

the Outlook

The recent cold trough that brought much needed rain to Central California will bring cooler temperatures and strong, gusty winds to Southern California and the Southwestern Desert regions this week. As we transition to these desert stands weather patterns will continue to impact supplies. The generally warm and humid fall weather pattern (which increased growth rates and lowered yields in the Salinas Valley) impacted these Desert area stands as well.

The early iceberg acreage in the region has been affected by the early heat and rains that hit the region during planting. Iceberg lettuce yields will remain on the low side with smallish head size, irregular solidity and ribby head formation. The hot weather has contributed to very low yields due to high core (seeders) in virtually all of the current acreage. Disease pressure is also taking a good chunk of acreage at the moment due to a Fusarium outbreak in some of these early lots. Strong winds look to continue to impact the region increasing wind and fringe burn while impacting texture and shelf life of current supplies.

Romaine and leaf lettuce supplies are also seeing reduced yields in the current weather pattern. A generally ribby head formation along with seeders and fringe burn are common in these fields. Carton weights will remain on the light side with mechanical damage on the rise during pack out and transit due to the ribby head formation and weaker texture.

Heart material is very limited in these fields as most of the fields are showing an open head formation. Need cooler overnight temperatures (hopefully on the way) to help cupping and bleaching in the romaine stands.

Broccoli and cauliflower production remains low due to recent rains in Central California affecting yields and quality from this region. Desert area supplies remain weeks off leaving these older fields the only option at the moment. Mid range forecasts bring in another rain maker to the Salinas Valley over the weekend further disrupting production and quality next week.

Bottom line remains the same supply shortages and gaps are likely to continue through November at a minimum. Keep a close eye on inventories as quality will be compromised as well. You can expect lesser carton weights, quality and shelf life as we continue what will undoubtedly be a very challenging transition to desert area stands.

