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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending April 27, 2003

Released 4:00 P.M.

April 28, 2003

**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Scattered rains eased drying conditions in some areas during the week of April 20 through 26. Rainfall ranged from about a half inch to over four inches. Most localities received about an inch of rain for the week. Temperatures averaged from one degree below to one above normal in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s while nighttime lows were in the 50s, 60s and 70s. Several stations recorded at least one low in the 40s.

**FIELD CROPS:** Moisture supplies declined with topsoil supplies rated mostly short to adequate and subsoil supplies rated short to mostly adequate. Central and southern Peninsula areas report some very short moisture supplies while some surplus supplies still exist in the Panhandle. Peanut planting is underway with two percent planted. Some peanut producers are delaying planting to avoid disease infestation. Cotton planting is active in the Panhandle. Most corn growers finished planting. Sugarcane harvesting is finished. Hay making is active in drier areas of the Peninsula.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	10	1	2	5	0	2
Short	55	34	65	40	30	57
Adequate	30	55	33	55	65	41
Surplus	5	10	0	0	5	0

**VEGETABLES:** Watermelon picking is underway with very light supplies available. Tomato harvesting is increasing seasonally as more west central area growers start to pick. Other vegetables available include cabbage, cantaloupes, carrots, celery, cucumbers, sweet corn, eggplant, peppers, potatoes, radishes, squash, and light supplies of endive, escarole, lettuce, and okra.

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** Cattle condition is fair to good. Pastures are fair to mostly good in the Panhandle and mostly fair to good across the Peninsula with very few reports from the Panhandle and southern Peninsula reporting poor pastures.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	15	0	0	0
Fair	25	40	50	15
Good	60	55	50	85
Excellent	0	5	0	0

**CITRUS:** Most of this week was warm and dry, however Friday and early Saturday morning there were a lot of hard rains and thunderstorms. Varying amounts and sizes of hail fell in scattered locations. Rainfall totals were in the one to five inch range with the larger amounts falling in some of the west coast counties. Up until the weekend, growers and caretakers had been irrigating around the clock to keep their trees in good condition during the current fruit set period. Some trees have already started dropping the excessive fruit they cannot carry for next season. Harvesting crews were very active this week moving large quantities of Valencia oranges to the processors. Some of the juice plants are closing for the weekends so that they can run longer hours more efficiently during the week. Movement of both colored and white grapefruit continues to slow down as supplies run low in most areas. Several of the fresh fruit packing houses on the lower east coast have closed for the season as they have run out of good marketable fruit. The last of the Temples are being picked, most of which are being processed. Honey Tangerines are just about over for this season.

Caretakers are very busy mowing, chopping and discing cover crops. Postbloom nutritional sprays are generally complete and the second time around sprays are underway. Hedging and topping continue in harvested groves with most of the debris being cut up with bush hogs. Dead trees are being removed and burned. New trees are being planted where there is sufficient irrigation to keep the trees alive until the summer rains arrive.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Apr 13	Apr 20	Apr 27
Valencia oranges	7,429,000	6,942,000	6,697,000
All grapefruit	1,000,000	1,183,000	697,000
Honey tangerines	122,000	107,000	85,000
Temples	9,000	1,000	0

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