



MIDWEST
FOODS

Spring Transition Update: Arizona moving to Northern California Growing Regions

April 14th, 2023

West Coast growers are currently moving from harvesting in Arizona and Northern Mexico to Northern California in the Salinas Valley and Oxnard/Santa Maria Growing Regions. Depending on weather this transition between growing regions seasonally happens after Easter and then back South again after Thanksgiving. The new regions we are moving to in California have experienced unprecedented persistent rain, ongoing powerful storms and flooding. Quality issues are anticipated over the next couple of months for lettuces, berries, broccoli, cauliflower, celery, and other crops even as we move to these new fresh fields. These extreme weather events create potential for various quality conditions, limited supplies and gaps, and higher prices that we are starting to see now due to slow and delayed start and interruptions in early plantings in California. Additionally, we usually see Southern production overlapping with Northern production as it begins – **which was not possible for this year.**

The delay in transition to California necessitated extended harvesting in Arizona with growers reacting and adding additional plantings to continue the season as long as possible. **We are currently seeing heat damage, rusting, leaf burn and various other quality issues from the crops still coming from Arizona - specially significant rusting and pink discoloration in lettuces.** Even freshly harvested product looks aged due to staying in Southern Growing Region longer and the heat that comes with that. This is an industry-wide issue that all growers have been reacting to and doing their best to work around to have product not gap completely. Again, as we move into California product over the next couple weeks, quality issues are still expected to be evident as Salinas Valley was in the early stages of growth and planting during the ongoing rain and storms.