

Many of you are aware of the reduction of celery supply available from the Oxnard growing area. The growing regions around the Salinas Valley and Oxnard experienced above average temperatures in September and October, causing the plants to mature quicker than anticipated. The positive outcome of the quicker growing cycle was the abundance of celery that was available for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday demand, which typically can be two to five times that of normal. However, our weather pattern shifted in late November and early December and has done the opposite to the celery crop schedule. We are now in the position of dealing with fields that are not mature enough to harvest as the maturing process has slowed, and all potential fields that could have been harvested up to date have been utilized filling the torrential demand of the holidays. We are now in the position of waiting for the fields to mature and climate and time will play a large role in that. We have definitely witnessed a shift in celery sizing over the last few weeks and expect to see it continue into February. Overall weight and sizing is down, making celery sizes of 18s and 24s almost an impossibility.

January has been a challenging month with demand and supplies, as national sporting events in college and professional sports culminate with Bowl games and the Super Bowl. The NHL and NBA are playing as well, adding to the events that are increasing demand to a month that typically is a good one for celery consumption. We anticipate tight market and supply conditions and subsequent prorates throughout the rest of January, and potentially into the first half of February. Periods of warmer temperatures will definitely help the celery grow, but we must be disciplined in our sales and harvest to avoid the position the industry is in now; shortages caused by reaching ahead into fields before they were fully mature to meet demand.

We apologize in advance of any disruption in order fulfillment. We will do our best to update you in any change in available supplies as we move through the month of January and into February.

We appreciate your support and patience.