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FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE

WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending July 21, 1996

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Very warm temperatures and high humidity continued over all areas. Daily highs through Saturday ranged from the upper 80s to mid 90s with rainfall varying from none at several locations to an unofficial four to five inches received around Bonifay. Several Panhandle, Big Bend, and central Peninsula counties reported that recent rains replenished ground moisture.

FIELD CROPS: The drying of hay is becoming difficult in some areas due to the high humidity. Peanuts are rated 25 percent fair and 75 percent good to excellent, a slight improvement from last week's ratings. Growth of cotton, corn, and soybeans is good to excellent in many Panhandle, Big Bend, and north central localities. Statewide ratings of topsoil moisture are: 9 percent short, 66 percent adequate, and 25 percent surplus, which improved from last week's ratings of 2 percent very short to short, 77 percent adequate, and 21 percent surplus. Statewide ratings of subsoil moisture are: 9 percent short, 66 percent adequate, and 25 percent surplus, which also improved from the prior week's ratings of 5 percent very short to short, 75 percent adequate, and 20 percent surplus.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: The condition of the State's ranges and pastures was rated from very poor to excellent (previous week's rating in parentheses): fair 20% (10%), good 55% (75%), and excellent 25% (15%). The State's cattle herds were

rated at fair 20% (10%), good 60% (80%), and excellent 20% (10%).

CITRUS: This was by far the hottest week of the summer in the citrus belt. Showers and rains were limited depending on the location. Some growers and caretakers started their low volume irrigation systems to help cool many young trees roots. A few of the drier groves on the high sand hills showed some afternoon leaf curl and a little wilt due to temperatures above 100 degrees in the groves. New crop fruit is making good progress in spite of the current dry conditions. There is still an abundance of new growth on trees of all ages as the result of near tropical conditions. Valencia orange harvest is over except for a few hundred boxes going to the fresh squeeze operations on a weekly basis.

Caretakers are mowing, discing, and chopping cover crops that are making good summer growth. Summer sprays and fertilizations continue in all areas. Growers with main ditches and canals are removing excessive weeds and sand to handle heavy rains should they arrive this summer. Dead tree removal, burning and replanting are all being done in most of the larger groves.

VEGETABLES: Tomato transplanting for the fall crop began around Quincy with some fields transplanted by hand due to wet soils. Land preparations for fall crop plantings are gaining momentum in many southern Peninsula localities. Southwestern growers will start laying plastic over the next few days.

INTERNET ACCESS

The weekly Weather and Crop News for Florida and other States is available on Internet each Monday shortly after 4:00 p.m. Access the NASS home page at <http://www.usda.gov/nass> then select NASS Publications.

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

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