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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending February 9, 2003

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Slightly warmer temperatures, especially over the southern Peninsula, aided crop growth and development during the week of February 2 through 8. Most temperatures for the week averaged one to two degrees below normal in the major cities except for two to three degrees above at Miami and West Palm Beach. Most daytime highs were in the 60s and 70s with several southern Peninsula localities recording at least one high in the 80s. Nighttime lows were mostly in the 40s, 50s and 60s with most localities reporting at least one low in the 30s. Showers brought nearly two inches of rain to some Panhandle and northern Peninsula areas while several central and most southern Peninsula areas recorded from none to only traces of rain for the week.

FIELD CROPS: Mostly rainy conditions over the Panhandle and most of the northern Peninsula increased most topsoil moisture supplies. Mostly drying conditions over the central and southern Peninsula lowered soil moisture. Topsoil moisture supplies, statewide, are rated mostly short to adequate while subsoil moisture is short to mostly adequate. The southeastern Peninsula reported very short topsoil moisture. Producers are preparing land for planting of spring acreage. Tobacco growers are tending hot beds. Sugarcane harvesting remains active in the Everglades.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	1	1	3	0	0	3
Short	64	54	47	43	35	56
Adequate	35	45	50	57	65	41
Surplus	0	0	0	0	0	0

VEGETABLES: Warmer and mostly dry weather over the major areas of production boosted the growth and development of most crops. Potato digging is getting underway. Vegetables available include snap beans, carrots, cabbage, celery, cilantro, cucumbers, sweet corn, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, miscellaneous herbs, parsley, peppers, radishes, squash, strawberries, tomatoes and very light supplies of potatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Pastures from the Panhandle through the central area are in very poor to good condition. Freezing temperatures and drought are limiting grass growth. In the south, the condition of range is slightly improved, but growth of grass is held back by drought. Statewide, the condition of cattle is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	5	15	0	0
Poor	30	45	5	10
Fair	50	40	60	70
Good	15	0	35	20
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: This was another mild week with cool nights and average days where temperatures got into the upper 60s and lower 70s. However, there was rain on Sunday in most northern areas that brought some relief to the relatively dry citrus groves. Generally, groves are in very good condition in spite of the freezing conditions that covered most counties on the morning of January 24. Trees and foliage are getting ready to start blooming as soon as the temperature warms up. There is currently some feathery new growth showing in a few of the younger groves in the southern and coastal areas. Harvest of early and midseason oranges is slowing as some areas are running out of mature fruit. Fresh fruit packing houses are finding good grapefruit for current shipments. Honey Tangerines and Temples are both being picked for processing and fresh utilization. Tangelo harvest is just about over for this season. A few juice plants are slowing operations with one or two closing for a short period because they are out of early and mid oranges. Most harvesters are waiting for Valencias to get a little more mature.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops for fire protection and prior to harvesting. Dead trees are being cut out of groves and burned. Burn permits are being limited in some of the drier areas near woods. Growers are currently working on and servicing their irrigation equipment for the upcoming bloom cycle and the normally dry spring weather. Fertilizers are being applied in most areas to help generate new growth and bloom buds.

Estimated boxes harvested week ended			
Crop	Jan 26	Feb 2	Feb 9
Navel oranges	121,000	100,000	80,000
Early & Mid oranges	6,458,000	7,068,000	6,346,000
Valencia oranges	10,000	65,000	132,000
All grapefruit	1,293,000	1,357,000	1,779,000
Early tangerines	2,000	6,000	3,000
Honey tangerines	101,000	125,000	93,000
Tangelos	142,000	87,000	33,000
Temples	88,000	125,000	165,000

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