



PRO*ACT QUALITY CONTROL

COMMODITY ALERT

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CROP OUTLOOK

As we move toward fall numerous factors are contributing to intermittent supply shortages typical of summer production. California growers will typically reduce fall plantings (less overall acreage) in anticipation of local/regional supplies throughout the country. Inclement weather throughout the Northeast and Colorado has severely impacted these regional supplies. A heat wave in California in early July (which brought product on ahead of schedule) has been followed by weeks of below normal temperatures and a heavy marine layer (fog) keeping overnight temperatures above normal. These warm, moist conditions in turn have increased mold, mildew and internal burn issues in the fields causing a further reduction in yields. Add to this recent insect infestations causing some acreage to be passed over or disked and we have our current shortage of broccoli, spinach, spring mix ingredients and especially romaine. Strong romaine and heart demand along with lighter yields due to insect, mildew and burn problems will impact these supplies for the near future at a minimum.

Insect activity/populations are becoming problematic for growers throughout the Salinas Valley in the warm overnight temperatures as we move toward late summer harvests. These aphids, gnats and small flies tend to hide under the cap and between outer leaves in broccoli, lettuce and romaine fields, making them difficult to reach with insecticide sprays. Insect populations are currently a problem in broccoli, romaine and iceberg lettuce stands, with some acreage passed over due to infestation and becoming more noticeable in leaf lettuce acreage as well.

Insect problems are a normal occurrence during the late summer (late August and September) in the Salinas Valley. This year however, with the warm overnight temperatures, lack of precipitation and associated die off of hillside grasslands, insect pressure is becoming noticeable, impacting production earlier than normal. As summer production rolls on insect populations may become a continuing problem for growers with hot temperatures and warm nights likely to occur in August and September.

A warming trend is on tap for the Salinas valley following weeks of fog/moisture and cool temperatures. Many lettuce and leaf crops remain a couple of weeks ahead of anticipated harvesting schedules. Heavy demand from the processing industry is forcing growers to enter these fields before optimal maturity to meet this demand. This will likely influence future supplies/availability into mid-September possibly beyond, depending on upcoming weather patterns.

Strawberry production has also been slow to re-materialize following July's peak. The cool moist coastal weather pattern has not helped growth rates or maturity. Supplies look to increase around late August with new crop fall acreage (Oxnard) anticipated around late September.

The expected warming trend and lightening of the marine layer should help overall growth rates next week. Demand will play a major factor as to upcoming and fall supplies. Weather patterns from here on out will play a crucial role as yields and quality of these supplies.