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PRO*ACT Crop Update: Arctic blast, wildfires disrupt operations

By

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An arctic blast has brought ice, snow and wind to most of the U.S. and freezing temperatures to the Southeast. Wildfires in Los Angeles County, driven by intense Santa Ana winds, have caused intermittent electricity outages at packing facilities and disrupted Los Angeles operations. Toward the end of the month, melons and avocados face supply disruptions.

Central American melons continue to face persistent challenges. Tropical Storm Sara's impact weighs heavily on cantaloupe and honeydew supplies. Offshore shipments remain extremely limited due to flooding and crop losses. Replanted fields will slightly improve volumes by late January. Still, tight supplies and elevated prices will persist over the next few weeks. Mexican honeydew yields are winding down, and offshore shipments from Central America are minimal. Expect stocks to remain tight with elevated prices through February.

The avocado market is tightening significantly. This month, there is a projected 25-30 percent supply shortage due to reduced USDA inspections over the holidays, weather-related trucking delays and limited yields across major growing regions. Mexican avocados are particularly scarce, with uneven ripening sometimes affecting quality. Colombia is helping to supplement demand on the East Coast, and California production will begin later this month. With Super Bowl Sunday one month away,

surging demand puts even more strain on an already tight market.

Although we're facing some difficult supply challenges, California is reaching peak citrus production. Cara Caras, Bloods, Minneolas, Sumos and mandarins are readily available. Sizing is leaning toward the smaller side, which makes their vibrant colors and sweet, juicy flavors ideal for brightening plates.

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