

the Outlook

The very cold temperatures in the Southeast will continue into the weekend as the cold air remains firmly entrenched. Hard freeze conditions continue for Northern Florida for another day with freeze and frost warnings posted for much of the rest of the state. Of greatest concern will be the strawberry crop located in Central Florida. This crop has seen a number of hard freeze days this week as growers do their best to protect the fruit. The majority of current production comes out of southern Florida and has been spared the brunt of these very cold temperatures this week. Mid-range forecasts bring a significant wet storm system into Southern Florida early next week which may disrupt harvests next week in the region.

Out west Mexico and the Southwestern Desert regions generally remain warm minus a few morning freezes in the Yuma region last week. Both regions remain significantly ahead of harvest schedules due to the unseasonably hot and dry conditions.

Back in California a passing storm system this week brought much-needed rain to Central California and regions to the north. While the system did bring decent rainfall, it was a warm system originating from the Southern Pacific Ocean. Southern California has been dealing with wildfires and warm growing conditions this winter. In fact, California has had the warmest December on record. Temperatures 10-15 degrees above normal with generally warm overnight temperatures have been the norm. This has advanced the growth rates of the spring plantings in the Salinas region with these seedlings already a week or so ahead of schedule. On the bright side, a significant storm system looks to impact California early next week with 1-2 inches expected across the state. This will likely disrupt strawberry production from Southern California next week. As always upcoming weather patterns will play a crucial role in supplies a quality going forward.

