

the Outlook

Summer production rolls on in Central California, above average temperatures along with warm humid overnight temperatures continue to push crops ahead of schedule. These prolonged growing conditions have continued from early spring into the current production period. There has been a recent explosion of mold and especially mildew issues in leaf and lettuce stands as well as in spinach and some of the tender baby leaf items. Yields as low as 50% are common in many current stands, with some blocks left behind due to heavy mildew pressure. Unusual thundershowers and even hail continue in the Salinas Valley providing even more unwanted moisture in the fields. These growing conditions cause a weaker cell structure and texture affecting shelf life of these products.

As fields are harvested and then disked under in preparation for the next crop, the microbial load (mold, mildew, bacteria, viruses etc.) that will be added to the soil increases. This in turn can affect the yields and quality of the next crop grown on that plot of land. This season looks to have an increased microbial load as the season progresses. Many growers have to prolong the Salinas season due to transition acreage unavailable due to drought issues.

As we move through summer and especially fall production, it is very important to keep a close eye on inventories and your rotations, as product will not have the typical shelf life. Weather forecasts show no let up of the warm and humid temperatures experienced so far this year.

