



WEATHER CROP



Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
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Week ending February 8, 2009

COOL WEATHER RETURNED

WEATHER SUMMARY: Major cities averaged highs in the 50s and 60s; lows averaged mostly in the 30s and 40s. Maximum daytime temperatures reached the 70s with minimum temperatures ranging from the teens to the 30s. Temperatures averaged 8 to 11 degrees below normal. The coldest weather came mid-week as nighttime lows dropped below freezing again in many areas. Precipitation was more plentiful than in recent weeks. Central Florida reported the highest rain amounts; most areas received from 0.25 to 1 inch. Nearly all locations in the northern and southern Peninsulas received between a tenth and a quarter of an inch.

FIELD CROPS: Growers finished potato planting in Putnam, St. Johns, and Flagler counties; plants already in the ground suffered some freeze damage. The planting of pine trees continued in Taylor County. Varying levels of damage were reported for sugarcane. Topsoil moisture was mostly short to adequate; subsoil moisture levels were short in the Big Bend and central Peninsula, but adequate in the Panhandle and southern Peninsula. Drought conditions in some areas have delayed field work.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	4	5	15	12	16	11
Short	36	29	37	30	23	35
Adequate	59	65	48	55	60	51
Surplus	1	1	0	3	1	3

VEGETABLES: The second freeze of the winter caused many growers to once again protect crops from the wind and cold. The health of some vegetables had already declined due to the freeze in January. The combination of the two freezes caused a decrease in the movement of vegetables such as beans, cucumbers, peppers, eggplant, strawberries, tomatoes, and squash. Losses to strawberries and greens were reported in Washington County. Strawberry and blueberry blooms were damaged in Bradford and Putnam counties. Tomatoes were recovering in Manatee County. Planting of cabbage wrapped up in Flagler County and only minor damage to the crop was reported. Growers in Fort Meyers reported that their greens and cabbage had very little damage. Other vegetables marketed last week were avocado, okra, greens, broccoli, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, endive, escarole, and radishes. Preparations for spring vegetables were still underway.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition was very poor to excellent with most very poor to poor. In Gadsden County, drought, cold, and freezing temperatures hurt forage production. In Leon County, winter forage for horses, cattle, and goats was degraded by the cold, dry air, and the freeze. In Jefferson County, winter grazing benefited from the previous week's rain. In Santa Rosa, pasture and stock ponds were stressed by drought. In Washington and Columbia counties, cool season forages (oats, wheat, and ryegrass) were set back considerably due to the cold. Cattle condition was poor to excellent with most fair. Supplemental feeding with hay and minerals was the primary feed. In the central areas, pasture condition was very poor to good with most very poor to poor. Forage growth was completely shut down as a result of freezing conditions. In Osceola County, cold snaps and frost have done major damage to forage. Cattle condition was mostly good. In the southwestern areas, pasture was poor to good with most in poor condition due to drought and cold. The condition of the cattle in the southwest varied from poor to excellent, but most was fair. Statewide, cattle condition was poor to excellent with most fair to good.

Condition	Cattle		Pasture	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	0	10	20	25
Poor	20	10	45	40
Fair	35	50	25	30
Good	35	29	9	5
Excellent	10	1	1	0

CITRUS: The first full week of February began in a fashion similar to that of late January as cold fronts and freezing temperatures returned to the State of Florida. Tuesday, the National Weather Service called for a hard freeze warning in many citrus-producing counties. Citrus growers took preventive measures to lessen the impact to their citrus crop through irrigation. The State of Florida relaxed weight restrictions for citrus trucks, which allowed growers to increase their load size and speed the harvest. Mid-week the freezing temperatures returned with minimal precipitation. Early morning lows ranged from 18 degrees in Brooksville, mid 20s in Arcadia, to 23 degrees in Palmdale. Widely scattered reports from the groves indicated some fruit and tree damage. Weather returned to normal over the weekend with seasonal temperatures reported. Trees that survived the recent freezing temperatures appear to be healthy in the well-cared-for groves. New bloom and growth has not been seen thus far. Caretakers were fertilizing, hedging, irrigating, and removing brush while others are taking a more proactive approach to greening by pushing affected trees. The Honey tangerine harvest was over 100,000 boxes last week and is expected to hold constant for the next several weeks. Grapefruit increased to over one million boxes while the early and midseason orange harvest was expected to continue at around the five million box level until the crop is fully harvested in early to mid-March. Varieties being harvested included early, midseason, Navel, Temple, Valencia oranges; grapefruit; Sunburst and Honey tangerines and tangelos.

Estimated Boxes Harvested - Week Ended			
Crop	Jan 25 ^{1/}	Feb 01	Feb 08
	<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>		
Early and mid oranges (including Ambersweet)	5,286	5,837	6,089
Temples	19	18	24
Navel oranges	52	34	13
Grapefruit	695	863	1,014
Tangelos	47	60	79
Sunburst tangerines	14	3	2
Honey tangerines	107	85	136
Valencia	0	0	4

^{1/} Excludes Monday, Feb 19. Six-day week for comparison purposes.

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