



THE OUTLOOK

After more than a week of very warm temperatures, with numerous record highs over the weekend on the west coast, a cut off low will bring rain to the Southwestern growing regions through tomorrow. This system is currently impacting Northern Mexico and the Southwestern desert growing regions and will drift north into Southern and possibly Central California over the next couple of days. These regions have seen powerful winds (25-50mph) over the past few days as this cut-off low lingered off the Baja coast. Mid-range forecasts bring another cut-off low into the region late this week with another possibly impacting the region early next week. The timing of these systems is particularly disruptive to the strawberry supplies in Southern California set for Valentine's Day demand as intermittent showers are forecast into early next week. Many harvests have been cancelled or remain on standby today in the desert regions as this system slowly moves north and east. This moisture impacting the desert fields will only increase disease, mold and mildew pressure in these stands. Blisters from the freeze will break open (epidermal peel) in the strong winds allowing an easy entrance for pathogens to impact the fields. This in turn will further lessen yields, quality and shelf life in these stands going forward. And let us not forget that most crops are already weeks ahead of schedule due to warm fall temperatures and seed varieties planted. These early season varieties are not adapted to the warmth received this fall. The extended heat this fall increased growth rates while substantially lowering yields in the fields. This may also become a concern for the seedlings planted in the transition area of Central California (Huron) and Salinas set for spring harvests as the recent record heat can disrupt growth cycles affecting these supplies down the road.

Then the extended freezing temperatures that impacted the entire desert region arrived in late December and early January. Growth rates slowed to a crawl while causing extensive freeze damage to the numerous crops in the fields. Overall texture and shelf life will be severely challenged in upcoming supplies. This has impacted all commodities and shippers in the region. Processors looking for product are entering younger fields to meet demand. This along with light yields will only further lessen available product/fields down the road. Growers will be reaching for product leading to supply shortages and gaps moving forward. At this point we will have to wait and see how these tropical systems impact the large growing regions in the line of fire and keep you up to date as we gather more information.