

PRO*ACT

Crop Update

February 27, 2025

The strong high-pressure system over West Coast will begin to move out of the area today as a series of low-pressure systems roll into California into early next week. This will bring a return to seasonal temperatures following over a week of unseasonably warm temperatures. While heavy rain is not expected with these systems, some light to moderate rain, and cooler temperatures are forecast across the entire region. As these cold fronts pass to the north of the Southwestern desert growing regions strong winds are expected across these fields with a Santa Ana wind event impacting Southern California late this week.

These crops have already been battered by previous extended cool temperatures, freezes, and the recent heat wave in the region. Strong winds can do extensive damage to these already weakened crops, especially the spinach, spring mix and tender leaf items. The leaves of the various crops can be left tattered and torn, allowing an entrance for pathogens to take hold. This will only increase wind and fringe burn, as well as depositing some dust on the crops. The winds will also likely increase dehydration in the leafy green crops once again impacting the texture and shelf life of most crops.

Insect pressure, the numerous small insects (flies, gnats, aphids, thrips) will be a continuous problem for growers in the region. Aphids, flies and other critters are already becoming noticeable in many upcoming fields. As growers combat the bugs with insecticide sprays the small gnats and flies tend to hide and accumulate in between the leaves as they die off making them very difficult to remove during harvests.

On the processing side the overall growing conditions, causing leaf sensitivity and weaker overall texture 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. The spring mix and tender leaf items will continue to show some yellowing, discoloration and breakdown along with lesser texture and shelf life due to the growing conditions in the region.

There remains plenty of uncertainty regarding the potential tariffs on Canada and Mexico following a 30 day pause during February. The Trump administration has indicated that the tariffs will likely go into effect in March. Given the numerous fruits and vegetables impacted by the potential tariffs, the produce industry is justifiably confused and concerned as negotiations continue.

