

# On The Horizon

[www.lipmanproduce.com/news-and-events/newsletters/](http://www.lipmanproduce.com/news-and-events/newsletters/)



## Market Update

**Tomatoes:** The Eastern tomato market is in transition. Quincy has two more weeks to go with light volumes, while more growers are starting up each day in Ruskin/Palmetto. Production will stay at light levels until mid-November when the Ruskin/Palmetto area hits its stride.

Fortunately, Eastern Mexico did not see serious damage to tomato crops from the hurricane that passed last week and expects to have steady volume through mid-December on rounds and romas. Baja's Fall acreage is producing lighter yields than normal due to rains during the growing cycle. Quality is affected, particularly on fruit from the southern region with reports of skin checks and scarring. Grapes are crossing from both Central Mexico and Baja with the best quality and most reliable volume from Central Mexico.

**Bell Peppers:** With Central Florida, South Florida, and Georgia all in production, the East has solid supply of bell peppers this week. Some of the fruit from Georgia is showing stem and wall decay from previous rains, but Florida's product is very nice. In the West, we're seeing local deals in the Central California coast area wind down and give way to the desert's increasing volume. Quality, condition, and size are very nice from desert farms.

**Green Beans:** With both Georgia and Florida harvesting, the East has a steady supply of good-quality green beans available this week. The West also has good numbers from the California desert, but the volume may only last for another 10-14 days. This will make the transition to Western Mainland Mexico critical to the Thanksgiving holiday, as Guasave is expected to start with light volume around November 15<sup>th</sup>. Stay tuned!

**Cucumbers:** Fall production from Baja remains limited as cucumber fields hit the seasonal decline. Crossings have become sporadic and quality is just okay. This shifts Western markets toward Western Mainland Mexico for supply. Growers are coming on board daily, although they have not reached their peak in production. The East has good quality and supply out of Georgia, Central Florida and Southern Florida this week.

**Eggplant:** With Georgia still in production and solid quality and volume out of Florida, the East has plenty of eggplant to meet market demands. The West is a mixed bag of tricks. The Fresno area is still shipping, although quality and volume are declining. New fruit from the desert has nice quality, but sizing is smaller due to a round of cool weather. We look for Western Mainland Mexico to break fields next week which should add some bigger and better fruit to the mix.

**Summer Squash:** Yellow and zucchini squashes are in good supply throughout the country this week. Florida and Georgia are both harvesting although quality varies by grower and field. In the West, local California deals are all done, but Western Mainland Mexico is flushing squash for the next two weeks. Quality has been excellent from this area.

**Chili Peppers:** Chili peppers are tightening up in the West, with Anaheims becoming especially hard to source. Baja is declining rapidly with only hit and miss availability. California's local deals are dwindling in varieties, with mostly japs available to ship. The only area with more steady supply is South Central Mexico, where transportation can present an issue.

## Transportation Facts

\*The National Diesel Average dropped \$.03 for the second week in a row, checking in at \$2.50 per gallon.

\*The average price for a gallon of diesel fuel is \$1.14 lower than the same time last year.

\*Fuel prices fell in all reporting regions except California this week. The Midwest saw a decrease of \$.06 per gallon, the largest drop in this week's report.

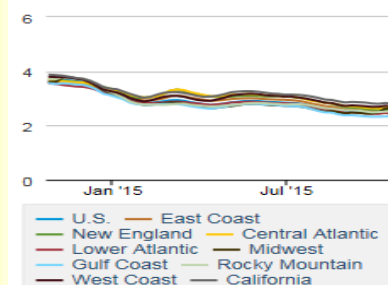
\*California reported the highest-priced diesel fuel of the week at \$2.81. The cheapest fuel in the nation is in the Gulf Coast area at \$2.30.

\*The WTI Crude Oil Price dipped \$2.69 (5.9%) per barrel this week, moving from \$45.89 to \$43.20

\*With a slow week in the industry, transportation is available in adequate or surplus levels throughout the country.

### On-Highway Diesel Fuel Prices

(dollars per gallon)



Source: Energy Information Administration

## ON THE HORIZON CONTENTS



News in the Grocery Trade- page 2  
Getting to Know Your Veggies- page 3  
Restaurant Industry News- page 4  
An Apple a Day- page 5

Produce Barometer- page 3  
November Calendar- page 3  
National Weather Spotlight- page 4  
Pack Your Bags - page 5



## News in the Grocery Trade STORE ASSOCIATES HAVE STRONGEST INFLUENCE ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY: RETAIL FEEDBACK STUDY

[www.progressivegrocer.com](http://www.progressivegrocer.com), October 23, 2015

Personal interactions with store associates and customers hold the trump card for solidifying shopper satisfaction and loyalty, according to results of the Retail Feedback Group's (RFG), 2015 U.S. *Supermarket Experience Study*. Now in its eighth year, the annual study from the Lake Success, N.Y.-based consumer research and insights consultancy finds that supermarkets continue to generate high satisfaction among shoppers, scoring an average of 4.44 on a five-point scale where 5 is highest.

Underscoring the significant impact store associates have on shopper satisfaction are high marks from shoppers who are made to feel like a welcome guest (4.70), who derive food expertise from store associates (4.66), and who encounter exceptional service (4.66), all of whom expressed the highest overall trip satisfaction score.

Additionally, several retailing fundamentals can greatly impact the overall trip experience and store satisfaction. Supermarkets performed well in some of these areas yet show room for improvement in others.

- **Quality/Cleanliness:** Supermarket shoppers rated quality/freshness of the food and groceries (4.47), followed by cleanliness of the store (4.44) as the two highest-rated core experience factors.
- **Service:** While shoppers gave high marks to the friendliness and attitude of the store personnel (4.43) and the speed and efficiency of checkout (4.41), helpfulness and knowledge of personnel (4.35) realized a lower rating and availability of personnel to provide assistance if needed (4.26) received the lowest rating across all core experience factors.
- **Value:** The value for the money spent on this visit received the second lowest rating at 4.27.
- **Variety:** A mid-tier core experience factor was variety and selection of products, at 4.38.

"Our findings show that two of the three lowest-rated areas among the core experience factors are people-related – helpfulness and knowledge of personnel and the availability of personnel to provide assistance," said Doug Madenberg, RFG

principal. "It is important to strengthen these areas, especially considering how store associates can positively influence overall satisfaction."

Nothing detracts from a good experience at the supermarket more than unsanitary conditions, according to 69 percent of shoppers who say a dirty store really gets on their nerves. Two-thirds are highly irritated by unsanitary carts and baskets. At 64 percent, discourteous employees follow in third place.

Considering the various ways consumers might interact with their primary supermarket using digital technology, half at most are actually doing so. The most common way is to check the digital circular (43 percent), followed by building online grocery lists (36 percent) and researching special online promotions (34 percent). Online services such as ordering groceries, reading blogs and getting nutritional advice receive little uptake across the entire population, but are distinctly more popular among Millennials.

Supermarket shoppers continue to be highly engaged with social media. While the total share using one or more social media vehicles with at least some regularity remained flat at 83 percent, shoppers increased their usage across vehicles over the past year: from an average of 2.9 different platforms in 2014 to 3.3 in 2015.

Up from 26 percent in 2014, 31 percent of supermarket shoppers are connected to their primary store on one or more social media platforms. Compared with the 83 percent who use social media, this still represents an opportunity gap of 52 percent. While down from 59 percent last year, working on closing the gap continues to be important for food retailers in the face of ever-growing competition and diminishing store and brand loyalty.

"Shoppers are changing the ways in which they interact with the store pre-trip to increasingly include technology and social media," said Brian Numainville, RFG principal. "This is especially true for the Millennial shopper. As this Millennial

shopper base grows in numbers; older generations become more comfortable with technology; and retailers improve and amplify their digital offerings, the adoption speed of using technology and social media when interacting with supermarkets will only accelerate."

Survey respondents who had shopped for groceries online reported varying levels of satisfaction, all of which were lower than satisfaction with the in-store visit. The average satisfaction for online ordering from general/specialty food websites (4.38) fell only slightly below overall in-store supermarket shopping satisfaction (4.44). Pure-play online shopping ended up somewhat lower (4.30). Traditional grocers offering delivery (4.15) or in-store pickup (4.14) had much lower average satisfaction.

As the economy is recovering, some shoppers are starting to abandon money-saving practices — both measured in the share of shoppers using some form of money saving measure and the number of ways in which people look to save money. However, overall, money saving measures remain prevalent, used by 76 percent of shoppers. The top money-saving behavior, employed by 70 percent of shoppers, is reviewing the traditional paper circular at home or in the store. An additional 16 percent review the circular electronically.

Clipping paper coupons (obtained from newspapers or other printed sources) is the second most popular money-saving measure at 25 percent, down from 32 percent. Additionally, 14 percent downloaded digital coupons. The use of special (unadvertised) sales promotions offered in the store continue to drop from 28 percent in 2013 to 17 percent last year and 14 percent in 2015.

The above findings are based on a nationally-representative study, prepared in conjunction with 210 Analytics LLC, of 1,200 supermarket shoppers.



## GETTING TO KNOW YOUR VEGGIES

### Facts About Acorn Squash!

Acorn squash is a small variety of winter squash named for its resemblance to a large acorn. Its firm, yellow-orange flesh has a mellow, sweet flavor that pairs well in dishes containing bacon, garlic, maple syrup or spices such as sage or nutmeg. Acorn squash is rich in vitamins, minerals, dietary fiber and antioxidant compounds.

#### Vitamins

Acorn squash contains vitamin A, niacin, folate, thiamine and vitamin B-6, but it is an especially good source of vitamin C. A 1/2-cup serving of cooked, cubed acorn squash provides approximately 20 percent of the recommended daily allowance of vitamin C. Adequate vitamin C intake promotes the health of the immune and skeletal systems and may help prevent hypertension, heart disease, cancer and osteoarthritis. To maximize the amount of vitamin C you receive from acorn squash, use the vegetable three to four days after purchase and cut it only right before cooking. Steam or bake the squash instead of boiling it to keep vitamin C from being lost in the cooking water.

#### Minerals

Each 1/2-cup serving of acorn squash contains 13 percent of the recommended daily allowance of potassium and 11 percent of the RDA of magnesium. As both a mineral and an electrolyte, potassium plays a vital role in muscle contraction and in maintaining the body's water balance. Magnesium regulates potassium levels, strengthens bones and teeth and aids in proper energy metabolism. Regularly eating potassium- and magnesium-rich foods like acorn squash can lessen your chance of stroke, osteoporosis, depression and diabetes.

#### Dietary Fiber

Acorn squash provides 5 grams of dietary fiber in every 1/2-cup serving, an amount that fulfills 18 percent of the recommended daily intake of fiber. The majority of acorn squash's fiber is soluble fiber. According to Mayo Clinic.com, this type of fiber helps regulate blood levels of both glucose and cholesterol. In 2009, an article published in "Nutrition Reviews" summarized current dietary fiber research and concluded that a diet containing fiber-rich foods like acorn squash could help prevent stroke, heart disease, diabetes, obesity and gastrointestinal disorders.

#### Antioxidants

The American Dietetic Association lists winter squash as one of the best sources of the antioxidant beta carotene. Antioxidants are compounds that can prevent cellular and DNA damage by inhibiting the activity of unstable free radicals. A high intake of antioxidant-rich foods is linked to a lower risk of cancer, neurological disorders, cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Beta-carotene is a carotenoid that may specifically support eye health and prevent the development of age-related macular degeneration.

#### Healthy Cooking Methods

To get the greatest benefit out of acorn squash's nutrients, choose a low-fat cooking method. Mark Bittman, author of "How to Cook Everything Vegetarian," advises that steaming or roasting winter squash is simple, uses no added fat and yields cooked squash that can be served chunked or mashed as a side dish or added as an ingredient to other entrees. For additional flavor, acorn squash can be grated and sauteed in a small amount of olive oil.

## PRODUCE BAROMETER

ITEM	QUALITY	PRICING
Bell Pepper	Good	Steady
Cucumber	Good	Lower
Eggplant	Good	Steady
Green Beans	Good	Lower
Lettuce-Iceberg	Fair	Higher
Jalapenos	Good	Steady
Onions	Good	Steady
Potatoes	Good	Higher
Squash	Varied	Lower
Tomatoes	Varied	Steady



## November Calendar

### All Month

National Roasting Month

National Pepper Month

**November 3<sup>rd</sup>**

National Sandwich Day

**November 6<sup>th</sup>**

National Nachos Day

National Men Make Dinner Day

## Ruskin, FL Weather

Thu Oct 29	Fri Oct 30	Sat Oct 31	Sun Nov 1	Mon Nov 2	Tue Nov 3
84° F	84° F	84° F	86° F	84° F	86° F
66° F	68° F	70° F	70° F	70° F	72° F
W 7 MPH	NE 7 MPH	ESE 7 MPH	SE 6 MPH	ESE 4 MPH	E 4 MPH
Precip 20%	Averages	Averages	Averages	Averages	Averages
82° F/62° F	82° F/62° F	82° F/62° F	82° F/62° F	81° F/61° F	81° F/61° F





## Restaurant Industry News NEW STUDY: SOLO DINERS ON THE RISE

By: Gina LaVecchia Ragone, [www.restaurant-hospitality.com](http://www.restaurant-hospitality.com), October 20, 2015

Restaurant reservation site OpenTable crunched its numbers recently and came up with an interesting finding: The number of people going out to eat on their own has risen significantly in recent years, as evidenced by the number of party-of-one reservations made via OpenTable. Solo dining reservations have grown nationally by 62 percent in the past two years, making it the platform's fastest-growing party size.

One likely contributor to this trend is the increase in single-person households—up from 17 percent of U.S. households in 1970 to 27 percent in 2012, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. But OpenTable says the uptick reveals that attitudes toward dining alone are also changing. “The stigma surrounding solo dining is lifting and...diners are eager to enjoy a unique dining experience on their own,” states the report.

OpenTable examined the data by metropolitan area and found that Dallas, Miami, Denver, New York, Philadelphia, Las Vegas and Chicago have experienced the strongest growth in reservations for one. Of course, some of the increase in the number of reservations-for-one can be attributed to the popularity of the individual restaurants themselves. But among the restaurants that are doing well with single diners, other factors are at play as well. “The restaurants we highlighted on this list are hosting impressive numbers of solo diners, and while they vary in cuisine, they excel at personalized, friendly table service that makes those dining alone feel very comfortable and embraced,” says Caroline Potter, chief dining officer at OpenTable. “You’re not going to hear, ‘Oh, is it just you?’ when you walk into these establishments.”

“[Managers] can work with staffers to make certain they are engaging guests of all party sizes,” Potter advises. There are also physical measures restaurants can take to attract this growing demographic, including a variety of seating options, says Gregg Hackett, a Minneapolis-based architect. Hackett says bars, kitchen counters and, if space permits, counters overlooking windows are popular for singles. However, two-tops and other alternatives should also be offered to solo diners.

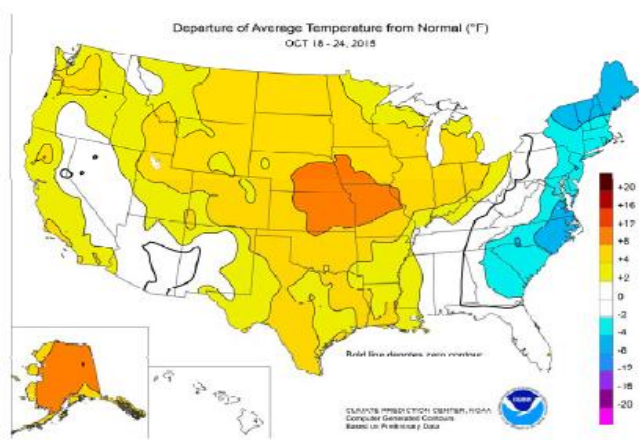
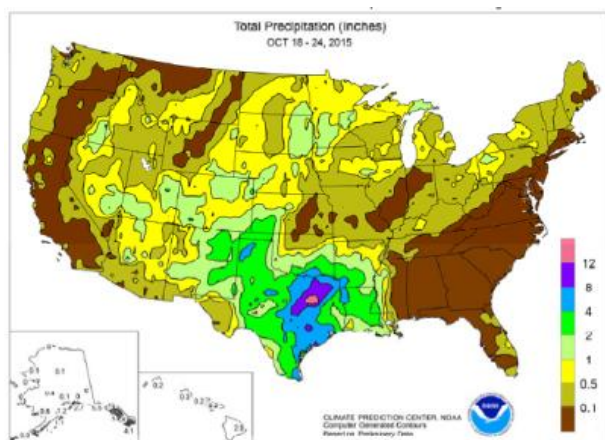
Restaurant designer Paul Basile of Basile Studio in San Diego agrees, adding that restaurants can incorporate “social seating” (communal tables work best at bar height, making the approach to the table less awkward) to allow guests make new friends and spark conversation. Designing pockets of dim lighting and brighter lighting for privacy or more exposure—depending on the individual diner’s mood—can also attract more singles.

Potter emphasizes that when it comes to seating options, operators should “offer up tables that round out the experience and allow diners to feel like they are connected to the dining room rather than being relegated to the bar or a table in a lonely corner. The emphasis should be on making the diner feel special—not solo.”

“As dining out has become one of our national pastimes, solo diners are taking every opportunity to visit top restaurants whenever they get the opportunity, much as they might attend a sporting event or show,” states the OpenTable the report. “Solo dining is about treating yourself to a delicious experience and savoring every bite...From communal and counter seating to doting table service, restaurants are welcoming parties of one with open arms.”

---

## NATIONAL WEATHER SPOTLIGHT Weekly Precipitation and Temperature Deviation





## **An Apple a Day WEIGHT CONCERNS ARE TOP OF MIND FOR CONSUMERS**

[www.gsrmagazine.com](http://www.gsrmagazine.com), October 22, 2015

The U.S. household manages, on average, 9.6 different health conditions, according to The Hartman Group's Health & Wellness 2015 report. Consumers are actively treating 3.4 health conditions and proactively preventing 6.2 health conditions. The report finds that the No. 1 health condition America's consumers are concerned with is the issue of weight management: More than half of consumers (58 percent) are either treating (26 percent) or preventing (32 percent) "being overweight."

"Not being overweight is a very prevalent health and wellness priority for so many of America's consumers," says Laurie Demeritt, The Hartman Group's CEO. "However, many have not yet experienced negative impact from the extra pounds they carry, so many allow themselves to be lulled into a sense of complacency. Relative comparisons to family and community, who likely have similar health issues, can also make accurate self-assessment difficult."

Consumers believe that America is accustomed to increasing waistlines and that the shame factor for fat has diminished in recent years. Yet, despite the statistics on overweight, consumers are generally positive about their own health. Americans are more aware than ever before that many aspects of their health and wellness urgently need improvement. More are working to incorporate exercise as a preventative measure. Yet The Hartman Group's research finds that, overall, there is little change in consumers' actions.

Among the one-third of consumers who are actively trying to prevent being overweight, 56 percent of them turn to exercise as the primary solution, 54 percent use food, and 27 percent use beverages. Food is also key to preventing many other health and lifestyle-related conditions, including diabetes, high cholesterol, heart, or cardiovascular concerns, cancer, and high blood pressure.

The Hartman Group's Health & Wellness 2015 report identifies the factors and trends driving demand for high quality, healthy foods, and beverages. It provides illuminating insights into emerging opportunities for CPG food and beverage manufacturers, food retailers, foodservice companies, and restaurants. The report updates and extends The Hartman Group's previous work and applies its signature "ahead-of-the-curve" thinking for marketing health and wellness solutions to consumers. The report delivers a culturally based big-picture assessment of where health and wellness is today, where it is headed and what it means for businesses.

### **Mark Your Calendar & Pack Your Bags**



**February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016**  
**NEPC Annual Dinner Dance Gala**  
**World Trade Center/Seaport Hotel**  
**Boston, MA**  
[www.newenglandproducecouncil.com](http://www.newenglandproducecouncil.com)

**March 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>, 2016**  
**Midwest Foodservice Expo**  
**Wisconsin Center**  
**Milwaukee, WI**  
[www.wirestaurant.org/expo](http://www.wirestaurant.org/expo)

### **Created By**



**For Our Valued Customers**

*Visit our websites....*

[www.lipmankitchen.com](http://www.lipmankitchen.com)  
[www.lipmanproduce.com](http://www.lipmanproduce.com)

**Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!**

Questions or comments about the newsletter?  
Contact : [joanna.hazel@lipmanproduce.com](mailto:joanna.hazel@lipmanproduce.com)