



TESTA PRODUCE, INC.

Green by Nature... Greener by Choice



INFORMATIONAL ADVISORY

Date: January 5, 2015

Product: Lettuce & Leaf items

Supplier/Brand: N/A

Valued Testa Produce Customers:

Freezing temperatures in the Yuma desert region as well as the Southern California region this past weekend has made production difficult for all growers in the produce industry. Temperatures continue to reach freezing points through the first week in January. Shippers have been delayed in harvesting commodities like leaf and lettuce by a minimum of four to five hours a day. This equates to almost two full days of production that has been lost for the week. In terms of production, suppliers are down by 35-40% of product they would have normally harvested on the previous mentioned commodities. **The biggest issues on leaf and lettuce are epidermal peel and blister.** Blister is the change in the plant structure that occurs when ice has been subjected to extended periods of freezing. As the cell structure begins to break down, blister starts to appear on the ribs of the leaf and lettuce. Eventually, the blister will pop and air entering the cell structure causes a brownish color.

The weights on romaine and lettuce are off as well. Workers have to peel back layers of leaf so that the blister is not seen so much. Case weights have been as low as 23 lbs. The light weights are industry wide. The cold weather has affected broccoli as well. Pin rot and sporadic browning is being seen as the crown is opened up. Again, all suppliers are having this issue. Cauliflower and celery have been two commodities that have not been hit as hard in terms of quality.

Delayed harvesting however has occurred. Expect all small leaf items to have shorter shelf life, spring mix being an example. Value added items will not have the normal shelf life, especially with leaf and lettuce items so a more expedient turnover in inventory would be prudent. The weather forecast is expected to warm up in Yuma by next week. By Sunday, January 4th, low temperatures are expected to be in the mid 40s-50 degrees with highs in the 70-79 degree range. In the done regions of Arizona, growing areas 30-45 minutes outside Yuma, temperatures will be lower than Yuma but still be warmer than this past week. Currently this dome area is producing leaf and lettuce items as well as other commodities.

For the short term expect quality issues and higher markets. We will continue to monitor the weather situation and keep you all informed of any breaking news.

Thank you,
Testa Produce Quality Assurance