



The Outlook

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CROP OUTLOOK

Past and present growing conditions throughout California continue to impact crop yields and quality. One thing to remember is that spring crops currently being harvested were planted around mid-January. They have been in the ground a long time. Thus providing many opportunities for problems to arise in the fields. In February Central California experienced a prolonged wet cycle that prevented normal field prep work and delayed plantings of some crops. These cool moist conditions slowed growth cycles of crops during this period. March began with warm (near record) temperatures followed by a series of cold, wet, very windy storm systems that continued into mid-April, minus a few brief warming trends. Then came the heat wave of April 18-22 with consecutive days of record high temperatures 10-15 degrees above previous record highs. Most recently, this week, the region experienced rain along with warm humid conditions followed by a current warm up today into early next week. All that being said overall temperatures have been well below normal throughout the winter and spring growing season. These drastic temperature fluctuations, storms, very strong winds and generally cooler conditions have impacted current supplies. Growers remain 5-10 days ahead of normal harvest schedules due to low yields forcing growers into new fields. On the bright side moderate demand has kept the situation from becoming extreme and upcoming weather patterns look to return to normal. This should help crops return to a more seasonal growth cycle and improve yields and quality in upcoming stands.

Cauliflower production has taken a beating from the previous heat wave with extremely low yields currently. The forecasted weather pattern will not help growth rates into next week, add to this less overall acreage planted and supplies look to remain light for the near term possibly well beyond.

Broccoli stands are showing extreme variance (crown size all across the board) in the fields due to the heat and generally poor growing conditions of late. Supplies look to lighten up as growers enter these new fields.

Iceberg lettuce production will remain on the light side with smallish head size as growers remain ahead of schedule in many stands. Strong processor demand continues to take a bite out of supplies. Wind, fringe and tip burn along with sun discoloration and growth crack continue to impact yields in the fields. Recent rain, moisture and high humidity will increase mold and mildew presence in these stands likely further reducing yields for the near term.