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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending February 10, 2002

Released 4:00 P.M.

February 11, 2002

WEATHER SUMMARY: Scattered rains fell in many localities during the week of February 3 through 9. However, more rain is needed to ease prolonged dryness in many northern, central and southern Peninsula areas. Homestead, Ft. Lauderdale and Pensacola reported about two inches of rain for the week while Dover recorded about an inch. Other stations measured from traces to nearly an inch while Ft. Pierce reported no measurable rain for the week. Temperatures at the major stations averaged from two degrees below normal at Jacksonville to three degrees above at Miami. Pensacola temperatures averaged five degrees below normal. Daytime highs averaged in the 50s, 60s and 70s while nighttime lows were in the 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture supplies are short to adequate with some west central Peninsula localities reporting very short supplies. Subsoil moisture supplies are mostly short to adequate with very short supplies reported by some west central Peninsula localities. The danger for wildfires is increasing over most of the Peninsula. Sugarcane planting and harvesting remain active in the Everglades.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very short	0	4	0	4
Short	47	47	44	58
Adequate	53	49	56	38
Surplus	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern counties, the condition of cattle is fair to good and pasture is fair. Small grain pastures are looking very good after recovering from earlier hard freezes. In some locations, winter forage is finally coming out. There is high use of hay in some locations this winter. In the central part of the State, unseasonably warm weather has kept pastures producing longer this year. The pasture condition is good and the cattle condition is fair. Recent rains have turned pasture grasses green, however, supplemental feeding of hay continues. Statewide, the cattle condition is fair to good.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very poor	0	10	0	0
Poor	25	20	0	5
Fair	50	65	75	65
Good	25	5	25	30
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: There were several spotty showers with a few good hard rains this week. The east coast citrus counties received 3 to 4 inches in most areas. More rain is needed as growers continue to use irrigation to maintain good tree condition for the upcoming bloom period. Trees in all areas have started to produce feathery new growth with pin head bloom buds. The cool temperatures during the early part of the week reduced the growth rate. Warm weather in the next few weeks could produce an early bloom. Harvest of early and midseason oranges is slowing with some areas depleting their supplies. A few processing plants are limiting loads as the early orange harvest winds down. Valencia harvest is increasing for both fresh and processing. Most of the fresh grapefruit are coming from the lower east coast.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops. Dead trees are being pushed out and burned. Growers are continuing to fertilize to generate new growth for the bloom period. A few resets are being planted in the warmer locations.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Jan 27	Feb 3	Feb 10
Navel oranges	104,000	113,000	122,000
Early & Mid oranges	7,541,000	7,786,000	7,259,000
Valencia oranges	4,000	74,000	118,000
All grapefruit	923,000	1,327,000	1,650,000
Early tangerines	50,000	22,000	11,000
Honey tangerines	178,000	149,000	126,000
Temples	62,000	80,000	119,000
Tangelos	154,000	104,000	94,000

VEGETABLES: Growers around Quincy are preparing land and laying plastic for the planting of spring crop tomatoes. Scattered rains interrupted some planting and harvesting activities with most progressing normally. Vegetables available include tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, celery, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, parsley, potatoes, radishes, snap beans, squash, sweet corn and strawberries.

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In cooperation with the Florida Cooperative Extension Service whose county directors participate in supplying field information.