

GreenGate Fresh Crop Report

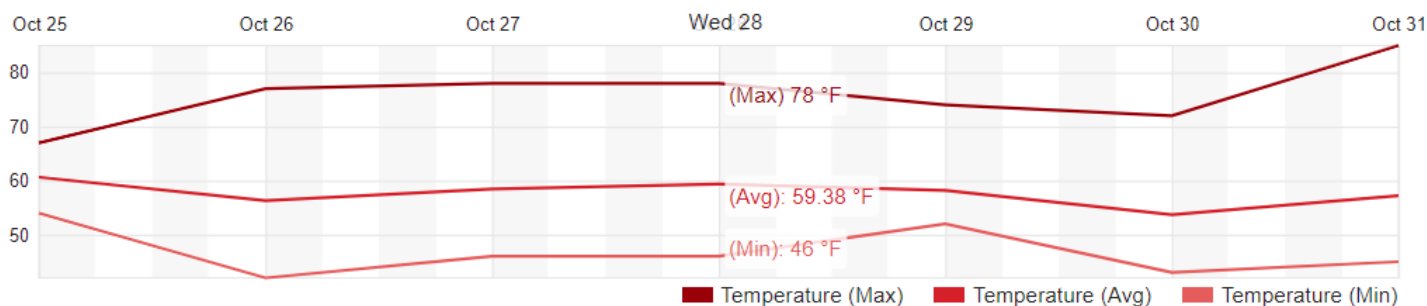


Report Date	11/2/2020
Growing Location	Salinas, CA

Overview

- This will be our last report of the Salinas 2020 season. This Thursday, 11/5, we will be packing up all of our equipment, loading trucks and getting ready for the transition down to Yuma. If you haven't seen the time-lapse video on our website, it gives a good idea of what the move is like for us. The video now needs a little update since we have added much more processing equipment in the last 5 years, but it still shows the general flow of things. Fresh Modern Marvel: <https://vimeo.com/129052926>
- Equipment will be pulled out Thursday and on the road before midnight. On Friday, we begin installing everything as it arrives. Saturday, we test – make sure the belts are going the right direction, water pumps are working, scales and baggers are wired up and chemical injection systems are primed. Saturday night, we turn the plant over to sanitation for a 12-hour period and Sunday morning we start with ~300 swabs for APC, TCC, Listeria spp. and Salmonella spp. during the full pre-operational inspection. Once everything is green-lighted by our QA team, production begins running to start catching up on orders. Monday is the first shipping day out of Yuma.
- As of today, nearly all growing regions around Salinas have either exceeded degree days for a full year or are well ahead of historical averages and the previous two years. It will be critical for us to evaluate how next year begins to unfold as this warming trend continues year over year.
 - 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.
- As mentioned in the last report, being so far ahead creates a few issues – crops that were scheduled to harvest next week on planting schedules may be forced to 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 continuing to generate higher market conditions for these commodities as availability of good, mature product is squeezed throughout the region. Transition regions like Huron are filling some of the gaps, but Yuma may not bring supply back up to 100% as yields remain low in Salinas.

Historical Weather (Salinas Airport Station):

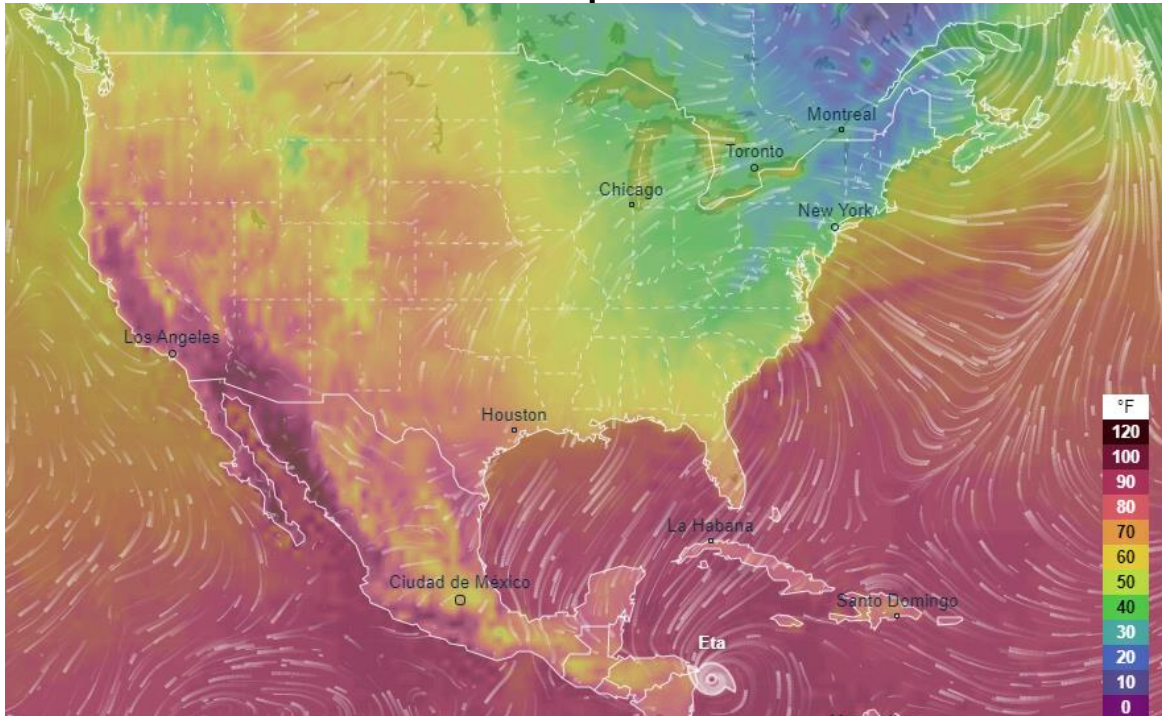


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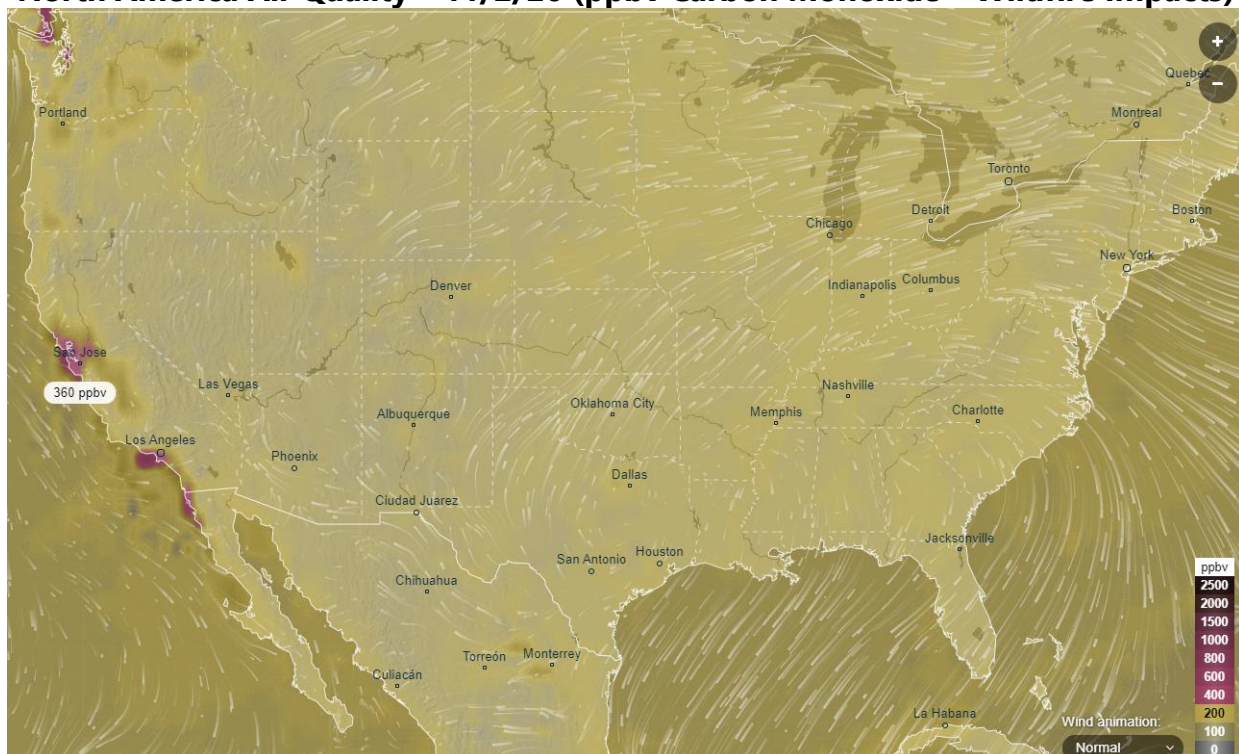


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North America Temperatures – 11/2/20



North America Air Quality – 11/2/20 (ppbv Carbon Monoxide – Wildfire Impacts)



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Crops Covered This Week:

- Iceberg Lettuce
- Romaine Lettuce
- Spinach
- Cabbage
- Kale
- Arugula

Iceberg

The iceberg market remains strong, with prices slightly higher and availability slightly lower. Much of the iceberg being cut now is still very much on the young side with low densities but also low defects. By cutting younger, many of the typical defects seen at the end of the season aren't showing as high percentages such as mildew, tip burn and rib discoloration. There are still fields that are battling the ever-present sclerotinia and other plant pathogens though the cooler temps are helping to keep them at bay.



Low density / fluffy heads. Not much overall weight in the field which makes acres go faster.

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Though young, outer leaves can be seen with some mildew and decay. Heads are clean internally.



Nasty example of bottom rot (Rhizoctonia). Heads like these are left in the field untouched during harvest.

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Though young and fluffy, they still have a good sweet taste. Cores are noticeably shorter than other periods this season.



Chopped iceberg in the hopper this morning,

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Romaine

Romaine continues to show some defects like fringe burn, tip burn and mildew, though not as bad as in July/August. The cores continue to be slightly elongated and taste is moving away from sweet due to the production of phenolic defense compounds by the heads. Insect pressures remain high throughout most of the valley, now concentrated in what little green there is left.

Overall quality is decent for the time of year and supplies have continued to be strained. There will be an infusion of romaine supply into the market once Yuma fires up full-bore, so long as demand remains steady. We will have a crop report for the first fields in Yuma toward the end of next week and will have a better idea of what November/December will do to the overall lettuce quality going into the winter. At the moment, initial reviews bode well for nice transition product.



One of the last romaine fields of the season. Quality is good, though plants have really had a rough summer.

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Good sized hearts for foodservice processing. Nice coloration with a healthy mix of lighter green and yellow.



Split head – Clean internally. Notice the slightly elongated core.

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Chopped romaine from a bag this morning. Color profile is on the lighter side as many of the darker leaves are removed due to fringe burn or minor mildew spots.

Spinach

Spinach has been marching along all season with little to no issue. The heat caused some stretchy, fragile leaves with thin leaf textures but that is mostly gone by now. The temperatures have been ideal for rapid growth without weak cellular structures. Cotyledons are sometimes an issue for baby as they haven't quite laid down yet before the harvest machine comes through.

Insect pressures remain high for all tenderleaf items. There is less and less green for them to feed around, so insects become more concentrated in what is left at the end of the season. The PCAs (Pest Control Advisors) are working hard to keep them at bay with the tools available to them. Beyond that, we employ a number of mechanical and visual removal steps as well as optical sorting and color sorting prior to the flotation tank systems.

We expect the first tenderleaf fields in Yuma to be a little on the fragile side, but still decent quality. More to come next week.

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Beds are clean and sizing is relatively consistent across the field. Good bed prep is critical to maintaining consistent sizing and avoiding the blade hitting the dirt as it rolls down the bed.



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Cabbage

Cabbage is now the crop in the field that has seen the most stress throughout the season due to its very long lifecycle. From the fires, ash deposition and smoke coverage to heat waves and insect/disease pressures, the cabbage has really been tested as one of the heartiest crops. The heads now have varied sizing from grapefruits to basketballs. No matter the sizing, most fields have relatively light heads with elongated cores. With all of the stressors, the taste is slightly on the bitter side. Harvest crews are doing a great job at removing the majority of the core when it is so far into the head. We look forward to starting our Yuma cabbage as it will be much denser and not have gone through the rigorous conditions that the Salinas cabbage has.

At this point, we have intentionally focused on harvesting cabbage that was farther away from the fire that has mostly avoided the 'choking' effect that the smoke and ash have caused on the stomata of the cabbage leaves. In general, we are seeing that respiration levels of cabbage are much higher than normal due to this stomata-plugging effect.



Green Cabbage on the east side of the central portion of the Salinas valley.

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Notice the lower density in the head as well as the elongated core.





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Mature Kale

Kale has done relatively well despite the stress this season. The last cuttings are showing a bit more yellowing in the under-canopy than was seen in the heat of the summer. The texture is also slightly less crisp than earlier in the season but the main stems still have a good snap to them.



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Arugula

Similar to spinach, arugula has done quite well throughout the season. In the heat of the summer there was some flowering, but that is mostly gone now. The leaves have a good texture and size. The rosettes are standing high up and stems are not very stretchy.

