

PRO*ACT

Crop Outlook

February 14, 2024

The first in a series of storm systems will move into California today with moderate precipitation mainly across Central California and regions to the north. The next system arrives Friday night into early Sunday with heavy precipitation expected across the state. A third system is expected to move into California Sunday night. This system is forecast to stall over the area forming a cut-off low pressure system that will bring bands of rain across the state into the middle of next week. This may then bring a warm rain event to the desert regions early next week. While these longer-range forecasts can often change, updated forecast now bring much less rain to the Southwestern Desert regions and northern Baja/Mexico than previous forecasts. Warmer temperatures look to move into the Desert regions with morning lows remaining above frost levels into early next week. This will help with recovery and growth rates in the area hampered by previous rains and very cold mornings this week.

The strawberry growing regions of Southern California (Oxnard) will once again be impacted by these upcoming storm systems with 2-4 additional inches of rain expected over the weekend into mid next week. Growers have been stripping and cleaning up fields with some light harvesting in front of the next round of rain. The plants remain strong with good fruit sets and flowers currently.

Iceberg, romaine and leafy green fields continue to exhibit epidermal peeling, blistering and rib discoloration along with increasing reports of weak tip, mildew and bottom rot in current stands. Harvesting crews will be trimming out the outer leaves in an effort to reduce these defects in the box resulting in a smaller head size along with lighter color and carton weights. These supplies will likely continue to show some premature pinking along the rib that tends to show up during transit and storage. Processed leafy green items will also likely see an increase in this pinking showing up in the bag.

The spring mix and tender leaf items will continue to show some yellowing and discoloration along with weaker texture and lesser shelf life due to the rains, hail and morning frost conditions in the region.

Broccoli fields are seeing increasing amounts of brown beads and pin rot along with some branchy crowns in current supplies. Cauliflower supplies are showing generally a creamy color with occasional discoloration and mold spotting at pack out.

It is important to keep your rotations in check as the overall quality and shelf life of most crops will be challenged. We will keep an eye on the upcoming weather and the impact on the various crops to keep you up to date as we gather more information.

