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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending May 27, 2001

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**FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE**



WEATHER SUMMARY: Scattered showers brought varying amounts of rain during the week of May 20 through 26. Dover reported no rain; Homestead reported three and a half inches. Many areas remain very dry with the threat of wildfires still high in many localities. Temperatures at the major stations averaged from two degrees below normal to two degrees above. Daytime highs were in the 80s and 90s. Nighttime lows were mostly in the 60s and 70s with Jacksonville, Pensacola and Tallahassee recording at least one low in the 50s. The clash of the Atlantic and Gulf sea breezes brought welcomed rains to many central Peninsula localities on May 27 and 28 with amounts ranging from traces to an inch and a third.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture throughout the State is very short to short with scattered areas of adequate moisture. Peanut and cotton planting are delayed by dry soil conditions but are active in areas that have received rain. Thrips are causing problems in some cotton and peanuts. Small grain harvest is active. Irrigated corn, sugarcane, and tobacco are in good condition. Dryland crops are showing stress from drought. Hay fields are showing drought damage. Farmers are cutting hay in irrigated fields. Reports showed 78 percent of the peanuts are planted compared with 55 percent last week, 70 percent last year, and a five-year average of 84 percent. Peanut condition is 10% poor, 80% fair, and 10% good.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	71	38	44	38
Short	29	46	52	46
Adequate	0	16	4	16
Surplus	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Statewide pasture condition is very poor to fair. In the Panhandle, most of the area is very short of moisture. Ranchers are feeding supplemental hay because pasture is in very poor condition. Pasture condition improved in locations that recently received rain. In the north counties, high temperatures and wind created serious drought and fire potential. Wildfires burned over 45,000 acres. The hay supply is very short. In the central counties, ranchers are feeding hay. Pasture condition is down to zero in some locations due to drought. In the west central area, cattle condition is unchanged. Pasture is in bad shape. In the southwest, cattle condition is fair to good. Statewide, cattle condition is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	15	20	0	0
Poor	50	45	10	15
Fair	35	35	85	80
Good	0	0	5	5
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: There were several moderate to heavy rains and thunderstorms this week. Most of the heavier rains fell on the east coast and lower interior. However, there were a few good thunderstorms in parts of the interior of the citrus belt. This was a very good beginning

of the summer rainy season. Several growers and caretakers shut off their irrigation systems and enjoyed the natural moisture. New crop fruit is making good progress in most well-cared-for groves. Most oranges are golf ball size and larger. Grapefruit vary from golfball to baseball size. The vast majority of the Temples, tangerines and tangelos are marble to golfball size. Valencia harvest is still very active in most areas, with most of these oranges going to the processors. Movement of white and colored grapefruit is slowing as several fresh fruit packing houses have closed for the season.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops for fire protection, followed by hedging and topping operations. Growers are fertilizing, spraying and herbiciding. Some burn permits are being issued for a few of the larger groves with sufficient emergency water supplies.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	May 13	May 20	May 27
Valencia oranges	7,308,000	7,824,000	6,472,000
All grapefruit	1,060,000	803,000	530,000
Honey Tangerines	23,000	6,000	4,000

VEGETABLES: Harvesting of most crops continues to slow seasonally as hot temperatures arrive. Vegetables available include potatoes, watermelons, tomatoes, sweet corn, peppers, cucumbers, cantaloups, snap beans, eggplant, squash, radishes, okra, blueberries and parsley.

SNAP BEANS: North--Picking is decreasing seasonally. Quality is mostly good. Southwest--Crop condition is fair. Harvesting is slowing seasonally with some growers finished. Quality is fair to good. Dade--Producers finished picking. Workers are clearing fields and planting cover crops. West Central--U-Pic harvesting continues. East Coast--The season is finished. Workers pulled up plants and removed plastic.

BLUEBERRIES: North, Central--Harvesting is slowing as the season nears the end. Quality is mostly good.

CABBAGE: Harvest is complete.

SWEET CORN: Everglades, Zellwood--Picking continues with good quality available. Harvesting is expected to continue into early June.

CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market: West Central--Growth and development are normal. Harvest is winding down with fruit of fair to good quality. Sizes are variable with some large and extra large available. East Coast--Fruit is setting and sizing on the limited acreage left to be harvested. Clean up is active with the mowing of plants and the pulling up of plastic active. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Growth and development are good. Harvest is steady. Quality of fruit is good.

PICKLES: West Central--The crop is in fair condition. Harvesting is winding down. Fruit quality and color are fair. Dade--Harvest is complete. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is winding down. Fruit quality is good. Zellwood--Crop progress is generally good. Harvest is winding down.

EGGPLANT: Southwest--The crop is in fair condition. Cutting is declining seasonally. Quality is fair to good. East Coast--The crop

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

remains in mostly good condition. Cutting of regulars remains active with a light volume available. Quality is good. Dade--Harvesting of a very small supply is active. Quality is fair. Producers have disced most fields and planted cover crops. Palmetto-Ruskin--U-Pic harvesting is active. Quality and color are good. Sizes are variable.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE: Everglades--Harvesting is virtually done.

LETTUCE: Everglades--Harvesting is virtually finished.

OKRA: Dade--Crop condition is rated very good. Recent rains boosted growth and development. Harvesting is very active with good quality available.

BELL PEPPERS: West Central--Crop condition remains good. Picking is steady. Quality, sizes and color are good. Southwest--Condition is fair as the season winds down. Harvesting is decreasing seasonally. Quality is fair to good. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Rainfall about mid-week delayed some field activities. Harvesting continues with good quality available. Sizes are variable. Growers are removing stakes and strings from acreage completely picked, mowing plants and taking off plastic.

HOT PEPPERS: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting continues to slow as the season nears the end. Quality is good.

POTATOES: Hastings--Harvesting is starting to slow seasonally as hot temperatures arrive. Quality is mostly good. West Central--Digging is finished.

RADISHES: Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvesting is nearly done. Quality is good.

SQUASH: North--Harvesting is starting to slow seasonally as warmer temperatures arrive. Quality is mostly good. Southwest--

The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting is nearing the end. Quality is good. East Coast--Growers finished harvesting, mowed down plants and cleaned up acreage completely picked. Dade--Harvesting is virtually done. Growers have disced most fields and planted cover crops.

TOMATOES: Quincy--Harvesting is getting underway with a light volume available over the next seven to ten days. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair condition. Picking is mostly steady but starting to slow seasonally. Fruit quality is fair to good. Sizes are extra large to large. Growers are pulling stakes and preparing land completely picked for fall crops. East Coast--Crop condition is fair to good. Warm temperatures continue to speed up the ripening of fruit. Mid-week rains slowed some field work. Harvesting continues with growers making first, second and third picks. Crown picks are providing good quality. Second and third picks are yielding variable sizes. Southwest--The season is nearly over. Picking of a very light volume is active. Quality is mostly good. Dade--Harvesting is finished. Workers continue to remove stakes, irrigation pipes and plastic from acreage entirely picked, and to plant cover crops.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Southwest--Condition is fair. Picking is slowing seasonally. Quality is mostly good. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting is slowing seasonally. Quality is fair to good.

PLUM TOMATOES: Southwest--Condition is fair. Harvesting is nearing the end. Quality is mostly good. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair condition. Picking remains active but continues to slow seasonally. Quality is fair to good.

WATERMELONS: Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is good. Cutting is steady. Quality is good. Color is fair to good. Sizes are variable. Southwest--Condition is rated fair to good. Harvesting is winding down. Quality is good. Jackson County--The crop is in good condition. Growers are irrigating most acreage as needed.

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