

the Outlook

California is bracing for a major rain event as a deepening low in the Gulf of Alaska connects with a subtropical low in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. This will provide a near continuous stream of moderate to heavy rainfall to the Central Coast beginning late Saturday into Monday. Current accumulation estimates for this event range from 5-10 inches in the Salinas Valley and 3-5 inches in the Santa Maria Valley with 1-2 inches in Southern California. The storm track brings the majority of the precipitation into the Central Coast with diminishing returns to the south and no rain expected in the desert growing regions. Mid-range forecasts show a brief break before another series of fast moving storms move into California next week. The next significant storm should arrive next Thursday, January 12th into the following weekend. Significant precipitation from previous storms has already saturated the ground and flooding is likely with the amount of rain expected.

While current Desert area production will not be hampered by this system the impacts may be far reaching. Plantings in the transition region (Huron) of Central California are forecast to receive a significant hit (2-4 inches) with this system. Soils already well saturated will not handle this latest onslaught well.

The Salinas and Santa Maria Valleys are in the midst of planting for spring harvest and with the continuous storms plantings will surely be delayed. Fields may become easily inundated especially in the clay soils that make up many of these stands. It can take days, even weeks, for fields to dry out sufficiently for plantings to resume. Long range forecasts keep the storm track open well into January further delaying scheduled plantings.

At the moment we will have to wait and see how the various regions come through the upcoming weather patterns. We will keep a close eye on this major storm as well as upcoming weather trends and keep you up to date as we gather more information.

