



# The Outlook

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The last in a series of Pacific storm systems will move to the east today with dry weather on tap for the week end into early next week. The series of storm systems over the past week or so have impacted all Western growing regions with heavy precipitation, strong winds and cold temperatures. It is safe to say that carton weights, quality and shelf life will be compromised for the short term at a minimum. Given the rainfall totals and winds we can speculate as to potential quality. The powerful winds will leave lettuce, leaf and tender leaf items tattered and torn allowing access for disease, mold and mildews to take hold. Humid conditions following the storm will only add to these mold and mildew problems especially in spinach, spring mix and tender leaf items. Water soaked leaves and the saturated ground will lessen shelf life of processed and whole commodity products for the next couple of weeks at a minimum. Not to mention the cold temperatures slowing growth rates to a crawl in these fields putting crops behind schedule. Bottom line is that supplies, quality and shelf life will be problematic for the near term. Future weather patterns will play a crucial role as to how these stands recover throughout the Western growing regions. At this time we will have to wait and see how the various growing districts have come through the recent weather events.

Strawberry growers will begin to strip and cull damaged fruit and flowers in an effort to induce growth to salvageable fruit. Supplies will be light to say the least from Southern California over the next few weeks as these stands recover. Water damage, pin rot, mold, decay, white shoulder and misshapen fruit are likely to be evident when growers re-enter these stands. Traditionally in California February brings the most rainfall and with the El Niño in place in the Southern Pacific we may be in for a few more rounds of heavy precipitation this winter season.

