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**Trendspotting: Wintery weather cooling California crops**

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By

Craig Levitt, managing editor

March 1, 2023

Mother Nature continues to play tricks. I mean, who doesn't expect snow in Southern California? Reports from the West Coast suggest the inclement weather is having the biggest effect on commodities such as lettuce, cauliflower, broccoli and celery.

Cauliflower prices specifically are up 8 percent over the previous week to \$32. "In a few weeks, cauliflower markets will shift focus from western Arizona, to central California," said Mark Campbell, founder and CEO of ProduceIQ. "A good bit of price volatility can be expected from cauliflower markets."

He said celery prices are relatively stable despite low supply. "Prices remain relatively stable due to softer demand but have the potential to increase significantly if cold weather continues to plague Western growing regions," he added.

Of course, foul weather isn't limited to California. Cold and wet weather is stunting growth and delaying harvests in Mexico. ProduceIQ reports that asparagus prices are up 40 percent over the previous week and this week's reported Mexican import volume is significantly behind the norm. "Growers are forecasting markets to remain volatile for the next few weeks," Campbell. "However, supply will likely improve with warmer Mexican weather expected in mid-March."

He also said that avocado crossings through Texas are reportedly significantly down. "In response, Hass prices are up to \$27," he said. "Still comparatively low but forecasted to climb higher as Mexican growers enter an annual lull in production."

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## About Craig Levitt |

When his dreams of becoming a professional hockey player came crashing down due to lack of talent, Craig Levitt turned to journalism. He graduated from Hofstra University in 1992 and has covered various areas of the retail food trade since 1996. Craig joined The Produce News in 2017 and is now managing editor. In his spare time, Craig still plays men's league hockey (poorly) and enjoys walking the aisles of his favorite supermarket with his wife and two daughters.

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