



The Outlook

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CROP OUTLOOK

The roller coaster weather patterns this season in California will continue as cooler temperatures (60s along the coast to mid 80s inland) are once again forecast for the Salinas Valley following the recent spike in temperatures. A weak system in the Central Pacific Ocean will slowly work its way east over the next few days. This system will contain low and mid level cloud cover along with a very heavy marine layer (fog) as it moves inland over the next few days. This will once again bring moist, humid overnight conditions along with cooler daytime temperatures to the region into early next week. These are ideal conditions for mold and mildew growth in lettuce and leaf stands and will also likely increase fringe, tip and internal burn in the fields. Insect pressure is also becoming problematic in many fields at the moment. Yields, shelf life and overall quality will once again suffer as a result of these growing conditions. Demand remains moderate for most items as local and regional supplies come to harvest throughout the country, easing pressure on California product.

Lettuces- Romaine and iceberg lettuce are of particular concern at the moment given the anticipated weather pattern. Iceberg lettuce yields and quality have improved recently in the warm up however the upcoming weather pattern may reduce yields and quality next week. Romaine and romaine heart supplies have been impacted with low yields due to mildew, fringe burn, internal burn and recently insect pressure in the fields. This in turn is causing growers to use more acreage to meet the demand of processors and customers. This looks to continue for the near term as the moist, humid growing conditions return to the Salinas Valley. As we move into summer production romaine varieties used at this time tend to produce more green, and less bleached heart material through the summer and fall. This is the most difficult time of year for romaine heart production due to these varietals differences.

Cauliflower- Supplies will remain light to moderate for the near term as yields remain low. Current production remains heavy toward large sized (9s) flower and the warm overnight temperatures will only increase growth rates, mod and mildew in these stands. Demand remains relatively light at the moment but can quickly change as we move through summer production.

Onions- Demand exceeds supplies currently on fresh onion production as California growers struggle to provide product. Overall cooler temperatures in the San Joaquin Valley along with less planted acreage (water restrictions) have combined to create a shortfall of product. The current size structure in the valley is heavy toward smaller sized onions. The cooler temperatures are also impacting the drying of the onions at the moment. Overall growing conditions (cool, moist) have increased stain and pitting in the crop further reducing yields. Add to this light production out of New Mexico (30% less planted acreage) pushing demand toward California and we have our current situation. The recent warm up should help with the drying process and improve growth rates in the fields. Given the various factors supplies look to remain tight for the near term at a minimum.

Hot temperatures forecast in the Midwest and Southeast this week may impact local supplies from these regions as numerous heat advisories have been issued in the various states. These temperatures have the potential to impact supplies of beans, bell pepper, squash and especially tomatoes due to bloom drop and heat stress. At this time we will have to wait and see how the various regions come through the current weather trends.