

GreenGate Fresh Crop Report

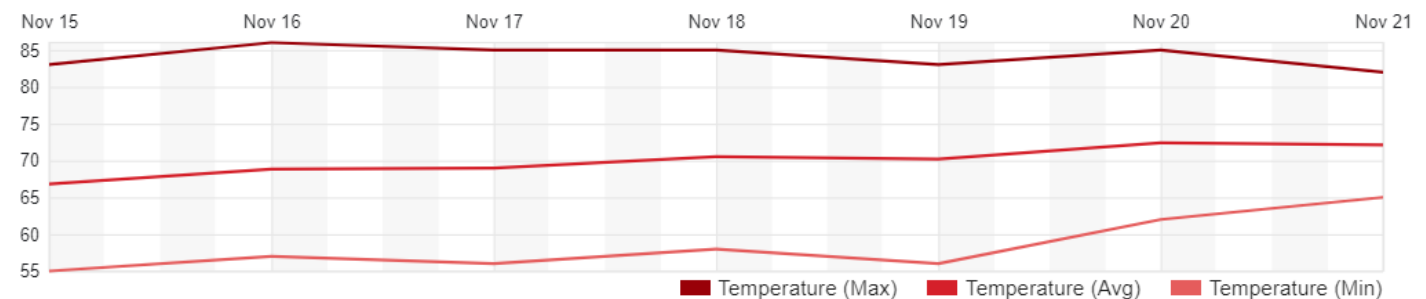


Report Date	11/24/2020
Growing Location	Yuma, AZ

Overview

- This is our first crop report for the Yuma season. This was one of our most successful transitions from a production perspective with nearly every piece of equipment coming back online with zero issues and producing more cases the first day than any previous move. The coordination, planning and execution is truly a feat to behold each season.
- While the facility started up nicely, the rough quality in Salinas and market conditions across the industry followed by an early move to Yuma created a situation where many commodities were in short supply and very young.
- The iceberg market is starting to come down slightly as supply is coming back up with the good weather in Yuma. Romaine is still in relatively short supply and may stay that way if we have a hard freeze in the desert. Spinach and other tenderleaf items are struggling to get up to speed as well, as some heavy winds shortly after planting blew out some fields creating low yields and uneven beds.
- The weather has been relatively cooperative since moving down to Yuma. The temperatures quickly came down to high 70's to mid 80's right after we started up and the nighttime lows have not created too many ice delays in the field over the last couple of weeks. This weekend, we do expect some freezing out east that may cause delays in harvest. Depending on the maturity of the plant, these freezing periods can have effects ranging from only a delayed harvest for the day to heavy epidermal peel for younger romaine plants. As the season goes on, we will keep everyone apprised of how these freezes are affecting quality.

Historical Weather (Yuma Station):

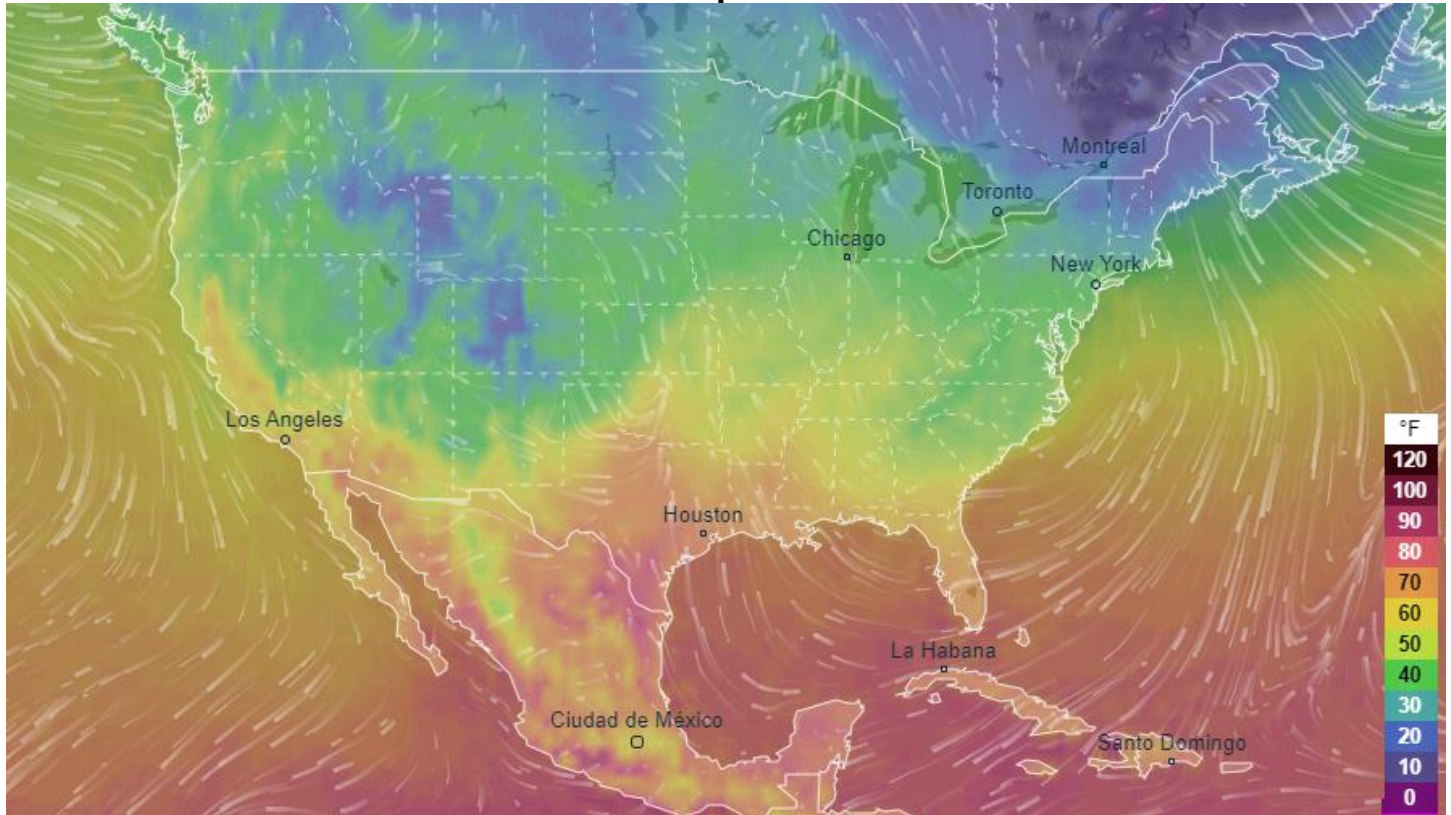


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North America Temperatures – 11/24/20



Crops Covered This Week:

- Iceberg Lettuce
- Romaine Lettuce
- Spinach
- Cabbage
- Broccoli
- Kale

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Iceberg

The iceberg market has been up for quite some time as I'm sure everyone is aware. Supplies are starting to creep back up and the market is coming down slightly over the last couple of days. The first fields in Yuma had some impacts from Fusarium wilt but the fields being cut now are completely out of those issues. Nearly all iceberg being cut since the start of the Yuma season has been relatively small, loose and of decent quality after the fusarium impact. Very few defects are seen at this point, apart from some outer leaf and small core pieces that are difficult to remove with the very small head size. I would expect to be seeing more 'ideal' size iceberg heads by the end of next week as the holiday gives the market a little bit of a rest to allow fields to catch back up. Overall, supply has been the only major challenge for iceberg this transition.

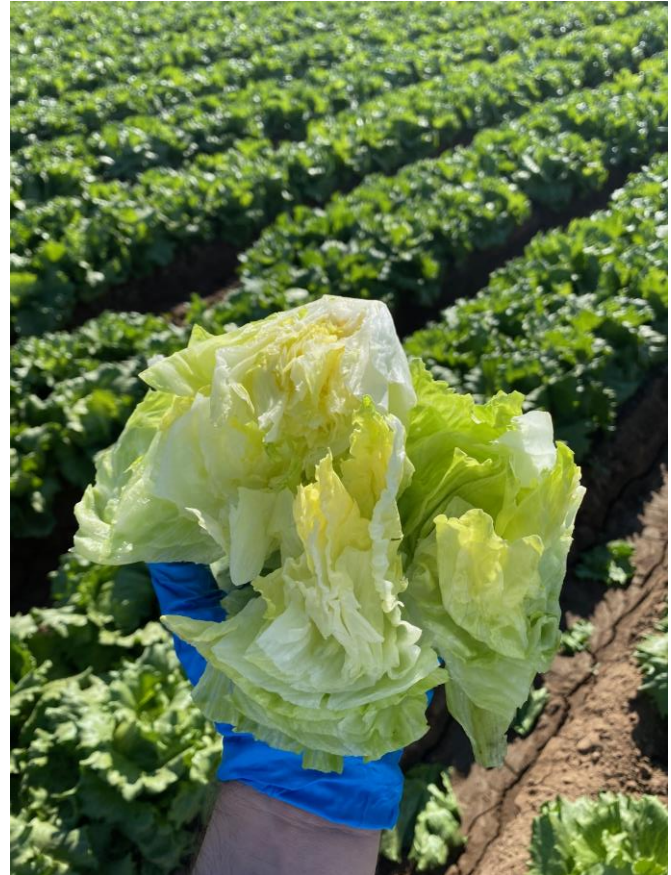


Iceberg field in the Tacna, AZ area – east of Yuma

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Heads are very small, but clean internally and very sweet tasting with no bitterness.





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Romaine

Similar to the iceberg, the romaine is relatively young right now and the color profile is leaning toward medium to heavy green. The younger romaine has a higher respiration rate, so modified atmosphere packaging is adjusted to account for the heavier chlorophyll content. Bags of chopped romaine arriving at DCs and stores may not look quite as tight as the more yellow romaine as the plants inside need some more oxygen over time to settle down.

Defects on romaine have been very limited. The product is of great quality, with the only real issue to speak of being the size. Little to no fringe burn and tip burn have been seen. Similarly, very little mildew present in any of the first fields. So far, we have not had any hard freezes that would create epidermal peel or blistering, but we will continue to keep everyone up to date. The epidermal peel is inevitable and will show up at some point in the winter.



One of the first romaine fields east of Yuma.

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Small, young and bushy romaine. Not much of a heart formed yet so textures also lean toward leafy and less crunchy with minimal rib material.

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Split head – Clean internally. Notice the bushy head and very short core.



Chopped romaine from a bag this morning. Color profile is much darker. The darker leaves tend to show bruising more, which generally goes away after the bag has been opened and rested in a bowl.



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Spinach

Spinach in the desert is in short supply. The spinach that is available is a mixed bag of sizing. Most fields are relatively small, with mechanical harvesting close to the ground to hit all of the stems on the rosettes. The smaller spinach tends to bring in a much higher level of cotyledons (seed leaves) which look like blades of grass but are actually the first leaves to pop out of the seed and give the plant the energy it needs as it sets down roots. The cotyledons can mostly be screened out on the harvest machine and on the wash line, but inevitably, some will sneak through and generate the question, 'Why is there grass in my spinach?'

The smaller sizing means that even regular spinach is closer to a baby spinach size. Also, the younger leaves have grown faster than many of the other spinach fields throughout the year which can lead to more fragile, tender leaves – more mechanical damage, cracked leaves, bruising. The turbidity of the wash lines, levels in the dryer barrels and amount of product placed in hoppers at any point in the process will help to minimize this mechanical damage and bruising.

Note that Arugula and Spring Mix are also having similar issues of inconsistent sizing, but overall quality is good.



Bed of spinach close to Yuma off Highway 95. Notice how close the base of the leaf is to the bed.

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Quality is very good, but sizing has been the only real challenge at this point in the season.

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Photo illustrating sizing, as well as the variation in sizing from the same rosette. All of the leaves on the top came from the same plant with the same blade height. Leaf lengths averaging around 2-3" for now. Sizing will get better quickly as the fields catch up. Depending on the weather, maybe 1 week.



Example of cotyledons. It is important to remove as many as possible, as they are always the first thing to go bad in the bag. These seed leaves are not meant to survive as long as the true leaves.



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Cabbage

Cabbage quality in the desert is looking very good. We came down to fields just reaching their point of maturity, if not a little bit early. Some of the first plantings were left behind completely due to cracked/burst heads. The first cuttings also had a few cracked heads, but they are very easy to leave behind during harvest.

Compared to the cabbage in Salinas, the Yuma cabbage is very dense, leaning on the lighter side of color profile and the heads are full with only slightly elongated cores. Fortunately, these cabbage plants had nowhere near the stress that the Salinas cabbage had with the wildfires and heatwaves. Time will tell how the weather in the desert treats the cabbage this season, but at this point there is no point of negativity in the outlook. Ice will have minimal impacts at the harvest level, but should not create any quality issues in the plant.



Green Cabbage way out east toward Texas Hill, AZ.

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Notice the higher density of the head as well as the slightly elongated core. Heads are relatively small right now but will get bigger within the next few weeks.



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Broccoli

Broccoli markets have also been up. Pin rot and diamond back moths (caterpillars/larvae) were a common sight in the last Salinas fields. The quality down here in Yuma is very good compared to those last fields, though pin rot can be seen very occasionally in some sporadic heads throughout the field. If pin rot is seen at all during harvest, those heads are left in the field and avoided completely. Sometimes it can be difficult to see however.

Hollow core is also present in some broccoli, which can lead to other quality defects over time including brown bead. The hollow cores change the way that the broccoli plant can move water around as well as the vascular pressures within the stem.



Like other commodities, broccoli crowns are quite small right now.

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Mature Kale

Kale in the desert is looking great. The first cuttings are relatively low to the ground but virtually no defects are seen at all. Color profiles are on the darker side, stem diameters are very low and overall leaf structure is hearty. We expect the kale to continue this way throughout the season as they thrive in the desert conditions with lower humidity.



Kale field close to the City of Yuma, AZ

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