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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending February 20, 2000

Released 4:00 P.M.

February 22, 2000

FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE



WEATHER SUMMARY: Warmer temperatures aided plant and tree growth during the week of February 13 through 19. Temperatures at the major stations averaged four to twelve degrees above normal. Daytime highs were mostly in the 70s and 80s. Nighttime lows were mostly in the 50s and 60s with central Peninsula and northern localities recording some lows in the 40s. Scattered showers dropped mostly traces to about a half inch of rain with Tavares and Ocklawaha receiving about an inch.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture throughout the Panhandle is mostly adequate. The Peninsula moisture is mostly short with scattered areas of very short or adequate moisture. Growers are making preparations to plant spring crops. Tobacco farmers are caring for tobacco beds. There is some disease in tobacco beds. Pine tree planting is active. Sugarcane grinding is active. Sugarcane planting is winding down. The wild fire problems have been reduced in the Panhandle due to the rains.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	4	4	3	0
Short	62	69	71	85
Adequate	34	27	26	15
Surplus	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Statewide, the condition of pasture and range is poor to fair. In the Panhandle counties, the winter forage condition perked up. In the central Peninsula counties, permanent pastures are greening up due to recent rains and warm weather, and winter annual pasture is providing good grazing. In the west central area, the condition of cows and calves fell off due to poor grass. The condition of permanent pastures is poor but the condition of small grain forage is good. In the southwest, the pasture condition is fair due to drought. The fire hazard is high. Statewide, the condition of cattle and calves is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	5	0	0	0
Poor	50	45	10	5
Fair	40	50	85	85
Good	5	5	5	10
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: There was a lot of warm weather with temperatures in the low 80s on Thursday, Friday and Saturday throughout most of the citrus belt. There was very little if any rain and growers are continuing to irrigate to maintain good tree condition as new growth and bloom buds start to show on many Navels and Valencias. Also, many other types of fruit that were picked earlier and were hedged and or topped are also putting out new growth and pin-head bloom buds. Harvest of early and midseason oranges is starting to slow as supplies are starting to run low in some locations. Picking of grapefruit for processing is increasing in all areas. Honey tangerines and Temples are

being picked for both fresh and processing.

Caretakers are cutting cover crops for fire protection and prior to harvesting. Hedging and topping are both very active. New resets are being planted in older groves where dead trees have been removed.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Feb 6	Feb 13	Feb 20
Navel oranges	112,000	94,000	84,000
Early & Mid oranges	8,004,000	9,019,000	7,182,000
Valencia oranges	10,000	29,000	188,000
All grapefruit	1,925,000	1,920,000	1,934,000
Early tangerines	91,000	23,000	19,000
Honey tangerines	108,000	119,000	119,000
K-Early Citrus Fruit	2,000	5,000	3,000
Tangelos	115,000	79,000	42,000
Temples	71,000	74,000	158,000

VEGETABLES: Warmer temperatures are aiding plant growth and fruit development. Major vegetables harvested during the week include potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, endive, escarole, cabbage, celery, cucumbers, lettuce, radishes, snap beans, squash, strawberries, sweet corn, and eggplant.

SNAP BEANS: Dade--Crop condition is rated very good. Planting continues with activity to start slowing within the next seven days. Harvesting is active. Yield and quality are good. Workers are irrigating as needed. Southwest--Condition remains fair to good. Planting remains steady. Picking continues at a steady pace. Quality is good. West Central--The crop is in good condition. Planting is gaining momentum. East Coast--Planting of a small acreage is active. Germination is good. Oldest plants are forming pin beans. Everglades--Condition remains good. Picking is expected to start by early March.

CABBAGE: West Central--Crop is in fair to good condition. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is steady. Fruit quality is fair to good. Size is variable and color is good. Hastings, North Central--Transplanting is active. Growth and development are normal. The crop is in good condition. Heads are smaller than normal in some areas. Harvest is steady. Dade--Cabbage is doing well with good quality and yield. Volume is steady as fields are cut each week.

CELERY: Everglades--Harvesting remains active with very good quality available.

SWEET CORN: Dade--Harvesting is active. Quality and yield are good with a good volume available over the next five to seven weeks. Everglades--The crop is in mostly good condition. Planting is active and will continue through mid-March. Picking continues. Quality is mostly good. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Harvesting is slowly increasing with some progress delayed by slow ear development. Quality is variable. Volume is expected to increase over the next five to ten days. Southwest--Condition is rated fair to good. Planting remains steady. Zellwood--Planting continues.

CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market: Southwest--Crop is fair. Planting and harvesting are steady. Fruit quality is fair to good. Dade--Cucumbers are being harvested with good quality and yield. Volume is low due to the small acreage. West Central--Crop condition is good as planting gains momentum. Growth

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

and development are normal. East Coast--Oldest plantings are forming runners, blooming and starting to set fruit. Germination of recent seedings is good. Some thinning of plants is underway. Planting continues on the older plastic for the spring crop. Harvest could start in 7 to 14 days.

PICKLES: Dade--Planting of small acreage is active. West Central--Crop condition is good as planting gains momentum.

EGGPLANT: East Coast--Planting of a small acreage is active. Picking is active. Quality and color are very good. Volume is light. Workers are cleaning fall crop acreage. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is nearing the end. Cutting of good quality continues at a steady pace. Dade--Condition is rated very good. Harvesting is active with a good volume available for the rest of the season. Quality and yield are good. West Central--Condition remains fair to good. Planting is active.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE: Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvesting is active.

LETTUCE: Everglades--Harvesting continues.

PEPPERS: Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting is slowing seasonally. Harvesting continues. Quality is fair to good. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Plant growth on younger acreage is improving. Laying of plastic and planting are active. Harvesting of green Bells is increasing. Quality is very good with large sizes available. Picking of red and yellow Bells and specialty varieties is active with a light volume available. Dade--Harvesting of a light volume continues. Quality and yield remain good. West Central--Condition is fair to good. Planting is steady. Sumter County--Transplanting is active.

POTATOES: Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Digging is gaining momentum with good quality available. West Central--The crop is in good condition. Dade--Growers continue to kill plants in preparation of harvest. Digging is expected to start over the next five to seven days with good quality and yield expected. Hastings--Crop condition remains good. Planting continues.

RADISHES: Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvesting of a steady volume is active. Quality is mostly good.

SQUASH: Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting

is steady. Harvesting of fair to good quality is active. Dade--Young acreage is in very good condition. Picking continues with good quality available. Yield is good with a good volume expected for the rest of the season. East Coast--Germination and plant growth on younger acreage is good. Picking of zucchini and yellow varieties continues. Volume is light to moderate. Quality and color are good. West Central--Crop condition remains fair to good. Planting continues.

STRAWBERRIES: Plant City, Dover, Lithia--Warmer weather is increasing fruit development. Picking continues. Quality is mostly good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is fair to good. Picking remains steady. Quality is fair to good. Sizes and color are good. Yield is good. Dade--U-Pic harvesting is active. Volume is good.

TOMATOES: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Transplanting is slowing seasonally. Warmer temperatures aided plant growth and fruit sizing. Fruit set is good. Picking is steady with good quality available. Sizes are good. Packout is about normal. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Laying of plastic and transplanting of the spring acreage is increasing. Harvesting is increasing with crown picks yielding very good quality and good sizes. Dade--Plants are growing well with good fruit set and sizing. Growers making first and second picks and bypassing the third pick due to the low market. Packout is good with a heavy volume of 5x6 and 6x6 sizes available. Pinhooking is very active. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop remains in fair to good condition. Warmer temperatures are aiding plant growth. Transplanting is starting to slow seasonally with activity to continue into early March. Sumter County--Transplanting is active.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting is nearing the end. Harvesting remains steady. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is slow.

PLUM TOMATOES: Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting continues to slow seasonally. Harvesting remains steady with good quality available. Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is fair to good. Transplanting is mostly steady but starting to slow.

WATERMELONS: West Central--Condition is rated fair to good. Planting is gaining momentum. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting continues at a steady pace.

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