

the Outlook

As we begin summertime harvests in the various regions across the country weather patterns continue to be problematic. The Midwest is currently drying out after record precipitation and flooding in Texas and Oklahoma.

The Southeastern growing regions along with the eastern shore have seen numerous storm systems this spring. Resulting in planting delays, some re-plantings and delayed maturity in the fields. Crops throughout the region remain 7-10 days behind schedule as showers and thunderstorms continue to impact the region. Light to moderate yields at this time are expected to improve as crops come to maturity.

On the West Coast growers have seen the opposite conditions. This region received record low precipitation and virtually no Sierra Mountain snow pack. The spring weather pattern saw numerous extended heat waves and record high temperatures. This has been followed by a consistent deep marine layer, fog and drizzle over the past few weeks. Crops remain ahead of schedule with the recent cooler temperatures helping growth rates, insect pressure and yields.

At the moment we are closely watching tropical storm (Blanca) in the Pacific Ocean. This system is expected to gain strength over the next few days and become the second hurricane of the season in the eastern Pacific. The current northwesterly track brings the storm off the Mexican coast heading toward the tip of Baja. Blanca is forecast to become a major hurricane reaching Cabo San Lucas sometime on Sunday. This is an early start to the Pacific hurricane season and these storms can cause havoc in Mexico and the US.

As far as the drought is concerned the lack of winter rainfall throughout California has prevented normal leaching of salts in the soil reducing yields in the stands. The tree fruit, citrus and avocado stands are in dire need of a decent winter to help leach the soil. With the region in a 4 year drought, smaller size structure, lighter yields and an early finish to the season are a concern for these growers in the late summer and fall. The early start to the Pacific Hurricane season mentioned above may portend to El Nino conditions for the west this winter. Could that then translate into a strong winter for California? That remains to be seen.

