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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending September 19, 2004

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September 20, 2004

WEATHER SUMMARY: During the week of September 13 through 19, Hurricane Ivan spun off tornadoes in the Panhandle in addition to dumping torrential rainfall. Some outer bands of rain from Ivan fell in scattered areas of the Peninsula with some localities escaping the effects of the storm. Several stations recorded less than a half inch of rain for the week with a few localities reporting under a tenth inch of rainfall, such as Apopka, Dover, Fort Lauderdale, Fort Pierce, Immokalee, and Pierson. Many areas in the Panhandle received more than four inches with Graceville reporting five inches for the week. Temperatures averaged from one to three degrees above normal. Daytime highs were mostly in the low 90s with a few reports in the high 80s. Nighttime lows were in the 60s and 70s. Intense winds tossed crops and heavy rains flooded fields in areas affected by the storm.

FIELD CROPS: Soggy soils are slowing peanut digging in the Panhandle with producers unable to put heavy equipment into fields. A small acreage dug for drying but not harvested has vines rotting due to the excessive moisture. Some older peanut fields not yet dug are nearing the sprouting stage. Peanut condition is rated 25 percent fair, 35 percent good and 40 percent excellent. Heavy rains and strong winds from Hurricane Ivan damaged cotton with growers currently assessing losses. The storm delayed hay making and corn harvesting. The recent tropical storms caused heavy losses to pecans in Jefferson County. Most topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are surplus in the Panhandle and adequate to surplus over the Peninsula. Short to very short soil moisture is reported in some spots of Seminole and Broward counties.

VEGETABLES: Okra harvesting remains active in Dade County. Field preparation for vegetables continues in the central and southern Peninsula localities. Producers are evaluating damage to tomatoes in the Quincy area caused by the recent tropical systems.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, pasture is poor to good, with rain from Hurricane Ivan filling low spots in pastures. In the north, pastures are in fair to good condition. Armyworms are active in hay fields and pastures. Land preparation for fall forage planting has begun. In the central areas, condition of cattle decreased from the previous week, with most now in fair condition. In the southwest, pastures have improved considerably from last week, with most now in fair to good condition. Statewide, cattle are mostly fair to excellent condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	5	5	0	0
Poor	5	20	0	0
Fair	50	60	45	25
Good	25	10	40	60
Excellent	15	5	15	15

PERCENTAGE OF PEANUTS HARVESTED TO DATE

This year	25%
Last year	26%
5 - year average	26%

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	1	0	1	0	0	0
Short	1	1	13	1	1	10
Adequate	33	29	60	29	31	64
Surplus	65	70	26	70	68	26

CITRUS: Summertime weather conditions prevailed over the state with high temperatures in the 90s on most days. Rainfall was variable over the state with some areas receiving heavy showers and other areas lighter amounts. Lakes and rivers continue at high levels but are receding in some areas. Groves hard hit from both hurricanes continue to drop fruit as growers assess damage and move downed trees to provide access to groves. Growers are still moving excess water from groves in some areas. Summer sprays are being applied to crops designated for fresh use as rainfall permits. Some packinghouses are testing grapefruit for maturity to begin limited harvest. Fallglo tangerines are beginning to show slight color break.

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