



The Outlook

April 21, 2009

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CROP OUTLOOK

The heat wave will continue today on the West Coast following Monday's extreme temperatures. Record high temperatures were recorded throughout the state, in some instances topping previous highs by double digits (10+ degrees) in and around the Salinas growing region. Temperatures are expected to quickly moderate beginning on Wednesday as approaching storm systems push the high pressure ridge eastward. Mid-range forecasts remain a bit unclear but expect cool windy conditions to return to the Salinas Valley with a slight chance of rain possible on Friday.

These extreme temperatures come on the heels of last weeks cold and very windy (20-40 mph, gusts up to 60 mph) conditions in the Salinas Valley. Crops already stressed from previous growing conditions this spring may begin to show heat related stress, especially lettuce and leafy green supplies. The young, tender spring mix and leafy greens are especially vulnerable due to growing location. The majority of these supplies are generated from interior valleys that are currently receiving extreme heat. Even the coastal growing regions (strawberries, lettuce etc) usually kept cool by sea breezes are reaching records in this heat wave. We expect to see an increase in fringe burn, internal burn and discoloration along with lesser yields, texture and shelf life for the near term at a minimum. Lettuce supplies look to remain light due to processor demand and current stands producing smallish head size and lighter carton weights. We will be closely watching temperatures reached today in the various micro climates throughout the Salinas Valley. It will take awhile for field assessments to take place following the heat before growers will have a clear idea of damage and loss.