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**California cantaloupe crop running slightly late**

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May 3, 2023

California cantaloupe farmers are overjoyed with the amount of rainfall received this winter and for the welcome relief to severe drought conditions that have impacted growing areas for the past several years.

Although rainfall was heavy throughout the winter, cantaloupe-producing districts have not experienced flooding that has impacted other parts of the state. Additionally, California cantaloupe fields had not yet been planted at the time of the state's heaviest rainfall.

California cantaloupe growers are reporting that wet fields and rainy weather definitely delayed planting, particularly in the southern growing districts of the Imperial Valley. This means that promotable volume of cantaloupe from California will likely not be available until Memorial Day weekend, with peak supplies expected throughout the month of June.

Cantaloupe plantings in the major San Joaquin Valley growing regions were also slightly impacted by wet fields. But this is not expected to significantly delay harvest of cantaloupe on the west side of California, which should peak in mid-July as it normally does.

"In short, we know the beginning of California cantaloupe season will be approximately two weeks later than normal this year," said Garrett Patricio of Westside Produce in Firebaugh. "We'll provide updates on the San Joaquin Valley harvest timing as harvest gets closer but, for now, we are not expecting major delays.

"Importantly, we want to remind everyone the [California Cantaloupe Advisory Board](#) operates a robust, mandatory food-safety program that involves government audits of all cantaloupe farmers, packing facilities and cold storage operations," said Patricio, who serves as chairman of the CCAB.

"Like all produce, it's important that only safe water is used to grow cantaloupes. Our program includes mandatory water tests which meet or exceed what is expected when final federal water requirements under FSMA are approved," said Patricio. "We want to ensure our customers that flooded fields have not been an issue for us this year even with the heavy rains."

Further, Patricio noted that California cantaloupe growers have invested heavily in food-safety research for over 20 years and the industry has adopted growing systems that keep irrigation water from coming into contact with cantaloupes in the field.

More information about the CCAB's mandatory food safety program can be found [here](#) along with a [list of companies](#) who have been verified to be in compliance with its stringent standards.

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