

# the Outlook

Weather patterns across the U.S. and Mexico will continue to impact production from the various growing regions. All signs point to a continuing strong El Nino event this winter and spring.

Out west the unseasonably warm summer and fall pushed crops well ahead of schedule to start the winter season. An early season cold spell followed in late November causing extensive frost and freeze damage throughout the Southwestern Desert regions. And now another round of frost and freezing temperatures are set to impact the region this week. These fields were starting to dig out of the blister and peel from the previous cold spell. Numerous El Nino storm systems continue to impact the west with rain and strong winds. Long range forecasts models (not the most reliable) keep the moisture tap open with these storms as substantial rain is forecast for mid to late February. On a brighter note the Sierra snowpack (latest reading to be taken today) is well above average. Last year at this time it was at 25% of normal. Lakes and reservoirs throughout the state are also rising with the continued rainfall. This is crucial for California growers and drought conditions in general. But let us not forget that one good year of rainfall and snowpack will not alleviate drought conditions in the state, but it will help.

South of the border has seen its share of inclement weather as well beginning with the numerous hurricanes that impacted the region in the late summer and fall disrupting planting schedules. The weather pattern this winter has produced numerous low pressure systems that brought substantial rain and cold temperatures to the various regions. This has resulted in lesser supplies and quality creating gaps in production as crops transition to new fields and regions. Forecasts bring another round of cold weather to Northern Mexico and Baja over the next few days, with a very cold air mass expected to move into Central Mexico late this week into the weekend. These cold temperatures can cause severe damage current crops as well as affecting the bloom (tomatoes, squash, beans, peppers etc) and upcoming production.

The Southeast (Florida) has had more than its share of rain to deal with this year causing severe flooding across the southern part of the state. In fact South Florida received above average rainfall the past 3 months with 139% above average in November, 199% in December and 350% in January. This has impacted the numerous crops originating from this region. A couple of storms systems are set to roll through the state this week followed by a very cold air mass expected early next week. This very cold air is expected to reach Southern Florida with possible near freezing temperatures and strong winds. Regions to the north are likely to receive hard freeze conditions as the cold dry air moves through.

Given the forecasts and the numerous crops in the line of fire we will have to wait and see how the various regions are impacted by the upcoming storm systems. It is safe to say however that supplies from all regions look to take another hit with this latest round of weather. Yields and quality will be impacted possibly/likely long term from all regions. And let's not forget that in a typical El Nino year the most powerful storm systems occur in February and March.

