through March before shifting north. Meanwhile, Mexico is maintaining consistent volumes out of Sinaloa. Quality has been good from all areas and should remain so, barring any significant weather disruptions.

EGGPLANT

Eggplant supplies in the East remain very light, with Florida still in winter production mode. Most harvests are coming from older plantings, resulting in fair quality. A shift is expected in late March to early April as new fields come into production. In the West, moderate volumes are available from Mexico's Sinaloa region. Growers typically anticipate increased demand for Lent, so production is expected to rise in the coming weeks. Overall, quality from Mexico has been good.

YELLOW & ZUCCHINI SQUASH

Florida's squash production has been steady and adequate this week, with volumes expected to increase in the next 2-3 weeks as new spring fields come online in South Florida. Quality has been good overall for both zucchini and yellow squash, though there are some inconsistent issues with yellow squash. In Mexico, Sinaloa's production has decreased as growers have moved away from older, lower-quality fields. Yellow squash is a bit snug, but zucchini is available in moderate volumes. A supply boost is expected within 5-7 days as new plantings begin. Additionally, Sonora is set to come online in a light way during the same timeframe, providing overlap between the two key Mexican production areas.

HARD SQUASH

Honduras has moderate volumes of butternut and spaghetti squash available, though acorn squash is not currently in production. Additional growers are getting a late start, so volumes should increase in the next few weeks. Quality has been good on butternut but only fair on spaghetti. In the West, supply is adequate for butternut, with stronger volumes of acorn and spaghetti squash. Overall quality has been good across all varieties, though some scarring has been noted on spaghetti squash. Butternut volumes are expected to increase next week as new fields in the Obregon area begin production.

CHILI PEPPERS

South Florida has light volumes of most chili pepper varieties this week, with jalapeños and poblanos leading the way. Cubanelles are in short supply as most current plantings are older, leading to a decline in quality and availability. Volume is expected to improve in about two weeks as new Spring plantings come online. Current quality is average, with some inconsistencies in sizing and condition. In Mexico, chili pepper supplies remain moderate to strong, with good overall quality. However, tomatillos are beginning to show issues, particularly with husk conditions, due to current weather patterns and the age of crops.

MINI SWEET PEPPERS

Mini sweet peppers continue to be available in moderate to good volume levels out of West Mexico. We are seeing some occasional sizing and greening issues, but overall quality is good. The current production areas are expected to continue in a consistent manner for the next several weeks.



WASTE NOT, WANT NOT: HOW RESTAURANTS ARE TACKLING FOOD WASTE INNOVATIVE WAYS RESTAURANTS ARE SAVING MONEY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

[NRN.COM](https://www.nrn.com)

FEBRUARY 20, 2025

You've probably seen it before—leftover food that could have been used, just being thrown away at a restaurant. It happens more often than you think. Every year, restaurants generate millions of tons of food waste in restaurants—enough food that could feed hungry people, reduce waste, and save money. The food service sector plays a critical role in preventing food waste and addressing food insecurity. But things are changing. More participating restaurants are finding smart ways to cut down the amount of food waste, and their efforts are making a big difference. Here's how they're doing it.

Tracking Smarter, Wasting Less

Many restaurants now use technology to track food waste and manage inventory. Smart inventory management systems help chefs see what ingredients are being wasted the most. Some systems even predict how much food a restaurant needs based on past orders, helping to avoid food waste and reduce greenhouse gas emissions because less food in the trash means fewer problems for the environment.

Menus That Make Every Bite Count

Some chefs design menus in a way that reduces waste. For example, they use the same ingredients in multiple dishes so that nothing goes bad before it's used up. Others get creative by using food scraps—like turning vegetable peels into crispy chips or making soups from leftover bones.

The food waste hierarchy promotes sustainable cooking methods such as "root-to-stem" and "nose-to-tail" cooking, ensuring that every part of an ingredient is utilized. At a restaurant I visited, they made banana bread using overripe bananas that would have been tossed out. It was a win for the business and customers who loved the new dish!

Serving Just Right, Not Too Much

Some restaurants now offer different portion sizes so customers can choose how much they want. Others encourage sharing plates, while others offer half-size meals. This way, people are less likely to leave food on their plates.

Feeding People, Not Landfills

Of course, food safety laws must be followed, but many businesses have found safe and effective ways to donate food. Many restaurants work with waste haulers to make sure that good food doesn't end up in the trash but is given to people who need it.

Turning Food Scraps into Something Useful

Not all waste can be avoided, but restaurants are finding creative ways to make use of organic waste. Some compost leftovers at composting facilities to create nutrient-rich soil for gardens. Others send food waste to farms to be turned into animal feed.

The fight against food waste isn't over, but the restaurant industry is making progress. Technology, sustainable practices, smart menu planning, better portion control, food donation efforts, and composting all reduce waste and protect natural resources.



[READ MORE HERE](#)

CONSUMER CONFUSION HOLDS BACK SALES OF NATURAL AND ORGANIC PRODUCTS, RESEARCH FINDS

[FOODDIVE.COM](https://www.fooddive.com)

FEBRUARY 24, 2025

A majority of shoppers believe it is important for their groceries and household goods to be natural or organic, but a substantial share are unsure of what those terms mean when it comes to the products they encounter. That confusion leads many consumers to not purchase natural or organic products even as people increasingly place a priority on their health.

Three-quarters of the approximately 1,500 shoppers who participated in a survey conducted in the second half of October said they bought at least one natural or organic product during the six months prior to the study.

In addition, almost 60% of respondents said they think products they buy should fall into those categories, and over a fifth reported buying more natural and organic goods during that period, according to the research. A similar proportion of participants in the survey said they buy natural or organic products because they feel these goods “are better for them” and “tend to have fewer synthetic chemicals and additives”.

Even as people show robust interest in natural and organic products, there is confusion around what those labels mean. Forty percent of all shoppers think the terms mean the same thing, and that uncertainty leads almost a fifth of those who rely on conventional goods to avoid buying natural and organic products.

Concerns about cost also play a role in keeping people from buying natural or organic products, with more than 70% of consumers who favor conventional products pointing to affordability as the top reason why they did not buy natural or organic goods during the six months before the survey.



[READ MORE HERE](#)

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!

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