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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending October 3, 2004

Released 4:00 P.M.

October 4, 2004

**FLORIDA  
 AGRICULTURE**



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Drier conditions over most of the Peninsula and Panhandle localities allowed field work to progress rapidly during the week of September 27 through October 3; however, some fields are still saturated with water from Hurricane Jeanne. Most reports indicated from less than a tenth of an inch to over two and half inches of rain for the week. Several localities such as Apopka, Fort Pierce, Jay, Lake Alfred, Live Oak, Marianna, Ona, Quincy, and Tavares reported no rainfall while three to five inches was reported in Citra, Jacksonville, Tampa, and West Palm Beach. Temperatures for the major cities averaged from one to three degrees above normal, with Jacksonville six degrees above normal. Daytime highs were mostly in the 80s and crept back up into the lower 90s in some localities. Nighttime lows remained in the 60s and 70s.

**FIELD CROPS:** Continued dry conditions over most of the Panhandle helped the recovery of cotton from tropical storm damage, and allowed growers to speed up the digging of peanuts. Younger cotton acreage shows less loss from the recent tropical storms. Washington County peanut growers are reporting good yields as harvesting proceeds at a rapid pace. Peanut condition is rated two percent poor, seven percent fair, 90 percent good and one percent excellent. Some hay quality decreased because of recent excessive rainfall with producers continuing to bale as fields dry out. Some corn acreage was lost in Washington County due to the recent tropical storm. Drier weather during the week allowed soils to dry in some Panhandle and southeastern Peninsula localities. Short to very short soil moisture was reported for areas in Dade, Broward, Holmes and Washington counties. Elsewhere, soil moisture is adequate to surplus with many low lying areas still too wet to support heavy equipment.

### PERCENTAGE OF PEANUTS HARVESTED TO DATE

This year	50%
Last year	59%
5 - year average	56%

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	1	0	1	1	0	0
Short	19	0	12	14	0	9
Adequate	45	60	61	45	50	61
Surplus	35	40	26	40	50	30

**VEGETABLES:** Harvesting of vegetables is expected to begin up to three weeks later than traditional schedules due to hurricane Jeanne. Tomato picking is slowly increasing around Quincy including very light amounts of grape and plum tomatoes. Okra harvesting is active in Dade County. Other crops available include very light supplies of pickles and Bell peppers.

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** In the Panhandle counties, condition of pasture is good to excellent. Land preparation for small grain winter forage is active in the Panhandle and northern areas. In the central area, low lying pastures flooded. Excess moisture from hurricanes is reducing forage quality. Cattle condition is lower because of reduced forage quality. In the southwest areas, condition of range is mostly fair. Damage from the recent hurricanes is still being assessed. Statewide, cattle condition is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	5	0	0	0
Poor	20	5	1	0
Fair	35	15	34	5
Good	35	45	60	75
Excellent	5	35	5	20

**CITRUS:** After the passage of the third major hurricane this summer, weather conditions returned to more normal patterns, high temperatures and humidity and scattered rainfall. Rainfall amounts during the week were generally light and widely scattered. Lakes and rivers continue at high levels but are beginning to recede after this week's lighter rainfall amounts. Groves hard hit from the 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 and limited shipments have started.

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