

PRODUCT CONDITION ALERT!

March 10th, 2017

As we move further into the month of March, the desert growing areas in Arizona continues to get warmer and warmer. Temperatures in Yuma are already in the mid 90's. Temperatures that high create adverse growing conditions for most leaf items. This is the time of year when the commercial produce growers from California make their migration back to the Salinas Valley.

This year we are facing an extraordinary set of challenges for growers to make that transition successful. Those challenges are all weather related. As you may know, California has seen historic amounts of rain creating high water dangers for residents and huge delays in crop planting.

The desert growing area is all but done with only a few Growers–Shippers remaining and California is way behind on having crops ready for harvest. Those two situations combined, mean there will be an inevitable shortage of raw product available for shipping. We are already seeing supply issues with Broccoli, Cauliflower, Romaine, and Iceberg Lettuce. There will be more items with availability issues as we get closer to the end of the month. We should expect issues with Parsley, Kale, Spinach, and Napa as time goes on. Berries are holding strong, but as Florida finishes up there is the possibility we see some shortages there as well.

In addition to the availability woes that Produce Industry as a whole is and will be experiencing over the new few weeks, there are also numerous quality related concerns we need to be aware of. Cauliflower can potential have color issues, brown, black, or yellow can be seen. Broccoli could potentially have a purple cast to them. Mildew in lettuce heads will be an issue and light weight cases will be a problem as well. We are seeing concerns about seeders being packed in cases of Napa and insect infestations seem to be a problem as well.

So there is a lot to be concerned about, but there is a light at the end of the tunnel. If all goes well, we should start to see relief from our burdens some time around the end of April. Until then, communication and cooperation are two words that we can't stress enough.