

# the Outlook

Numerous factors continue to contribute to the current quality and supply issues in California. While weather patterns are the main factor, problems began with the heavy winter rains delaying planting schedules and an overall lack of labor force in the industry. The lack of labor is a continuing problem for growers, causing some fields to be left behind and not harvested. Weather patterns have been the major culprit recently as cool moist conditions have been the norm.

The early spring weather pattern of generally warm temperatures (with a few strong storms) has taken its toll on supplies. Spring storms disrupted many plantings and impacted growth rates causing some current gaps in supplies. The warm weather pattern that followed increased growth rates pushing crops in the ground ahead of schedule. This weather pattern has impacted yields of current supplies along with increasing mold, mildew, fringe and tip burn issues in lettuce, leaf and mix stands. The inconsistent temperatures and moisture has also contributed to some spotting, oxidation (pink rib), rib blight and reduced shelf life. Insect infestations remain a major problem in the region especially in leaf and lettuce stands. This looks to continue for the near term as grower's battle increasing populations.

Spinach and spring mix along with the tender baby leaf items are especially susceptible to mold and mildew issues (due to the dense plantings) in the current moist weather pattern. Mix items such as Napa and Bok Choy are also susceptible to moisture and are vulnerable to supply shortages. These crops are generally grown in specific concentrated locations on relatively sparse acreage.

With Iceberg, romaine and spring mix yields on the light side this spring processors are on the hunt for product to fill their needs further limiting supplies. The combination of lesser yields, processor demand and recent cooler temperatures will keep supplies on the light side for quite awhile.



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Broccoli and cauliflower supplies (along with many other commodities) will remain on a bit of a roller coaster with supply, as new fields come to harvests. Recent moisture and humidity will increase mildew and disease pressure in these upcoming harvests.

Short term forecasts expect a brief warm up late this week with a similar cut-off type storm system impacting the region next week into the weekend. Long range forecasts continue to promote a colder than normal pattern with dense marine layer into early June.

That being said all crops remain ahead of schedule and supply shortages are likely to occur as we move forward, varying by shipper yields and field location. As usual upcoming weather patterns this spring will play a major role in future supplies and quality.

