

MARCH 28, 2025

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**CROP &  
MARKET**  
INDUSTRY INFO





# MARKET UPDATES

## ROMA TOMATOES

Florida's roma tomato production is very limited this week as growers transition between crops and regions. Lipman is finishing up at the Naples farm and has just begun harvesting in Estero. Yields are lower than expected due to cool temperatures during fruit set. While the Estero crop is producing smaller-sized fruit, it is still on the larger side overall, with very nice quality. Volume is expected to remain light until the Ruskin/Palmetto region begins harvesting in a few weeks, at which point production should return to at least moderate levels. Mexico's roma tomato volume has been light but is showing some improvement as new Spring crops begin contributing to supply. West Mexico expects to see volume increases over the next 7-10 days, though levels will remain lighter than the peak season in January and February. Central/ Eastern Mexico currently has limited supply, but growers are set to begin harvesting new Spring acreage in late April. Baja will also start in a light way around April 15th. Quality has improved and is now good, with more fruit coming from new blocks.

## GRAPE TOMATOES

Florida's grape tomato supply is light to moderate this week. Lipman has wrapped up the Naples crop and is now focused on the Estero plantings, where harvests have been steady, and quality has been strong. Similar volume levels are expected until the Ruskin/Palmetto season begins in a few weeks. In the West, supply has been lighter as Culiacan's crops slowed due to weather, though volumes should strengthen within 5-7 days as conditions improve. East and Central Mexico, as well as Baja, are also seeing light supplies, but both regions anticipate new Spring acreage coming online in May,

## ROUND TOMATOES

Slicer tomato volumes in Florida remain light and are expected to stay that way for a few more weeks until the Ruskin/Palmetto crops begin. Current harvests have been slow to start, with light yields contributing to a snug supply situation. However, a gradual increase in volume is anticipated over the next few weeks, with levels expected to return to normal in about 3 weeks. Despite the limited supply, quality has been excellent, and there is a good range of sizing options available. Lipman is still in the early stages of harvesting in Estero, where production will continue for the next few weeks. The Ruskin/Palmetto crop is on track to start around April 20th, which will help stabilize availability. Mexico's round tomato supply was light to start the week but is moving toward moderate levels. West Mexico growers continue to harvest from existing acreage while waiting for new Spring plantings to begin in April. Spring volumes are expected to be lower than those seen in January and February, as fewer growers will be in production. East/Central Mexico is also seeing light supplies, with Spring crops scheduled to start in late April. Meanwhile, Baja is set to contribute to the supply in mid-May.

## TOMATO ON THE VINE (TOV's)

Mexico continues to have moderate production of TOV's while Canada's growers have gotten Spring production underway. Expect more volume from Canada in the upcoming weeks as they get further into the season. Currently, sizing is off a little in the Canadian fruit due to some new varieties in production.

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## GREEN BELL PEPPERS

South Florida farms are nearing the end of their bell pepper season, with just 3-4 weeks of fruit remaining. A mix of new and older plantings means that crown-pick jumbos, along with medium and choice-sized fruit, are the majority of what's available. The retail-preferred XL sizing is in short supply. Quality is average, with some scarring caused by wind and sunburn issues in certain fields due to exposed foliage. In the next few weeks, production will shift north as Plant City begins its first harvests. In the West, many of Mexico's bell pepper crops are on the decline, with production expected to wrap up by mid to late April. While there will be a small amount of product available from more northern areas, the main supply will shift to Coachella, California, starting around the beginning of May. Current quality is fair, and the fruit is coming off in smaller sizes, with fewer jumbos, XL, and large peppers available.

## CUCUMBERS

With the Honduran season effectively over, Eastern cucumber production has shifted back to Florida this week. Volumes remain limited as growers are just getting started, but harvests are expected to pick up within the next five days. Early quality looks strong. In Mexico, supply has been low to moderate, with lighter-than-normal volumes due to previous cool weather. Some improvement is expected in the next five days, though overall volume may remain below typical levels as some growers abandoned crops during sluggish market conditions, while others planted less due to water concerns. Sinaloa and Sonora are currently the main production areas and should continue until late May. Meanwhile, a few growers have begun harvesting in Baja, but significant volume from the region is not expected until late May or early June.

## CHILI PEPPERS

Eastern chili pepper production remains concentrated in South Florida, where growers are working through their final plantings of the season. There is a limited but steady supply of each variety, with no major surplus. Quality has been strong, as much of the fruit is coming from fresh plantings. The supply will soon begin transitioning north, with Plant City expected to start in late April. In Mexico, chilies are available from Sinaloa, Sonora, and Central Mexico, with moderate supplies of jalapeños and poblanos, but lighter availability on serranos, tomatillos, and Anaheims. Quality is mixed, as some fruit is coming from older fields, with tomatillos being the most challenging due to brown husks and other condition issues. However, new fields are expected to start in 7-10 days, which should improve quality. Looking ahead, Baja is projected to begin production around May 1st, while some other Mexican growing regions will continue to have light supply into the summer.

## GREEN BEANS

Florida's green bean supply has tightened due to a weather-related planting gap, with growers currently waiting for the next crop to mature. Supply is expected to remain limited for the next few weeks. In the West, availability is also very light as previous cool weather caused a production gap. While better supply was anticipated this week, it has not yet materialized, but improvement is expected over the next 7-10 days. Quality has been fair, with some reports of immaturity and sizing issues on the available product.

## HARD SQUASH

It's a quiet time for hard squash in the East. Honduras will continue to have butternut available for another 5-6 weeks but they have had limited spaghetti volumes (due to quality) and no acorn squash. There should be a few in Georgia in another month or so, but no real significant volume until local growers get going in July. In the West, both Sinaloa and Sonora have hard squash to offer and should continue to have fruit through May. Currently, volumes are light on spaghetti and butternut and more moderate on acorn. Quality is just okay, as there's some uneven sizing on butternut and, as usual, scarring on the spaghettis. California will get going in mid-late May to provide a domestic option in the West.

## MINI SWEET PEPPERS

West Mexico's mini sweet volumes are lightening up as we get closer to the end of the season although production is still at moderate levels for the time being. The season should continue until May. After that, Baja, southern California, and Canada will combine to provide supply. There have been a few concerns with stem issues and color, but quality is mostly good.

## COLORED BELL PEPPERS

Overall, supply of red, yellow, and orange bell peppers is adequate. West Mexico is in the final stages of its season, with marginal quality, while Canada has begun its season and is expected to ramp up production in the coming weeks. The new Canadian fruit is showing excellent quality, with most of the early harvest yielding jumbo-sized peppers. As the crop progresses, more XL-sized fruit is expected. While West Mexico typically continues production into May, reports suggest the season could end earlier than usual, as some growers harvested fruit at the green stage to take advantage of strong markets.



## LIPMAN FAMILY FARMS REPORTS STRONG QUALITY AND SOLID FOUNDATION FOR SPRING FLORIDA TOMATO SEASON; DARREN MICELLE DETAILS

[ANDNOWUKNOW.COM](http://ANDNOWUKNOW.COM)

March 24, 2025

As the grower gears up for its spring Florida tomato season, Lipman Family Farms is showcasing good quality across a variety of tomatoes, including crimson, grape, and romas, as well as field vegetables like green peppers. Darren Micelle, President of Value-Added, recently provided more insight into these categories and the opportunities that await retailers.

“Despite some weather-related challenges earlier in the year, our produce has maintained an excellent standard, ensuring a steady supply and consistent quality,” Darren assures. “Notably, the quality and sizing of roma tomatoes from Naples have been impressive, and round tomatoes are seeing very nice quality on both crown and second picks. This robust performance sets us up for a successful 2025.”

As the grower closes off its winter deal and looks forward to the spring Florida deal, Lipman Family Farms reports a solid foundation for a successful year ahead.

While the weather conditions associated with Hurricane Milton posed challenges in maintaining crop health and production timelines during the winter deal, Lipman Family Farms implemented effective strategies that allowed the grower to save the crop. New crops planted after the hurricane have also produced very well.

“Lipman Family Farms’ strategic measures to mitigate the effects of adverse weather conditions include enhancing agricultural practices, investing in resilient crop varieties, and strengthening supply chain logistics to handle disruptions more effectively,” Darren adds. “This proactive approach helps ensure that partners remain well-supported and successful despite environmental challenges. Initially, Hurricane Milton and subsequent weather impacts led to fluctuations in tomato pricing across all varieties including crimson, grape, and romas, as well as field vegetables like green peppers. However, the spring season is off to a strong start.”

As Darren goes on to explain, low prices lead to increased consumption, which will stabilize and increase market prices moving forward. With excellent quality tomatoes now in supply, retailers should take advantage via strategic promotions and creative merchandising plays.



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## HOW STORYTELLING IS SHAPING THE FUTURE OF RESTAURANT MENUS

[FSRMAGAZINE.COM](https://FSRMAGAZINE.COM)

MARCH 24, 2025

In today's competitive dining landscape, culinary innovation isn't just about slapping the newest dish you saw on TikTok onto your menu without a second thought; it's about figuring out what is authentic for your restaurant brand, what makes sense from a value perspective, and what you can realistically pull off. It also involves crafting a curated, multi-sensory experience for diners with storytelling at the center.

This approach requires a delicate balance of creativity, strategic risk-taking, and a willingness to experiment with fresh ideas while staying true to the brand's identity. It's a process where trial and error often lead to the most innovative breakthroughs, and limited-time offerings (LTOs) provide the perfect playground for testing these concepts. LTOs play a key role in culinary innovation for restaurants; it allows corporate chefs to test the waters for their best ideas and find out if the products resonate with customers, and if it doesn't work out, there's a natural expiration date.

Menu innovation today goes beyond the plate; it's about connecting with diners on an emotional level. Peter Kiley, brewmaster at Monday Night Brewing, emphasizes the importance of storytelling: "One of the greatest ingredients is storytelling—actually connecting with people about what you're trying to achieve." A unique approach he uses is "every time that someone on my team wants to create a product, I'm like, cool. Write a press release ... If you can't prove to me or to yourself that it should exist and that it's exciting, who else is going to believe it?"

When many think of sourcing inspiration for new dishes, scouring the internet on a popular chef's or restaurant's Instagram may come to mind. But the more you can play an active role in trying the food of creative chefs in different cities and tasting how ingredients work together, the better, argues Kiley. Even if a brand has a great concept, great food, and great storytelling, if the message isn't being seen by the right audience, it can still fail.

Regardless of the restaurant tapping into Gen Z's love for menu hacks and customization, the common thread is a commitment to creating memorable experiences for guests and the art of balancing creativity, strategy, and maintaining a clear sense of brand identity.



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# UPCOMING EVENTS:

The Lipman 5K is a race the whole family can participate in. ALL of the proceeds will go towards purchasing backpacks, bicycles, shoes, and other school supplies for Lipman's Annual Backpack Giveaway, hosted in Immokalee every August. This will be the 15th year that Lipman has hosted its backpack giveaway and this is a great way for you to contribute in a healthy way. School supplies are more essential than ever. Help us take the weight off of families during a demanding back-to-school season by registering for the Lipman 5K Run For Backpacks.



The 11th Annual Lipman 5K Run For Backpacks will be hosted in Ave Maria, FL. The event will take place on Saturday, March 29th, 2025 from Annunciation Circle.

Registration ends March 29,  
2025 at 8:00am EDT  
click the image to register

## TOMATO SNAPSHOT

MARCH MADNESS, MEET YOUR MVP: CUCUMBERS! 🏀🥒 THIS QUICK & EASY BUFFALO CHICKEN CUCUMBER ROLL IS FRESH, FLAVORFUL, AND MADE FOR GAME DAY MUNCHING. READY IN MINUTES, GONE IN SECONDS!

