

PRO*ACT

Crop Update

January 30, 2025

Cold temperatures in the Southwestern desert growing regions are forecast to continue throughout the week. These desert fields will see very cold morning temperatures with moderate lettuce ice across the region into Saturday before a warming trend begins next week. These very cold temperatures currently will slow growth rates to a crawl in the desert regions possibly causing some supply shortages down the road.

The leafy green fields will continue to show some wind and fringe burn, feathering/epidermal peeling, blister and discoloration in upcoming harvests. Along with blister and epidermal peel you can expect to see lighter color and carton weights and smaller head size as growers trim out damaged outer leaves.

On the processing side extreme cold can cause physiological changes in the plants causing leaf sensitivity and weaker overall texture. This can result in increased mechanical damage and bruising during harvest and processing. Processed leafy green items will also likely see an increase in discoloration and breakdown showing up in the bag affecting shelf life. Spinach, tender leaf and spring mix items tend to be most susceptible to weather fluctuations due to being harvested at a very young stage. The spring mix and tender leaf items will continue to show some yellowing, discoloration and breakdown in the bag along with weaker texture and lesser shelf life due to the growing conditions in the region.

Iceberg lettuce supplies are starting to show some heavy fringe burn/frost damages tips along with feathering/epidermal peeling on the outer cap leaves, especially on the liner iceberg product. This is the result of the extended cold temperatures and previous very strong winds in the desert regions. Harvesting crews will leave and extra few cap leaves on liner lettuce packs for protection to the heads during transit. These outer leaves may begin to discolor during transit and storage. When these outer cap leaves are trimmed off the heads underneath are generally clean with nice color and decent texture. Those receiving liner lettuce should relay this to their customers to avoid unnecessary complaints. See attached pictures of fringe burn and blister.

It is important to keep your rotations in check as the overall quality and shelf life of many crops, especially processed items, will be challenged in the near term.

