



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

WEATHER CROP



Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
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Week ending March 30, 2008

COLD FRONT SWEEPS THROUGH STATE

WEATHER SUMMARY: Cooler temperatures and wind gusts swept the State last week with scattered showers in areas of the central and southern Peninsula. Crops in Wauchula, Trenton, and Suwannee Valley reported sustained wind damage toward the end of the week, but extent of the damage remains to be determined. Precipitation of more than two inches fell in Alachua County and more than half an inch was spotted in Hardee and Hillsborough counties. Low temperatures in the major cities ranged between the 20s and 60s; high temperatures in the 60s, 70s, and 80s. Daytime lows were in the 20s, 30s, and 40s; highs in the 70s and 80s.

FIELD CROPS: Palatka's potato crop planted in January was in full bloom. Peanut planting was underway in Washington County. No rain and strong winds dried out topsoil in Okaloosa County. Soil moisture was mostly short to adequate in the Panhandle and central Peninsula, very short in the Big Bend, and short in the southern Peninsula.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last Week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	3	15	61	6	6	56
Short	37	27	33	38	46	33
Adequate	59	56	6	56	46	11
Surplus	1	2	0	0	2	0

VEGETABLES: Farmers continued their spring planting, while winter harvest was winding down. Overall, crops looked good across the State. Harvesting of beans, corn, squash, and tomatoes continued in Florida City. Fort Myers continued harvesting collards, peppers, cabbage, and squash. Cucumbers continued to be replanted in Fort Pierce, while growers are just beginning to plant in Gadsden. Palatka reported harvesting of cabbage, collards, and broccoli. Onions were also harvested in St. Johns County. A few farmers were winding down their strawberry harvest in Plant City. In Starke, the strawberry harvest was at its peak. Some early vegetables were lost in Santa Rosa County during the cold snap on Easter weekend. Other crops marketed during the week were celery, sweet corn, eggplant, endive, escarole, radishes, and tomatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition was very poor to excellent with most in fair condition. Pasture condition was negatively affected first by freezing temperatures and then by dry, windy, unseasonably warm conditions. Warm season perennial grass was doing better but cool season forage growth was depressed. The condition of cattle was mostly fair. In central areas, pasture condition was very poor to good with most in poor condition. In Marion County, pasture growth has been very slow, evidently due to the cool nighttime temperatures. In Pasco County, pastures have greened up and the cattle seemed to be in good condition. In the southwestern areas, pasture was very poor to excellent with most fair. In Hendry County, rains over the Easter weekend greatly aided the spring pasture growth and resulted in standing water in places. Statewide, the cattle condition was very poor to good with most in fair condition.

Condition	Cattle		Pasture	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	10	10	15	20
Poor	15	25	20	40
Fair	45	45	40	25
Good	30	20	23	14
Excellent	0	0	2	1

CITRUS: Rainfall in citrus producing areas ranged from three quarters of an inch in Ona to no rainfall in Lake Alfred and Immokalee. Mornings continued to be cool, mostly in the high 30s and low 40s. Afternoon temperatures have been warm for this time of year reaching the mid-80s in most areas. The rainfall had been helpful for the spring flush of new growth and bloom. Well-cared-for groves were reported in excellent condition. Grove maintenance was in full swing with spraying, mowing, hedging, topping, and fertilizing taking place. Growers, caretakers, and field personnel were reporting new growth flush with a uniform bloom on both oranges and grapefruit. Sizes on grapefruit have been relatively small and pack-out amounts were declining. Fresh export sales for both grapefruit and tangerines were slowing. Varieties being harvested included early, midseason, and Temple oranges, increasing amounts of Valencia oranges, grapefruit, and Honey tangerines.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED - WEEK ENDED			
Crop	Mar 16	Mar 23	Mar 30
	<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>		
Early and Mid oranges	1,256	504	78
Navel oranges	4	2	2
Temples	42	100	90
Valencia oranges	2,339	3,725	5,272
Grapefruit	1,347	1,267	1,326
Sunburst tangerines	1	0	0
Honey tangerines	172	134	213
Tangelos	9	4	10

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