

# PRO\*ACT

CONNECTING FARMS | EMPOWERING KITCHENS™

## Crop Update

*October 1, 2025*

### Field Quality Slips as Salinas Winds Down

As a Salinas Valley native, this time of year is one of my favorites. Warm evenings, cool mornings, and golden sunrises over the hills are what make fall here so special. But even with the beautiful weather, it's also a signal that the growing season is winding down, and this year, it's shaping up to be one of the more challenging finishes we've seen in a while.

Recent rainfall, elevated humidity, and wide swings in daytime temperatures have made things tough in the fields. Iceberg markets jumped sharply after harvests were delayed or skipped due to muddy rows. Some growers are cutting heads earlier than usual to stay ahead of breakdown, which is leading to lighter boxes and inconsistent cartons at the cooler. The heat that followed the rain has only added to the pressure, with diseases like INSV and Sclerotinia showing up in both inland and coastal fields.

Romaine and green leaf lettuce are also feeling the stress. Plants are showing more outer leaf damage, mildew, and signs of weaker structure. Crews are trimming more aggressively at harvest to maintain quality, but that means lower yields and less visually perfect product. Broccoli and cauliflower are dealing with similar challenges. Insect pressure is increasing, especially from diamondback moths and aphids, and pin rot is becoming more common. Post-harvest, value-added shelf life is taking a hit, even with proper handling, as the raw product is just more vulnerable in these conditions.



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Looking ahead, the forecast for Salinas is mostly sunny with cool mornings, but we may see some drizzle midweek. While it doesn't sound like much, even light moisture can keep plant surfaces wet for longer and raise the risk of mildew or decay, especially when paired with warm afternoons.

Meanwhile, Yuma experienced some rain in early September, which caused localized flooding and damage to some first plantings. It's still too early to fully gauge the impact, but the desert transition could be a little bumpier than normal as we move through November. We'll have a clearer picture once the stands mature and crews begin prepping fields later this month. The Huron district is expected to begin harvesting in mid-October. While production there is more limited than in Salinas, early field reports are positive. Quality is looking strong on the handful of items grown there, which could offer a helpful bridge as Salinas winds down and the fall transition begins.

We're encouraging partners to stay flexible and stay close to the field. With these weather swings, careful harvest timing and quicker turns will go a long way in keeping product consistent. The views may be beautiful this time of year, but the work in the field is anything but easy.

