



The Outlook

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CROP OUTLOOK

The roller coaster weather pattern out west continues to impact production and quality of many crops. Cold temperatures and recent frosts, record precipitation followed by warm humid conditions and recent tremendous winds along with planting gaps due to water restrictions will continue to hamper production and quality during the transition period. Many shippers currently skip the transition region altogether choosing to remain in the Salinas Valley into late fall moving directly to the Desert growing regions around mid-November. A wide range of lettuce quality with small ribby heads and light carton weights look to continue for the near term. Yields as low as 50% are common in the fields currently, as mildew and disease impact leaf and lettuce acreage. These very low yields are causing a significant shortfall in production forcing processors to look for product to fill their orders. This in turn will impact available supplies over the next few weeks at a minimum. Light yields with lesser quality and shelf life look to continue through the transition until desert area growers hit their stride in late November.

Spinach, spring mix and baby leaf fields have also been impacted by mold and mildews following the rain and humid conditions last week. Supplies look to remain light with reduced shelf life for the near term at a minimum.

Broccoli and cauliflower supplies are in a similar predicament given the inclement weather pattern, reduced acreage and light yields.

Domestic strawberry production, hampered by rain and very strong winds will remain very light with Oxnard past its peak and northern production waning. A wide range of size and quality exists in the various growing regions.

All of these factors will push growers to look to desert stands ahead of schedule to meet demand. Bottom line is tight supplies with lesser quality and reduced shelf life will be the norm during the transition over the next few weeks.

As crops begin the transition shortages of varying degrees are typical minus this season's weather and water problems. This year looks to be especially challenging given the aforementioned problems. Mix items will continue to be generated from Salinas and Santa Maria with Oxnard and other areas contributing light volume as well. Lettuce, mix and cole crops will begin the transition to desert locals around mid-November. The various loading locations also create a challenge for timely pickup and delivery during the transition period. I will continue to travel to the various upcoming growing regions and we will continue to watch these weather events and keep you up to date as we gather more information.