

the Outlook

As production winds down seasonally in Central California, crops in the region remain ahead of schedule due to prolonged warm, humid growing conditions. Adverse growing conditions throughout the west this fall have lessened yields and quality throughout the state as growers reach for products to meet demand. The generally warm and humid fall in Central California, along with a September rain event, has pushed crops weeks ahead of schedule. These conditions have also caused an increase in seeders, fringe burn, mold, mildew, and other pathogens lowering yields substantially in the fields.

As local/regional fall deals complete their season demand will quickly shift to western production impacting overall supplies. Processors will be on the hunt for product to fill their quota, further lessening available product. As growers are forced to enter these young lettuce and leaf stands ahead of schedule (before optimum maturity), lesser carton weights and head size will be the norm. Broccoli and cauliflower supplies, among many others, are in a similar situation due to warm temperatures advancing growth rates and lowering yields in these stands.

As we approach the transition to desert area fields, crops remain ahead of schedule with moderate yields at best as growers battle seeders, fringe burn, mildew, and insect pressure. This looks to continue through the end of the Salinas season, and the desert regions begin in early November.

Heavy rains during the early plantings in September caused some delays in scheduled plantings in these desert regions. Some fields in the southern regions may have to be replanted due to hail and rains. Damage assessments of these regions are ongoing, but initial reports indicate many early fields were affected. Most recently, powerful winds have impacted the region. All of these factors will create supply shortages and gaps in product as we transition to these desert regions around early November. As always, weather patterns going forward will be a major factor.

