We insist upon top quality products from nationally recognized manufacturers. Our broad inventory consists of more than 64,000 stocked items, from gourmet to everyday.

Never content to rest on our laurels, we strive to continuously improve and innovate our products and services.

This commitment to excellence has served our customers well for more than 95 years, and continues to serve as our standard for success.

-Byron Russell

Chairman & CEO
Soy Complex

Soybean oil extended highs overnight on Tuesday only to find sellers show up Wednesday. The final bell saw values 50 points lower while the meal and beans were more subdued. Oil share reversed course and crush margins were mixed but firmer on the average. Overnight, the Chinese traders returned and saw their soybean oil play catchup after a week off and settled over 200 points higher. Chicago came out of the gate again last night looking for a run higher but the weakness in palm oil futures weighed on the overnight session making new lows for the week.

Lots of questions have been asked both internally and externally about price targets for the remainder of the year. We would encourage all of these discussions to start around a budget or at least an understanding of what a “success” would look like for you and your company. The markets are extremely volatile and we expect this to continue. This will present opportunities throughout the year to book off the highs on pull backs. Looking at the fundamental picture, there is going to be a concern around oil production in North America in most major oil types until Fall’s harvest. By the end of planting season, we will know what the upper limits of production really can be based on the acreage breakdown. With the meteoric rise in corn and soy prices, most analysts expect that these will both pick up acres. Will it be enough? Will it come at the expense of lesser publicized crops like cotton, peanuts, and/or sunflowers? The USDA will be issuing its farmer surveys shortly with the announcement of the findings to come March 31. This will likely be a more important report than it has been in recent years. In the meantime, the soybean oil market will likely continue to follow its three leaders: Soybeans, Crude oil and Palm oil. Soybeans continue to be in a tight stock situation which is very bullish. Crude oil has the promise of renewed global travel and lower production pushing prices higher. Palm oil is looking at falling production year over year but seasonally should improve in 2021. We are still a long way from the finish line but we are here to help. Happy Thursday.

Macroeconomics

US stock market prices were once again mixed as the different indices headed in opposite directions. The Dow was the only winner on the board again as it rose 90 to 31,613. The NASDAQ was in the losing column again down 82 points ending at 13,966. The S&P was marginally lower down only 1 to 3931. Problems continue in Texas as well as other Southern States ill-equipped to handle the snowfall that has come. Continued energy market strength was seen as Natural Gas prices shot another 4% higher yesterday before leveling off for a 2.88% gain. Crude oil rose above $62 for its highest point since the first fortnight of 2020. OPEC+ continues to keep its production down for price support and the optimism of future travel continues to keep sellers from stepping into the fray. Gold prices were sold off yesterday pushing prices back below $1800/oz.

Opening Call

Soybeans — down 1-3 cents
Soymeal — down 1-3 dollars
Soy Oil — up 5-20 points

Calendar

Today — Housing Starts, EIA Natural Gas report, EIA Petroleum Status

Friday—PMI Composite, Baker-Hughes Rig Count.

Quotable:

“The power is between your ears. The power is in your heart.”

-Jim Brown

Information contained herein is based on reports, communications, or other sources believed to be reliable. Neither the information contained herein nor any opinion expressed shall be construed as a solicitation to buy or sell any securities mentioned, but merely an expressed opinion.
Chicken Wing Prices Reach Record Highs
UB Consulting Takes a Fundamental Look at What's Behind the Surge

Chicken wing prices have been at the forefront of the conversation for several weeks now. Why? Because wholesale spot market prices have reached record highs and are behaving in a non-seasonal manner. Historical price seasonality suggests strong buying commitments are made around the end of Q3 into the beginning of Q4 when prices reach their seasonal peak. These purchases are made in the middle of football season and get another seasonal bump into January prior to the Superbowl and March Madness. Yet, as we all know, 2020 has been a year in which historical behavior has been notably in disarray—and 2021 has begun in a similar manner with prices well over their seasonal averages.

While many in the industry are still debating what is causing such behavior, particularly when foodservice wing joints continue to operate at limited capacities in many parts of the country, we briefly evaluated several indicators in an attempt to understand and explain what is happening.

We began with the most fundamental indicator: slaughter. Consider the availability of wings in terms of pieces rather than pounds. At the beginning of the pandemic, slaughter contracted significantly for obvious reasons, causing the pipeline of young chickens ready for slaughter to back up. Further, slaughter is highly seasonal, and can be relatively easy to forecast, all else equal. We also evaluated other indicators like eggs set and chick placements, and both performed very similarly, providing a decent look at what could be slaughtered in the future. Yet, slaughter figures have been well below what eggs set, chick placements, and seasonal behavior would suggest since April 2020. Fundamentally, this would naturally suggest that prices could trend higher, as fewer birds translate into fewer wings (pieces) available.
But “all” is seldom equal, or for this matter, similar. 2020 and early 2021 has proven to be quite different, and to illustrate this more clearly, we took another approach. We created a simple index that lags and smooths year-over-year changes in slaughter figures, to explain variations in price. This index suggests that anything below 100 is a contraction in slaughter relative to the previous six months. As we can notice, this index has remained well below 100 since June, but moved drastically lower from August 2020 to January 2021.

We were able to model price behavior and despite arriving at relatively decent conclusions, we are still scratching our heads on whether these levels are sustainable in February going into March Madness demand. As of the end of the second week of February, average prices remain high even though we expected these levels to adjust slightly lower relative to January. While a downward price correction is highly likely, we expect floor price levels going into March to remain historically high assuming a moderate recovery in the foodservice sector.

We must also consider that labor shortages were already causing some sporadic disruptions to the supply chain before the pandemic started; naturally, this became a major issue once the pandemic began. Similarly, and not necessarily mutually exclusive, heavier bird weights were also a pre-pandemic issue that got exacerbated once COVID cases started rising at many processing facilities. We assumed that, to a certain degree, slaughter data and prices would have reflected some of these constraints.

It is not unreasonable to think that prices could spike again in a shock-like manner as foodservice recovers and as warmer weather returns into the spring. We suspect the chicken industry is pushing for a steadier supply flow when this demand makes its way back. In the meantime, college basketball fans might have to sacrifice a beer or two to complement pricier chicken wings, as it is likely these record-high prices will be passed on to the consumer.
Foodservice

RE: JBC Panko availability

As a result of strong recent surges in demand related to changes associated with COVID-19 restrictions, along with industry-wide capacity challenges on Panko, our inventory supply on select SKUs will experience intermittent supply challenges over the next 90 days.

Working collaboratively with all relevant Kerry functional groups, we have prioritized production of high-volume SKUs near term to minimize the negative impact.

Our team is working to rebalance inventories and safety stock levels across all DC’s and distributors that have been cut and are being serviced via back-order when possible.

In addition, Kerry is bringing additional production facilities online in Q1 2021 that will provide incremental capacity to support our Foodservice business.

We sincerely appreciate your business and apologize for any inconvenience this is causing. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Kerry Customer Service or your local Kerry Sales Professional.

Kerry Foodservice
Americas Region
3400 Millington Road | Beloit, WI 53511
www.kerry.com
Date: 2-17-2021
To: All Customers
Re: Cucumber shortages/Pickle shortages

We are currently experiencing several forces that will be affecting the production of some pickle varieties for the next several weeks. These are all related to the cucumber crop in Mexico, where the recent freezing weather has caused unprecedented damage to many of the key cucumber growing fields. In addition, the current COVID-19 crisis is also causing labor issues on the picking of what crops that are available and even more delays getting them to the production facility.

There will be on and off again shortages. We are hoping supply will return to normal in the next few weeks but will keep you posted as the information becomes available for updates.

Sincerely,

Gielow Pickles
February 15, 2021

CAMBRO PRICE ADJUSTMENT NOTIFICATION

Dear Customer,

Thank you for your continued support of Cambro during this challenging time. While the last year presented many challenges, we were successful in holding pricing on most of our product categories. However, we are faced with increasing resin and corrugated packing costs as well as escalating freight rates that require us to adjust pricing on several of our product categories.

The following key product categories will be adjusted effective April 15th, 2021:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camwear Storage Products</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumblers</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dish Caddies and Camdolllies</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insulated Transport</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyethylene Storage Products</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camshelving</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunnage Racks</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trays</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingredient Bins</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polypropylene Storage Products</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handwashing</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camracks</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pricing on all other Cambro product categories remain the same.

Due to the ongoing Covid restrictions resulting in many customers working remote, our complete price adjustment file will be available digitally. If you are not the correct pricing contact in your organization, we ask that you please forward this email to the appropriate person or department responsible for pricing.

We continue to develop and introduce new and innovative products to the foodservice market that help our valued customers maximize safety, efficiency, and promote sanitation. Our USA based manufacturing and distribution facilities allow us to ensure consistent high product quality, provide faster delivery times and quickly respond to rapidly changing customer needs.

Thank you for your continued trust in Cambro. We value our partnership and hope you stay safe and healthy during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

Greg Fischer
Executive Vice President, Sales & Marketing

Melissa Booce
Director, Sales Support & Marketing Services
Due to the unprecedented winter weather that is sweeping through the central United States, and its impact on both local transportation and inbound/outbound freight, Sterno has suspended all operations at its Texarkana, TX, and Memphis, TN, facilities for the remainder of the week. These facilities are schedule to reopen in full on Monday, February 22, 2021.

Please reach out to your Sterno Customer Service or Sales contact with any questions.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support of Sterno.
BUTTER

• The butter market bounced back in a small way, going up .0225 this past week to close at 1.2675. • Milk production was up 3.1% in December of 2020 over the same month previous year and butter production was up almost 12% setting a new monthly record. • Yearly production for butter also set a record. For the 1st time ever there was over 2 billion lbs. of butter produced in a calendar year. No wonder the market is so soft. • Overseas butter continues to be around 1.000 high to domestic spot pricing, but as I said in earlier comments, there are many barriers to export which is helping to keep the butter inventories high and the market down. • 23 loads of butter were traded this past week on the CME as some were expecting a bit more upside this past week, with the difference in pricing to overseas butter.

EGGS

Eggs went up another .01 this past week but have not changed over the last few sessions. We may have reached a temporary plateau in eggs. Demand is still reasonably strong and even though we have seen some flocks molted and others taken out of production we still have more eggs than we need domestically. We will hopefully see the Easter demand season help in this area. Egg manufacturers are looking for some extended relief from below break-even egg markets. They have been losing money hand over fist apart from a short period when lockdowns 1st started for almost 18 months now.

CHEESE

• Like butter, cheese bounced back this past week. Both sides of cheese were up, with block going up .0650 and barrel jumping .1100. • We did see inventories on cheese move higher in December and that is also expected in January. Milk production continues to explode. • The block/barrel spread is down to .1400 but I would expect this to open a bit as we are still months away from barrel demand season. • Cheddar blocks closed the gap to the GDT price but are still more than .2500 low to overseas cheese. • It was surprising that markets would go up in the face of stock reports, but demand for block cheese is high this time of year with Superbowl parties, although not as strong as in past years. • 33 loads of cheese were traded this past week. There were 19 loads of block traded and 14 loads of barrel changed hands. Sometimes this is larger manufacturers or holders of cheese buying the market up to soften losses caused by a low cheese market.
BEEF COMMENTARY

For life in general there isn’t much that has remained normal for some time some time and the boxed beef market is not any different. Most of the seasonal trends that occur during the winter have slipped away and some have even noted that the industry is recreating what normal feels like. Typically, the winter months sees decent demand for end cuts and to a degree grinds, however, with additional factors there has been outstanding support for middles. With foodservice being out of sight for most of the industry there is renewed confidence moving forward for the reopening and lift of restrictions throughout the country. There remain some limitations with capacity guidelines, but businesses have begun to move forward. This has created a contra-seasonal support for rib and loin cuts. Retailers have also continued to see solid demand as the concern surrounding the pandemic has pushed consumers to the stores. Spot market activity has remained thinner, but support has kept values seasonally high.

GROUND BEEF:

- There has been a notable ease in demand for grinds post Super Bowl and with that prices have dropped lower. Retailers have continued to gather their immediate needs, but spot interest appears to have dwindled for the time being.

MARKET OUTFRONT:

The bottom line is this— Strong markets continue!! Demand and Weather related:

- Grinds will be down $.20 per lb.
- The round cuts will be steady
- The chuck roll will be up -.05 per lb.
- The market on strips will be up $.35 per lb.
- Choice Tenders will up $.45 per to $.50 lb. across the board
- Ribeye’s will be up $.45-$55 per lb. The rib eye and tender markets continue to stay strong for at least two more weeks. Now due to the weather across the country, harvest numbers down and strong demand markets will continue to stay strong thru the second week of March
- Thin meats and flap meat will remain steady to down $.06 with the exception of peeled skirts up $.50 per lb.
- Flap meat will start to come down slowly out front,

HAVE A GREAT WEEK!
MARKET UPDATE

Special Weather Note: Overall, weather has been good in most of the active growing areas in Florida and Mexico. However, winter precipitation has blanketed much of the country, creating numerous transportation issues and delays, particularly for any loads traveling through Texas to get to their final destinations.

Round Tomatoes: Florida round tomato harvests are at normal levels for this time of year thanks to warm weather and yield improvements. Now that markets have fallen off, growers are just harvesting crown and 2nd picks, letting the later fruit go by the wayside. This has given quality a boost and most of the fruit is very nice. The sizing profile has worked its way down a notch from last week and all sizes are available. We expect production and markets to remain similar for at least the next few weeks, barring any weather. West Mexico has also hit its stride with strong volumes of mature green and vine-ripe tomatoes available. Vine-ripe fruit is predominantly bigger sizing and overall quality is good. We expect steady and strong numbers for the balance of this month and into March.

Roma Tomatoes: Although romas are in the hands of only a few, volume remains steady in Florida. Sizing has been on the larger end of the spectrum and quality is good. Roma tomato supply continues to be steady and strong in Mexico. West Mexico, Guaymas, Guasave, and Culiacan are currently in good production and will continue through February and into March.

Grape Tomatoes: Overall, grape tomato supply is solid this week. Great growing weather has brought yield increases in Florida and farms have moved away from the older picks (10th and beyond). This has served to clean up any of the mixed quality that was around. Mexico’s crops are also producing well and there’s plenty available to meet demand.

Cherry Tomatoes: Florida’s cherry tomato supply continues to be somewhat stronger as yield improvements and overlapping plantings bring more to the table.

Mexico has light volume available, but the quality has not been great on what’s crossing at Nogales.

Bell Peppers: Florida’s pepper production has been steady with a mix of older and newer fields in harvest. All sizes are available, with the strongest numbers on J and XL sizes. Mainland Mexico’s Spring crops have come on strong and there is abundant volume available. Some growers are only packing J, XL and L sizing for crossings, leaving the smaller and choice fruit in Mexico. In general, quality has been good from both areas, although there are some occasional problems created from inventory backups.

Cucumbers: Honduras growers are working through a 2-3 week period of lighter production due to hurricane-related skips in the planting cycle. They continue to pick from older plantings to have something to ship, but it’s been mostly off grades this week. At least one major grower will start some new fields over the weekend, hopefully bringing more volume for next week. Meanwhile, Florida is still about 3 weeks away from beginning the Spring season. Mexico’s cucumber production continues to be on the lighter side as farms wait for new fields/crops to be ready in another 10-14 days. Overall quality is still very nice and most packs are available.

Yellow and Zucchini Squashes: Florida’s warm weather has brought on a flush of squash this week but there is a mix of quality. Cooler weather from a few weeks ago, coupled with some showers this week, has affected quality on both colors. Yellow squash has also been more impacted by a lack of pollination. With pollen plentiful this time of year, the bees are choosy and fly right by squash fields to get to the sweeter oranges, mangoes, etc. We anticipate better quality options in the next few weeks as crops grow past the current situation. Southern Mexico still has good squash supplies available, but volume will drop off over the next few weeks as we near the transition to northern growing areas. The first few weeks of March could be a little challenging, depending on how quickly the Hermosillo-area crops come online. Mexico’s zucchini quality has been solid, but yellow squash is hit or miss.

Hard Squash: Eastern supply continues to be status quo—a few acorn in Florida, with the majority of product coming in from Honduran import programs (or Mexico). We’re expecting Honduras to bring a little more volume in the coming weeks as more growers get started, but not to the levels of the past since acreage is down. There’s scarring on the spaghetti but overall quality is pretty good. Mainland Mexico’s production is steady on all three flavors, with Obregon set to break into new blocks in the next 10-14 days. There have been occasional concerns, but overall quality is good.

Eggplant: Florida’s eggplant numbers continue to be short this week as older crops play out before new ones get started in earnest. Reports indicate that some of the newer plantings have a light fruit set, so this item may remain snug until more areas are up and running this Spring. Mexico’s supply has also been on the light side particularly on larger fruit. Expect those patterns to continue through the Lent season.

Chili Peppers: Florida’s chili pepper supply is limited on both volume and variety. Serranos, Hungarian wax, and long hot’s are more limited than other chili options. Expect more of the same until Spring crops start in South FL next month. There’s plenty of chilies available in Mexico with all varieties and good quality available daily.

Green Beans: Homestead, Immokalee, and the Lake Okeechobee areas are all harvesting beans this week, but each spot has its share of quality issues. Cool weather from two weeks ago caused some crop loss in the lake area and some rain this week has affected all. Bean volume has been light out of Mexico with a variety of quality. Better fruit is coming out of the Guasave area, where they should see limited, but steady production for the next few weeks.

Market update continues on page 2
MERCHANDISING MINUTE
The Post-Pandemic Produce Department
By: Steve Patt, www.producemarketguide.com, February 17, 2021

While the United States is still many months away from a potential end to the pandemic, encouraging signs are emerging of a return to life before COVID-19. Some of the many changes that were made to help cope with and defeat the virus will disappear, while others will stay in place for much longer – perhaps forever.

Within the supermarket industry, one can certainly envision hand-cleaning stations and grocery cart sanitizing programs as part of life beyond the pandemic. Similarly, it is easy to imagine that a certain percentage of attendees at ballyhooes, concerts, movies and other crowded venues will continue to wear masks.

What does this return to “normal” mean for independent retailers, and specifically what does it mean for produce departments and produce managers? What, if any, changes that we have seen over recent months will become a routine part of every produce clerk’s day? To predict the answers, a first step may be to examine what drives consumers to purchase fresh produce in the first place.

Typically, produce consumerism over the past 20 years has followed the same patterns. First, interest in new fruits and vegetables has been generated through cultural assimilation, where produce from around the world has found its way to mainstream American supermarket shelves. Produce that was once unfamiliar now has a regular place among more traditionally available fruits and vegetables.

Second, consumers have been significantly influenced by the “Giada Effect” – a reference to American-Italian chef and Food Network personality Giada De Laurentiis. The growth of cooking channels, baking shows and other food-centric programming has delivered not only new techniques but also spurred a growth in ingredient shopping. One only has to look at fresh herb sales over the past few years to see the impact of kitchen programming on today’s produce shopper.

Next, restaurants have had the most significant impact on what a consumer is willing or unwilling to buy in the produce aisle. No one really enjoyed asparagus – until Chef Robert at the local eatery prepared an asparagus galette that was simply unforgettable. Restaurants have shaped palettes, and palettes shape shopping lists.

Finally, home-meal solutions such as Hello Fresh and others have given home cooks the confidence to try new ingredients, new preparations and new cooking techniques.

The pandemic has had an impact on each of these shopping influences. Restaurants in 2020, and deep into 2021, will have a minimal effect on shopping patterns for obvious reasons – many are closed or at least scaled back. Home delivery of meal solutions plateaued during COVID-19, primarily due to the per-meal cost during these times of economic hardship.

Continued on page 4

MARKET UPDATE Continued…

Mini Persian Cucumbers: Production out of Mainland Mexico is still very light but Baja is picking up in volume. Mainland Mexico growers should see more volume soon and quality should improve as more new crops start up.

HH English Cucumbers: With one major grower expected to finish the season sometime next week, volume in Nogales is past its peak. There will still be product available into March, but the production shift to Canada is underway. Ontario growers are starting to see truckload volumes as the season gets up and running in earnest. Our Florida program continues with steady production for now, but should see a lift as we move into March.

Tomatoes-on-the-Vine: Mexico continues to have more than ample product to meet demand. With Canada also having strong production under lights, this item is available in solid supply, which should continue at least for the short term.

Colored Bell Peppers (R,Y,O): Colored bell pepper supply is similar to last week – plenty of reds available with lesser volumes of yellows and oranges. The product crossing at Nogales has been on the larger side, with a lot of jumbos around this week. Central Mexico houses have been experiencing some cooler evenings, which is causing some greening concerns upon arrival. This should improve over the next week or so as warmer temperatures are forecasted this week.
MERCHANDISING MINUTE...Continued
The Post-Pandemic Produce Department
By: Steve Patt, www.producemarketguide.com, February 17, 2021

On the flip side, the “Glaed Effect” has been felt even stronger as trapped consumers watch cooking shows on network and cable television, on streaming services, on social media and on platforms like YouTube.

As the industry begins to move through 2021, another, and potentially more powerful, player has begun to materialize in the produce influence game. For months, consumers have been steeped in a culture of concern regarding health and safety – and rightfully so.

It is not a stretch to imagine that many produce decisions in the future will be shaped by the consumer’s desire to remain healthy and safe. The question is: How do these purchasing decisions translate at the produce department level?

From a safety standpoint, consumers are making fewer in-person grocery runs – and some have eliminated in-person shopping altogether in favor of delivery services, although many shoppers don’t prefer that approach. Instead of buying two apples three times a week, consumers are looking at purchasing larger quantities to ensure fewer trips. While this trend lends itself well to apples and potatoes, it does not translate as easily to fresh-cut or berries.

In addition, the growth of bagged and clamshell produce is indicative of this priority for better food safety (or the perception thereof) – and, for better or worse, that is a change that is likely to remain for quite some time. To accommodate this trend, some retailers have swapped out items, like bulk green beans, exclusively for bagged. What other commodities could be on the shopping block? How will produce managers make their departments colorful and enticing with so many items wrapped in plastic?

As the industry responds to post-pandemic produce shopping from a health perspective, two areas of focus emerge, both of which can and should impact today’s produce department.

First up is the organic dilemma. How is the consumer trend for fewer trips and larger packs reconciled with the organic shopper’s general disdain for plastic and packaging? Recent data suggests that casual organic shoppers are most concerned with the affordability of the product and not as stringent about packaging. Pure organic shoppers, on the other hand, are overwhelmingly bulk organic buyers – a factor which presents an issue for not only “bulk packs,” but also for front-end integrity. The answer most likely lies in sustainable packaging and inventive solutions for moving organic produce correctly through the register.

Second, the pandemic has created a universal mindset regarding the paramount importance of health and safety. The ability to fight off infections and viruses of all types will be front and center in the battle to remain healthy – and produce departments are in a prime position to offer help. What is displayed on wet walls and dry cases can assist in the battle to ward off illness.

The age-old adages – “an apple a day,” for example – ring true more than ever, as does a mother’s admonition to “eat your vegetables.” In today’s world, these directives carry more significance. Many fresh fruits and vegetables can help boost the body’s immune systems and subsequently help to fight off infections. Some of these items are commonplace: blueberries, red peppers, spinach and broccoli are amazing immunity boosters. But there are other, less traditional infection-fighters as well. Fresh ginger, fresh garlic and turmeric are all leaders in the fight against infection, as are sweet potatoes, kiwifruit and – of course – all varieties of citrus.

While it is profitable to market broccoli, blueberries and red peppers with aggressive retail and impressive displays, retailers should also market these commodities for their health benefits. Imagine a retail world where produce departments are set up based not on color breaks and category but on the health properties of each fruit and vegetable. Departments would include sections for heart-healthy vegetables, for infection-fighters, and even for produce items that help reduce blood pressure.

There is nothing good about a pandemic, and I am hopeful that another one never occurs. However, as with all things, there are lessons to be learned if the retail produce industry takes the time to reflect on what has been and envision what can be.
RESTAURANT ROUNDUP
Restaurant Sales Rose for the First Time in Four Months
[www.restaurant.org], February 17, 2021

After trending sharply lower at the end of 2020, restaurant sales bounced back with a healthy gain in January. Eating and drinking places* registered sales of $54.6 billion on a seasonally-adjusted basis in January, according to preliminary data from the U.S. Census Bureau. That was up 6.9% from December’s sales volume of $51.1 billion, and represented the largest monthly increase since June. However, it wasn’t enough to make up for the 8.3% drop in sales during the final three months of 2020.

January’s sales gain was a step in the right direction, but the restaurant industry’s road to recovery remains long. Overall, eating and drinking place sales in January still stood nearly $11 billion – or more than 16% – below their pre-coronavirus levels in January and February.

While January’s sales gain was much needed, most restaurant operators remain uncertain if it will be sustained in the weeks ahead. Only 16% of full-service operators expect to have higher sales in February or March than they did in January. Forty-six percent think their sales will decline from January’s level. Limited-service operators are only slightly more optimistic about the next several weeks. Twenty-one percent of limited-service operators think their sales in February and March will be higher than January; 37% expect to have lower sales.

Winter is here
Restaurants lost an important customer touchpoint during the recent surge in winter weather, with outdoor dining becoming less feasible in many parts of the country. This had been a lifeline for many restaurants, particularly in areas that ramped up indoor dining restrictions in recent months. Only 42% of full-service operators say their restaurant currently offers on-premises outdoor dining in a space such as a patio, deck or sidewalk, according to a National Restaurant Association survey conducted February 2-10, 2021. That’s down from 52% in November and 74% in September. In the limited-service segment (quickservice, fast casual and coffee/snack concepts), 37% of operators say they currently offer outdoor dining – down from 46% in November and 60% in September.

*Eating and drinking places are the primary component of the U.S. restaurant and foodservice industry, which prior to the coronavirus outbreak generated approximately 75 percent of total restaurant and foodservice sales.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR & PACK YOUR BAGS
August 25-26, 2021
NEPC Produce, Floral & Food Service Expo
Hynes Convention Center
Boston, MA
[www.newenglandproducecouncil.com]

October 28-30, 2021
PMA Fresh Summit
Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
New Orleans, LA
[www.pmaevents/freshsummit]

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Questions or comments about the newsletter?
Contact: joanna.hazel@lipmanfamilyfarms.com

Lipman Family Farms www.lipmanfamilyfarms.com | PHONE 239.657.4421 | FAX 239.657.6951
Tasty Bites from Chef Wil

Ramen has an annual growth of 16.4% (Tastewise)

TOMATO COMPLEXITY

Asian inspired dishes are on the rise in the fast-casual setting, inspiring new menu items like Shake Shack’s Korean fried chicken sandwich and Gochujang fries.

Ramen, being one of the fast growing Asian dishes in American restaurants, is projected to grow 20% over the next year. There will be new ingredients and new flavor combinations of ramen popping up as the year continues.

“Creative interpretations of ramen are taking hold - as long as the promise of flavor complexity, comfort and a touch of adventure remain intact.” (GeeFlavor.com)

TOMATO RAMEN

Ingredients
- 3 Lipman round tomatoes
- 1 qt dashi broth
- 2 chicken breasts
- 1 eggplant, sliced
- 4 oz sliced mushroom
- 7 oz extra firm tofu
- 120g fresh ramen noodles
- 1 Tbs fresh ginger, diced
- Toasted sesame oil
- Soy sauce
- Togarashi
- Salt & pepper

Instructions
Place tofu on cutting board with paper towels underneath. Place another cutting board or plate on top and add a little weight to press any excess water out.

Place sliced eggplant on a baking sheet and roast at 400°F for 10 min, then flip and roast another 10-15 min.

Slice approx 6 slices of 1 tomato and set aside. Skin and deseed remain 3 tomatoes. Simmer in a stockpot for approx 10 min. Add dashi broth (can also sub chicken, pork, or vegetable broth). Puree tomatoes in broth with an immersion blender (or remove with some broth and blend in blender, then return to pot). Add ginger and soy sauce to taste.

Season chicken breasts with salt and pepper then cook in a pan until internal temp of 165°F. Set aside to rest. Once rested approx 10 min, slice into ¼” thick medallions.

Slice tofu into strips and sear tofu on medium-high heat with oil. Add soy sauce and cook until all sides are crispy and brown. Remove tofu and add mushrooms to cook until softened.

Boil ramen noodles as instructed on the package. Once cooked, transfer to bowl, then add broth, tofu, chicken, eggplant, mushrooms and sliced tomatoes. Season with toasted sesame oil and Togarashi.
### Produce Barometer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Pricing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bell Pepper</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>E-Lower; W-Steady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cucumber</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>E-Higher; W-Steady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggplant</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>E-Higher; W-Steady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Beans</td>
<td>Varied</td>
<td>E-Lower; W-Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalapenos</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>E-Steady; W-Steady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squash-Hard</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>E-Steady; W-Steady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squash-Soft</td>
<td>Varied</td>
<td>E-Steady; W-Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>E-Steady; W-Steady</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### February Calendar

- **February 24th**: National Tortilla Chip Day
- **February 25th**: World Bartender Day
- **February 28th**: National Soufflé Day

### Naples, FL Weather

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Temp</th>
<th>Wind</th>
<th>Precip</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>79°F</td>
<td>S 19 MPH</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>72°F</td>
<td>N 16 MPH</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
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<td>NE 15 MPH</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>79°F</td>
<td>E 8 MPH</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>76°F</td>
<td>N 13 MPH</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>78°F</td>
<td>NE 10 MPH</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### National Weather Spotlight

Last Week’s Precipitation Totals and Departure of Average Temperature from Normal
Mission Statement

“Never content to rest on our laurels, we strive to continuously improve and innovate our products and services. This commitment to excellence has served our customers well for more than 95 years, and continues to serve as our standard for success.”

Our Promise

We insist upon top quality products from nationally recognized manufacturers. Our broad inventory consists of more than 64,000 stocked items, from gourmet to everyday. Never content to rest on our laurels, we strive to continuously improve and innovate our products and services. This commitment to excellence has served our customers well for more than 90 years, and continues to serve as our standard for success.

We understand that our customers rely on accurate and prompt deliveries. Our technological systems ensure that every order reaches customers on time and in optimal condition. Our state-of-the-art warehousing systems process every order with precision. A fleet of modern, temperature-controlled delivery trucks is equipped with satellite positioning technology to provide customers with faster, more efficient deliveries. These advances inspire customer confidence and satisfaction, which has been our goal since 1925.

Byron Russell, Chairman & CEO