

GreenGate Fresh Crop Report

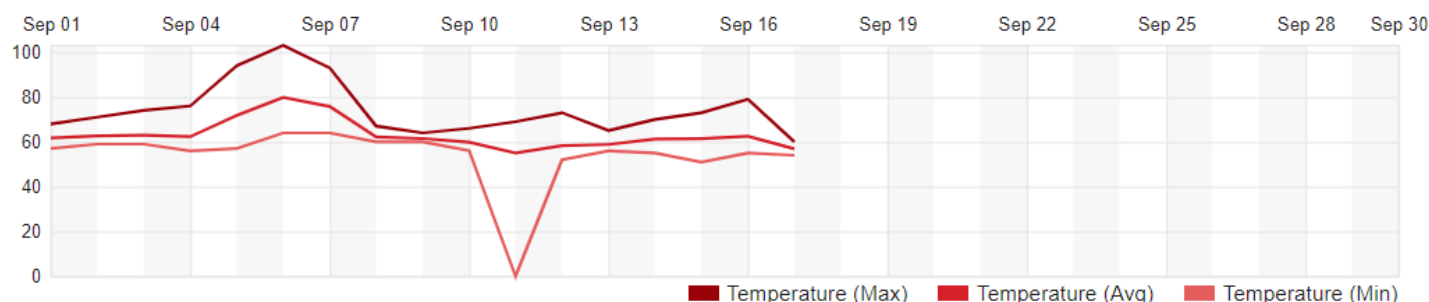


Report Date	9/17/2020
Growing Location	Salinas, CA

Overview

- This report will only touch on specifics for Iceberg, Romaine and Spinach as those are the commodities that are showing the most movement through either quality or market conditions. Broccoli is also having supply issues with relatively few quality issues beyond occasional pin rot.
- The fires in California (and Pacific NW) continue to rage and the effects have been devastating and tragic. We are lucky that the fires near Salinas were contained so quickly, but we remain at risk for another to start.
- There is very little ash or smoke cover in Salinas and the northern valley right now, so we do not anticipate any continued impact of the fires on crops.
- Thankfully the heat wave from last week subsided quickly and was followed by consistent cool temperatures – high 60's to low 80's for the high temperatures throughout the valley. This has helped to keep defects down that arise from sustained high temps.
- As of today, most regions are ahead of historical growing degree units. In Salinas, we are currently 34 growing degree days ahead of historical averages, 21 days ahead of 2018 and 4 days ahead of 2019. This certainly lays out a trend for warming year after year. Other regions such as Watsonville, Soledad, King City are ahead, but not quite as many days as Salinas.
 - **Growing Degree Days** – a calculation to measure the accumulation of heat throughout a day for a given region that gives an idea of when a plant will mature or flower.
- Being so far ahead creates a few issues – crops that were scheduled to harvest next week on planting schedules are forced to be cut early. Further, high GDD + heat waves have created a situation where some crops need to be cut early just to avoid defects or stress related physiological changes in the plants. These off-schedule harvests and quality issues are generating higher market conditions for these commodities as availability of good, mature product is squeezed throughout the region.

Historical Weather (Salinas Airport Station):

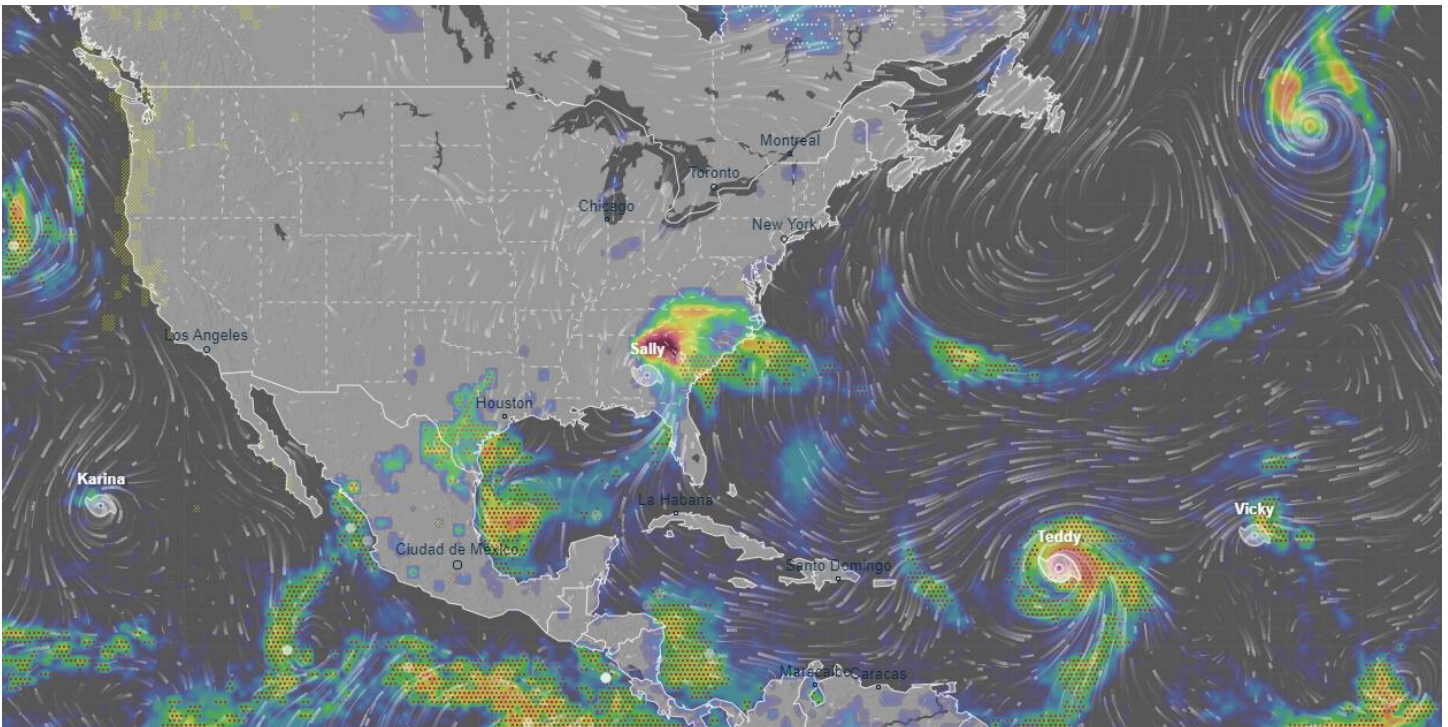


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- We are also keeping an eye on multiple storms brewing as well as the continued impact of Sally in the southeast. We hope that all of our friends, family, distribution partners and customers in this region are safe.
- These storms will not impact production but could impact movement of goods around the country.



- Plantings are also going into Yuma now to get ready for the transition. First large plantings started last week and will continue to increase each week going forward.

Crops Covered This Week:

- Iceberg Lettuce
- Romaine Lettuce
- Spinach

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Iceberg

Iceberg is still showing some of the defects noted last week – burst damage, some small pieces of tip burn, rib blight/rib discoloration and some twisted or elongated cores. With supplies getting tighter, most groups are harvesting a little bit early, which helps avoid heat-related defects but hurts field yields and pushes overall crop inventories in the valley farther away at a point where it's very difficult to plant more to be ready before the end of the season.

Defects in general are a little bit less than last week, but head textures are loose, firm or fairly firm. Cutting less-dense heads also means little to no burst damage. If the weather continues to cooperate, quality will be decent the rest of the season but supplies may continue to be tight depending on how demand shifts with COVID.



Variation in head density for plants in the same area.

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Clean internally



Clean internally. Good, sweet taste with little bitterness.

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Heat stress induced discoloration. When caught, these are removed during harvest or inspection.



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Chopped iceberg in the hopper this morning,

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Romaine

Romaine has also been stretching a little bit, showing elongated cores and more fringe burn. Some tip burn is present, but not as much as we had expected depending on the micro-climate (coastal vs. southern valley).

Similar to Iceberg, some romaine is being cut early to help avoid the development of defects. This will also put a little strain on yields and supplies for the next couple of weeks. Overall, quality is good for this time of the year and the stressors we have seen. However, shippers will continue to rely heavily on their harvest crews to maintain attention to detail and remove those defects that are present but easily caught such as fringe burn and tip burn that can be seen during coring for processed items.



Romaine head before trimming. Smaller head size to help avoid defects depending on region and heat abuse. Notice fringe burn along edges.

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Smaller heads, still with slightly elongated core. Other fields for this week in different micro-climate have larger heads with decent quality.



After top & tail.

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Spinach

Spinach has grown incredibly fast with the heat. The cotyledons are still standing tall when the true leaves are ready to harvest, leading to many of these cotyledons in the raw material after harvest. Appropriate screens are necessary for removal.

The pace of growth, as with other crops, has created lower supplies for Spinach. Crops are being cut before they get out of control and typically 2 to 8 or even 10 days before they were originally scheduled for harvest based on planting schedules. These stretchy spinach leaves can lead to more mechanical damage and will ultimately generate lower yields than expected which will further drive the existing market situation.

Thankfully, since these tenderleaf crops grow so fast, corrections can happen relatively quickly depending on the evolution of those market conditions.

Insect pressures remain lower than expected for this time of the year. Some praying mantis have been seen, lady bugs and moths. Little to no green shield bugs have been seen which is surprising for September. We'll see what happens in October. PCAs are keeping a close eye on tenderleaf fields.



Relatively consistent sizing and decent quality but stretched leaves with longer stems.