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Market Minute: Much higher demand firms up the tomato market

By

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Did you ever wonder where all the produce plants originated? We are so busy with keeping up with our responsibilities in the industry that the history of produce items is not on a daily agenda. It's more of a priority to achieve numbers so we don't have to explain missing the budget in a meeting.



I contacted a veteran tomato grower who once told me stories about where tomatoes and peppers originated. I learned that the tomato was once a wild plant discovered in the South American Andes mountains. The Spanish and Italians were first to perfect the plants into an edible food item. It was speculated that the early tomato was yellow in color and called “golden apple” by Italians. The French called it “love apple.”

Here are the latest tomato markets:

Currently, there is a greater-than-normal demand for tomatoes and a below-average supply gap until the Southeast and Mexico pick up production. Western tomato growers are finishing their crop.

Florida: The demand is good and the market is higher with low supplies in the central and southern regions. Grape tomatoes are extremely light in available supplies. Round tomatoes are reported as a

higher market. The cherry variety is light with a good demand and steady market. Roma plum tomatoes are on good demand and a higher market. Most retailers are relying on Romas for promoting a low price.

Mexico: Round variety supply is fairly heavy on 5x5 and 5x6 sizes. Demand on smaller sizes is good with a steady market. Grape tomatoes are in very light supply and in good demand. Cherry tomatoes are also very light on a steady market. Roma plum tomatoes are in good demand and a higher market on the extra-large size.

So, it looks like the grape tomato demand will exceed supply until the new crop matures. Cooler weather in Mexico growing areas slowed down growth.

Your tomato suppliers will have more information on all the markets and available volume. Check with them before committing to ad promotions in order to reassure product.

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