

KATRINA DAMAGED CROPS, DELAYED FIELDWORK

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Hurricane Katrina brought strong wind and rain to the extreme western Panhandle early in the week of August 29 through September 4. Preliminary rainfall totals for the week ranged from about a quarter inch in Balm to five inches in West Palm Beach. Avalon, Immokalee and Lake Alfred recorded over two inches of rainfall for the week. Nearly four inches of precipitation was reported in Umatilla. All other localities received from traces to over an inch of rainfall. Temperatures at the major stations averaged one to three degrees above normal. Daytime highs were mostly in the 90s. Evening lows were in the 60s and 70s.

FIELD CROPS: Strong winds and abundant rain from Hurricane Katrina on Monday, August 29, damaged cotton, corn and peanuts in the extreme western Panhandle. Katrina's rains leached fertilizer from cotton fields and washed away pesticides resulting in an increase of insect populations. Santa Rosa County expects a 15 to 20 percent peanut yield loss, and a 30 percent cotton yield loss. Peanut condition deteriorated slightly in wetter areas but improved in drier localities. Statewide, peanut condition is rated 1 percent poor, 29 percent fair, 50 percent good, and 20 percent excellent. Peanut digging got underway in the oldest fields with producers to begin harvesting the majority of acreage after mid-month. Wet conditions increased the incidence of disease in many peanut fields due to pesticides washing away. In Santa Rosa County, cotton condition is fair with Katrina's winds blowing plants for over 15 hours. In areas affected by the storm some leaf loss occurred with remaining leaves being wind-burned. Small cotton bolls were blown off plants and some larger bolls are dangling from stalks. Some cotton is on the ground in the oldest fields that had bolls beginning to open. Katrina severely damaged the corn crop in Santa Rosa County which had suffered from Hurricane Dennis. In Jefferson County, the storm caused pecan trees to drop some nuts. Drier weather in Madison County allowed hay producers to resume baling while soybeans remained in very good condition. In wetter areas, armyworms in hay fields continued to be a problem with growers unable to spray pesticides for control. Growers in areas experiencing wet conditions for most of the summer suffered significant losses of hay production. Rains over the Panhandle and the central and southern Peninsula increased topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies. However, dry weather over the northern Peninsula kept moisture supplies short to mostly adequate.

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Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	1	0	4	0	0	1
Short	14	23	6	10	16	9
Adequate	65	68	54	70	73	56
Surplus	20	9	36	20	11	34

VEGETABLES: Favorable weather conditions around the Palmetto-Ruskin area allowed growers to remain on schedule with tomato planting active. Most growers expect to begin planting peppers and cucumbers within the next week. Unfavorable weather conditions around Quincy had a negative impact on the development of the tomato crop. Some fields in Dade County are still saturated with water from Katrina, delaying field activities by at least two weeks. When fields drain producers will begin planting snap beans, eggplant, peppers and tomatoes. Dade County growers continue to market light supplies of okra. Field preparation for vegetables is active in central and southern Peninsula localities, where drier conditions exist.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, pasture condition is mostly good. In the northern areas, the pasture condition is poor to excellent with the poor pasture suffering from drought. In the central areas, pasture is in poor to excellent condition with the poor pasture suffering from flooding. Armyworms are damaging pastures in all areas except the southwest. In the southwest, pasture condition is mostly good. Statewide, the condition of cattle ranges from poor to fair, with most in good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last Week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	5	5	0	0
Fair	40	40	10	15
Good	50	50	75	75
Excellent	5	5	15	10

CITRUS: The first part of the week was hot and humid with temperatures reaching the low to mid 90s in all areas. Ft. Pierce had a record-breaking day on Tuesday at 94 degrees. The hot weather over the past several weeks prompted some caretakers to irrigate to keep trees in good condition. All areas of the citrus belt received some rains during the week ranging from two and a half inches in Lake Alfred to less than a quarter of an inch on the west coast. Fruit and trees continue to look good. Fertilizing, spraying and young tree care continued. Some grove workers are busy removing vines and overgrown weeds out of groves. Grove access is limited in some areas due to the canker eradication program.

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