



The Outlook

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Crop Outlook

Growers in the Central California region continue to battle low yields in their crops due previous adverse growing conditions. Warmer than average temperatures in late summer, were followed by the roller coaster of temperature variations typical of fall. Growers already ahead of harvest schedules will be hard pressed to meet expected demand. Growers will be reaching for supplies to meet demand, with yields extremely low growers are forced to enter younger cleaner fields ahead of schedule. This will leave less acreage for upcoming harvests keeping many crops especially broccoli, cauliflower and lettuce supplies light through October possibly well beyond. Shipper specific production shortages are likely to impact supplies through the transition to Desert locals.

Current supplies are showing the results of these growing conditions with hollow core (due to rapid growth) showing up in broccoli and to a lesser extent cauliflower stands. Leaf lettuce supplies are showing a leggy or ribby (elongated, bowed, twisted mid ribs) appearance with fringe and tip burn, moderate seeders and lighter hearts and carton weights at pack out. Iceberg production is also well ahead of schedule with lighter carton weights and mildew issues in the fields. With growers weeks ahead of schedule, cooler weather on tap, strong demand and lesser transitional acreage supplies look to remain tight.

Tomato supplies in the various regions have also been impacted by adverse growing conditions. As production from California decreases seasonally quality issues are on the rise in these fields. Lesser yields, quality and size are expected in these late harvests. Recent rains on the East coast have impacted production from Northern Florida (Quincy) and the waning supplies from Alabama, N Carolina and Virginia. Early reports from Central Florida (Ruskin) indicate disease issues in this upcoming crop due to heavy rains during the growing season.

Add to this many growers in Central Mexico reporting crop loss and the need to replant that will likely cause some gaps in supply from this region. Most growers indicate they will start later than normal this winter season. Baja supplies have also been lessened due to rains there. All this adds up to a difficult tomato transition to southern growing regions.

And let's not forget about the freeze in Chile impacting crops from this region. Early reports indicate significant loss in the region.

We will continue to monitor the situation and keep you up to date as we gather the information. Be prepared for shortages and possible loading delays along with lesser texture, quality and shelf life.