



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service  
1222 Woodward Street  
Orlando, Florida 32803  
407 / 648-6013

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>

# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending April 20, 2003

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April 21, 2003

**FLORIDA  
AGRICULTURE**



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Warm, dry conditions prevailed during the week of April 14 through 20. Temperatures in the major cities averaged from normal to four degrees above. Daytime highs were in the 80s. Nighttime lows were in the 50s and 60s with Tallahassee recording at least one low in the 40s. Most localities recorded no measurable rain for the week. Some central and southern Peninsula areas reported from traces to about a half inch of rain for the week with West Palm Beach reporting almost two inches falling.

**FIELD CROPS:** Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are short to adequate in the Panhandle and mostly adequate in the northern Peninsula except for a few pockets of short and surplus supplies scattered over the region. Central Peninsula soil moisture is mostly adequate with a few localities reporting short moisture. Southern Peninsula soil moisture supplies vary from very short to surplus depending on the amount of rain received recently. Corn planting and tobacco transplanting remain active in northern and Panhandle areas with the drier weather allowing producers to speed up the preparation of land for peanut and cotton planting. Sugarcane harvesting is finished with the last mill running, expected to close within the next two days.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	1	1	2	0	0	1
Short	34	8	28	30	4	37
Adequate	55	80	69	65	93	62
Surplus	10	11	1	5	3	0

**VEGETABLES:** Northern growers are planting peppers, melons and other vegetables. Harvesting was very active to meet the holiday demand. Potato digging is getting underway in the Hastings area with some yield reduction expected in fields flooded by the earlier heavy rains. Blueberry picking is slowly gaining momentum in southern areas. Cabbage harvesting is slowing seasonally. Other vegetables available include carrots, celery, cucumbers, sweet corn, eggplant, peppers, potatoes, radishes, squash, tomatoes, and light supplies of endive, escarole, lettuce, and okra.

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** Drought in some Panhandle and northern county locations held the pasture condition to good. In the Panhandle, pasture condition is good to excellent, with the cattle condition mostly good. In the northern areas, cattle

condition is fair to good, with pasture in fair to good condition as well. Weed control and pasture fertilization is active. In the central and southwestern counties, condition of cattle and pasture is mostly good. Statewide, cattle condition is mostly good.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	0	0	0	0
Fair	40	20	15	25
Good	55	70	85	75
Excellent	5	10	0	0

**CITRUS:** There was an abundance of warm, spring sunshine this week in all areas of Florida's citrus belt. Daytime high temperatures were in the mid to upper 80s with only a few scattered showers. Growers and caretakers are continuing to irrigate in all areas so that they may maintain good tree condition during the current fruit set period. There is still an abundance of new growth showing on trees of all ages. Valencia harvest is very active in all areas with the majority of this late fruit going to the processors. Fresh fruit packing houses are still running both colored and white grapefruit. The juice plants are still taking both colors of grove-run grapefruit. Movement of Temples and Honey tangerines is just about over for this season.

Caretakers are very busy mowing, chopping, and discing cover crops for fire protection. Hedging and topping continue in many harvested groves in all areas. Dead trees are still being pushed and cut out and burned so that the land can be prepared for new plantings. Postbloom nutritional sprays are still being applied to the groves that had a little later bloom period. Spring herbiciding has been reported in all areas.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Apr 6	Apr 13	Apr 20
Valencia oranges	6,913,000	6,743,000	6,942,000
All grapefruit	1,679,000	1,255,000	863,000
Honey tangerines	122,000	115,000	107,000
Temples	12,000	8,000	1,000

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