

PRO*ACT

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Crop Update

October 15, 2025

Drizzles and Delays in the West

We're officially in the home stretch of the Salinas season, with most shippers expecting to transition to the desert the week of November 17 fully. That still gives us a few more weeks in the Valley, but conditions in the field are deteriorating quickly. This week's inch-and-a-half of rain, combined with lingering heat and humidity, has only added to the already high pressure from disease and pests.

Earlier this week, the Salinas Valley saw roughly 1.5 inches of rain fall across key growing areas. That amount of moisture, paired with lingering humidity and warm afternoons, is putting additional stress on already fragile fields. Harvest delays, muddy rows, and damage to tender crops are all contributing to lighter yields and inconsistent supply. Even short disruptions like this can ripple through the system when availability is already tight.

Harvest crews are trimming heavily to maintain quality, especially in iceberg, romaine, and green leaf. Yields are down, weights are light, and most lots require extra attention at the cooler. The same holds for broccoli and cauliflower, where disease pressure, insect activity, and pin rot continue to chip away at volume. Even where the product looks fine on arrival, shelf life can be hit-or-miss, especially on value-added items. The window to make a clean pack is getting narrower by the day.



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Meanwhile, the desert is prepping to take over. While Yuma did see some rain in early September and October, most growers were able to adjust plantings. Early reports suggest the stands are a bit uneven in spots, but overall quality is expected to be good with fewer pest and disease challenges than what we've been seeing in Salinas. That said, early-season quirks, but quality and labor-related, will likely show up once harvest begins.

Huron harvest is underway and will offer some short-term relief on leaf items. Early quality reports are strong, but volume is limited and mostly focused on romaine and green leaf.

On the fruit side, strawberries remain tight. Santa Maria and Oxnard growers continue to cull rain-damaged fruit, and overall quality remains a concern with bruising, mildew, and softness showing up. Salinas and Watsonville are on the way out, and we'll be leaning on Baja and Mexico for the next cycle when they start up in November.

Citrus markets are still active. Small-sized fruit remains tight as schools continue to pull on 113s and 138s. Early California Navels are starting to ship, and the size profile is trending larger than last season, which should be a win for retail promotions as we head toward winter.

It's a tricky time of year to navigate, but the key is staying flexible and staying close to your shippers. Whether it's a romaine spec, a strawberry sub, or a lighter-than-normal iceberg box, having the right expectations on the front end will go a long way in keeping orders moving. More than ever, it's about tight turns, good communication, and trusting your suppliers to help you make the best calls for your customers.

