

# the Outlook

As we approach summertime harvests Mother Nature has delivered another blow to growers out west. Following many weeks of cooler temperatures and moisture from numerous storms and a strong coastal marine layer the weather pattern took an unexpected, drastic change over the past week. A strong high pressure system brought record high temperatures throughout California. Coastal regions saw temperatures 15-25 degrees above average temperatures. At these extreme temperatures many crops will just shut down for protection, not to mention the heat related damage that will occur in the stands. Spring weather patterns and supplies have been on a roller coaster all year.

Another factor to consider is the heavy rains and warm temperatures throughout the mid-West and Eastern regions impacting regional production. After a slow start due to heavy rains these regions are gradually increasing production. California growers plant less acreage in anticipation of these regional/local supplies however, lesser yields from these regions will increase demand for California production impacting overall supplies.

All cole crops, leaf and lettuces are vulnerable however the tender baby leaf, spinach and spring mix items are especially sensitive to extreme heat. The Coastal regions that supply cole and row crops (Cauliflower, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, lettuces and spring mix etc) saw triple digit temperatures. Not only the heat (how hot it gets) but the duration (number of days) of this heat wave will be a factor in how the numerous crops fair going forward.

As far as the coastal growing regions are concerned (Salinas and Santa Maria) we will have to wait and see how the stands come through the extended warm up. Insect populations are on the rise in the warm temperatures along with mildew fringe burn, internal burn and seeders, likely impacting yields and quality in the near future. Romaine and romaine heart production are susceptible to internal burn problems in these warm and humid growing conditions. Heart material becomes very challenging to produce in these growing conditions. Rapid growth in the warm temperatures causes a thinner textures and shorter shelf life on most upcoming leaf and lettuce stands. Many lettuce stands are showing some mildew and fringe burn issues currently due to warm humid overnight conditions.



# the Outlook

Another concern for growers are the young seedlings, transplants and tender or baby leaf (spring mix, spinach etc) items as these crops are susceptible to extended hot temperatures. Wilt, dehydration and general growing conditions will affect quality and shelf life of these tender leaf items. Processed lettuce products will also show the effects of these growing conditions with lesser texture and shelf life.

The bottom line is that most upcoming crops are likely to be affected to some degree (yields, quality, texture, shelf life etc). Heat related defects will certainly rise as growers do their best to combat the heat. Keep a close eye on inventories and rotation as lesser quality and shelf life are expected over the next couple of weeks at a minimum.

