

Crop Update

October 7, 2026

October Starts Hot

October is here, but summer weather is still hanging on out West. Another round of heat has pushed temperatures well above normal across California, adding more stress to crops already trying to finish out a long Salinas season. The Central Coast is still seeing temperatures in the 80s and 90s, with triple digits farther inland before conditions finally cool later this week.

Strawberries are taking the biggest hit right now. Growers pushed hard to get fruit off ahead of the heat, but yields are still dropping and more fruit is being culled. Smaller berries, sunscald, white shoulders, bruising and overripe fruit are all becoming more common, and crews are slowing down to keep packs as clean as possible.

Lettuce remains high on the watch list too. Romaine, Romaine Hearts and the smaller specialty romaine packs are dealing with heavier INSV pressure, and usable yields continue to shrink as Salinas finishes out. What was trailing iceberg a few weeks ago is now starting to catch up.

Huron is scheduled to begin next week, giving the industry another source of lettuce and leaf before the full desert transition in mid-November.



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At the same time, plantings are already underway in the Yuma area. The desert is still hot, with highs around 104 to 105 degrees through Friday, but cooler weather is on the way this weekend. There is also some rain in the forecast. At this point, the Yuma area looks more likely to see light rainfall than anything disruptive, which growers may welcome as a little free irrigation while those young crops get established.

Citrus is making its own transition. California Valencias are winding down and should continue shipping through late October, while the first limited Navel harvests are expected to begin next week. Volume will build over the following several weeks, and that should finally bring some relief on the smaller sizes that have been difficult throughout the Valencia season.

Fall may be on the calendar, but the crops are still dealing with summer weather that won't quit. The next few weeks are about finishing Salinas, getting Huron started and watching the desert crop get established ahead of the mid-November transition.

