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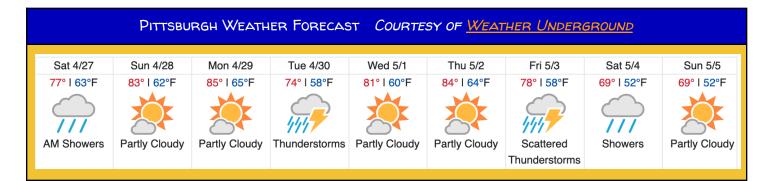
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PRODUCE NEWS & UPDATES

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THE PACKER

Study examines connection between fruit and vegetable consumption and sleep

Good-quality spring table grapes now are arriving from Mexico's Jalisco growing area, and U.S. grape shipments from California's Coachella Valley should get started in May. Last year, Mexican growers sent about 25 million 18-pound boxes of table grapes to the U.S., said John Pandol, director of special projects for Delano, Calif.-based Pandol Bros. Inc. and chairman of the grape division of the Nogales, Ariz.-based Fresh Produce Association of the Americas.

The official estimate for this year had not been released as of press time, but Pandol predicted that volume will be between 22 million and 24 million boxes. Growers decided to launch an early grape deal in Jalisco about five years ago when they realized that producers in similar tropical climates — like Brazil, North Peru and India — were able to grow good-quality table grapes, Pandol said. This year, the program was underway by April 1. The traditional Sonora crop out of Mexico should start by May 6. Grapes from California ship from May to January and represent 99% of all commercially grown table grapes in the U.S., said Kathleen Nave, president of the Fresno-based California Table Grape Commission. The California harvest begins in the Coachella Valley in late spring and moves north to the San Joaquin Valley by mid-July.

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