

PRO*ACT

Crop Update

February 21, 2025

A strong high-pressure system out west will bring a drastic warm up to California and Southwestern Desert regions over the next couple weeks. Record high temperatures in the mid to upper 80s are possible in the desert growing regions as the system remains stationary over the West Coast. These temperatures will cause many challenges for growers as the season begins to wind down in these desert stands.

Lettuce and leafy green crops are in good supplies with generally good quality but will likely see an increase in fringe and tip burn along with some elongated core/seeder in the warm temperatures. Epidermal peeling and discoloration will increase in the warmup and these crops will continue to show some premature pinking along the ribs that are not seen during harvest and tend to show up during transit and storage. Processed leafy green items will also likely see an increase in this oxidation/pinking showing up in the bag.

The spring mix and tender leaf items will continue to show some fringe burn, yellowing and discoloration. The warm temperatures can cause physiological changes in the plants causing leaf sensitivity resulting in a thin, weaker overall texture. For fresh-cut items this can result in increased mechanical damage and bruising during harvest and processing.

Insect pressure will certainly rise in these warm temperatures, the numerous small insects (flies, gnats, aphids, thrips) will be a continuous problem for growers in the extended warm temperatures. This looks to be the greatest challenge for growers in these regions going forward. Aphid and gnat populations can grow rapidly and are very difficult to combat as they hide in the underside of the leaves of the various crops.

