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**Trendspotting: West Coast storms expected to damage crops**

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By

Craig Levitt

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The storms on the West Coast are taking direct aim at a multitude of crops, including oranges, green onions, lettuce, leafy greens and strawberries.

While the rain and snow bring life to depleted reservoirs, too much water so close together can cause catastrophic flooding and crop damage. “As the worst storms continue to roll across the West this afternoon, it will be a few days before we know the extent of damage to in-season commodities,” said Mark Campbell, founder and CEO of [ProduceIQ](#).

The inclement weather in California, combined with strong Valentine’s Day demand are pushing strawberry prices in the West up by 15 percent compared to the previous week. “Strawberry prices typically decline sharply through May with a few moments of increased demand, such as these few weeks leading to Valentine’s,” he said.

Despite these significant increases, strawberry markets are still at a 10-year low for week No. 5 and are ripe for promotion. More rain in the forecast for growers in California — as well as Florida — this week will likely cause delays in harvesting and potentially cause damage to unharvested fruit.

There has also been rain in Mexico impacting green onion volume, which at \$27, a 10-year high for week No. 5. “Green onion prices typically experience a dramatic decline this time of year as growers in Mexico and Southern California ramp up production. Weather forecasts are still very wet for growers this week, so expect at least seven to 10 days before volume can fully recover,” said Campbell.

He also said Bell pepper markets are in a demand-exceeds-supply situation on both coasts. “At \$19, average prices are at a 10-year high due to poor (cold and wet) growing conditions in Florida and Mexico. Anticipate at least two more weeks of high prices,” he said.

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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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