

# IFPA's U.S. Produce Retail Point of Sales Results

March 2024 | The five weeks ending 3/31/2024

INTERNATIONAL  
**FRESH  
PRODUCE**  
ASSOCIATION



## March Was a Stellar Month for Fresh Produce Sales

---

*March reflects a sales boost from the early Easter timing, but also strength during the early part of the month. All five weeks experienced year-over-year growth in dollars, units and volume.*

## WHAT'S NEW

REMINDER:  
MULO+  
UPGRADE**Reminder: the New Circana MULO+**

As of last month's report, our monthly updates reflect the Circana MULO+ universe that includes additional e-Commerce, grocery, club, DTC delivery and other channels that were previously neither reporting data nor projected in the old MULO universe. This reflects an average expansion of 15% across total CPG. All time period history and geographies have been updated to MULO+.

FOODSERVICE  
INFLATION**A Possibly More Home-Centric Meal Landscape**

The March Consumer Price Index by the Bureau of Labor Statistics reflected the ongoing rise of inflation in foodservice. Restaurant price increases have been outpacing broader inflation for quite a while now.

- The March food-away-from-home inflation was up 0.3% from the previous month and 4.2% versus March 2023. In contrast, grocery prices increased 1.2% year-on-year. Yet, the cumulative impact of sustained increases has 95% of consumers somewhat or very concerned about grocery prices, according to the March Circana survey of grocery shoppers.
- The USDA released its inflation forecast for 2024 which shows more of the same, with above-average price increases for food-away-at-home. The most recent performance survey by the National Restaurant Association predicts further headwinds for foodservice. More than half of restaurant operator respondents said same-store sales were down year-on-year compared to only 17% noting a decrease in same-store sales this time last year.

MARKET  
IMPACT**An Earlier Easter**

Easter timing moved from April 9<sup>th</sup> in 2023 to March 31<sup>st</sup> in 2024. This was the earliest timing of the Easter season in many years — moving volume from the second to the first quarter of the year. This promoted a big volume boost during the last week of March, with pounds up 9.6% year-on-year. However, the earlier March weeks also increased volume sales, ranging from +0.5% for the first week of March through +3.4% during the middle of the month.

Produce department	Dollar sales	Dollar sales vs. YA	Volume sales vs. YA
March 2024	\$8,817,002,367	5.1%	3.8%
W.E. 03-03-24	\$1,740,122,529	2.3%	0.5%
W.E. 03-10-24	\$1,774,914,037	4.5%	2.3%
W.E. 03-17-24	\$1,769,927,028	5.4%	3.4%
W.E. 03-24-24	\$1,719,834,921	3.9%	3.3%
W.E. 03-31-24	\$1,812,203,852	9.5%	9.6%

**Sources:**

Circana, Integrated Fresh, MULO+ | March is the five weeks ending 3/31/2024

## POWER FACTS

## STATE OF PRODUCE

March 2024	Price/Lb.	\$ Sales	\$ vs. YA	Lbs. vs. YA
Fresh Fruits	\$1.83   +3.3%	\$4.4B	+5.4%	+2.1%
Fresh Vegetables	\$1.98   -0.9%	\$4.3B	+4.9%	+5.8%

## Share of Dollars



## TOP GROWTH COMMODITIES (NEW \$)

## \$ Absolute \$ gain vs. YA

In a change from 2023, absolute dollar growth was driven by increased volume sales for all top 10 commodities with the one exception of grapes. Berries put up double-digit pound growth, with an increase of 13.4% over last year's March. Fresh berries added \$120 million in dollar sales.

Mandarins are another strong performer, with pound growth of 9.6% year-on-year.

Product	\$ vs. YA	Lbs vs. YA	Dollar Sales Change vs YA
Berries	+10.6%	+13.4%	+\$120M
Onions	+16.0%	+5.8%	+\$47M
Grapes	+9.6%	-11.6%	+\$41M
Avocados	+12.6%	+1.1%	+\$36M
Mandarins	+13.3%	+9.6%	+\$34M
Tomatoes	+6.4%	+4.7%	+\$29M
Lettuce	+8.1%	+3.5%	+\$27M
Peppers	+8.4%	+5.6%	+\$24M
Cucumbers	+11.9%	+5.8%	+\$22M
Carrots	+8.2%	+5.7%	+\$14M



## SEASONAL COMMODITY SPOTLIGHT

Fresh potato sales have reached \$4.5 billion — making it the second-largest vegetable behind tomatoes. Despite substantial inflation in the first half of 2023, potato demand remained strong. In the past year, potatoes have grown dollars, units and volume.

- Russet are the largest seller, up 6.5% in dollars and 0.8% in units.
- Yellow potatoes are the number 2 seller with the fastest growth.
- Red potato sales are down YOY.

Potatoes 52 weeks	Vs. YA	Vs. 2YA	Vs. 3YA
Dollars	+3.6%	+23.0%	+18.2%
Units	+2.3%	+2.5%	-3.6%
Pounds	+2.2%	+2.0%	-6.7%

## WHAT THIS MEANS

The strength in produce sales is driven by more trips and more dollars spent per trip. This has resulted in an increase in the annual dollars per buyer as well as the total "in basket" dollars when fresh produce is purchased.

### Produce department (fixed and random weight) purchase dynamics



Annual  
trips/buyer  
**77.1 | +0.8%**



In basket  
dollars/trip  
**\$75 | +0.6%**



Dollars per trip  
**\$9.00 | +0.5%**



Annual  
dollars/buyer  
**\$690 | +1.3%**

Source: Circana, Total U.S., All Outlets, Household Panel, 52 weeks ending 3/31/2024, change vs. YA

“The March results are an encouraging sign for a much better 2024 for fresh produce sales at retail. Of course we have to consider the earlier holiday and the subsequent shift of dollars from April into March. However, the earlier weeks show that fresh produce is top of mind for the American consumer during holiday and non-holiday periods alike.

An other encouraging sign is the breadth of categories that are experiencing pound gains. Growth is no longer inflationary driven, nor is volume growth the rare exception. On the cusp of grilling and summer season, there are many opportunities for continued growth in the next few months.

– Joe Watson, IFPA's VP of Retail, Foodservice and Wholesale

## FUTURE OUTLOOK

### What's Next?

- While a home-centric environment, 84% of consumers apply one or more money-saving measures. According to the March Circana survey, 57% of consumers cope with the higher prices by looking for sales specials more often and 36% use coupons more frequently.
- Special occasions remain a time to splurge for many consumers:
  - Looking ahead to Memorial Day, 56% of consumers already expect to enjoy holiday activities, such as getting together with friends or family (31%) or hosting a barbecue (20%).
  - Also consider events such as March Madness where several record-setting games in viewership made the 2024 tournament the most watched ever. Whether F1 racing, the Kentucky Derby, the Masters or the Olympics coming up in Paris this summer, sporting events can be important times when shoppers can be encouraged to splurge a little more on fresh fruit and vegetables.

For any questions, please reach out to Joe Watson, IFPA's VP of Retail, Foodservice, and Wholesale at [jwatson@freshproduce.com](mailto:jwatson@freshproduce.com)

## METRICS

March 2024 sales	\$ Sales	\$ vs. YA	Lbs. vs. YA
<b>Fresh Fruits and Vegetables</b>	<b>\$8.8B</b>	<b>+5.1%</b>	<b>+3.8%</b>
Fresh fruit	\$4.4B	+5.4%	+2.1%
Berries	\$1.3B	+10.6%	+13.4%
Apples	\$482M	-4.5%	+9.3%
Grapes	\$470M	+9.6%	-11.6%
Bananas	\$389M	+2.2%	+1.3%
Avocados	\$322M	+12.6%	+1.1%
Mandarins	\$288M	+13.3%	+9.6%
Melons	\$247M	-2.3%	-7.7%
Oranges	\$183M	+5.1%	+3.4%
Pineapples	\$128M	+10.1%	+12.1%
Lemons	\$106M	+3.3%	+4.7%
<b>Product</b>	<b>Dollars</b>	<b>\$ vs. YA</b>	<b>Lbs vs. YA</b>
Fresh vegetables	\$4.3B	+4.9%	+5.8%
Tomatoes	\$481M	+6.4%	+4.7%
Potatoes	\$436M	+0.4%	+9.3%
Lettuce	\$356M	+8.1%	+3.5%
Onions	\$338M	+16.0%	+5.8%
Salads-kits	\$332M	-0.7%	-3.8%
Peppers	\$310M	+8.4%	+5.6%
Cucumbers	\$210M	+11.9%	+5.8%
Carrots	\$178M	+8.2%	+5.7%
Mushrooms	\$149M	-3.2%	-2.7%
<b>March 2024 sales</b>	<b>\$ Sales</b>	<b>\$ vs. YA</b>	<b>Units vs. YA</b>
<b>Frozen Fruits and Vegetables</b>	\$1.0B	+4.4%	+3.2%
<b>Shelf Stable Fruits</b>	\$592M	+1.2%	+0.3%
<b>Shelf Stable Vegetables</b>	\$725M	+6.5%	-0.3%
Meat department	\$9.8B	+7.2%	+2.0%
Dairy aisle	\$8.0B	+3.1%	+4.6%
Deli department	\$5.1B	+2.8%	+5.7%
Bakery department	\$4.6B	+2.2%	+0.6%

For more information, please reference IFPA's full consumption data at  
<https://www.freshproduce.com/resources/Commodities/>