



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service
1222 Woodward Street
Orlando, Florida 32803
407 / 648-6013

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>

WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending May 28, 2000

Released 4:00 P.M.

May 30, 2000

FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE



WEATHER SUMMARY: Hot, dry weather persisted during the week of May 21 through 27. Temperatures averaged two to six degrees above normal at the major stations. Daytime highs were mostly in the 80s and 90s with a few stations recording at least one temperature of nearly 100 degrees. Nighttime lows were mostly in the 60s and 70s. The western Panhandle and some northern Peninsula localities recorded from traces to three inches of rain during the week. Miami and Homestead area received from three quarters to an inch of rain. Most other localities recorded no measurable rain for the week. The danger of wildfires is extremely high for most counties due to prolonged drought.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture throughout the State is very short to short with scattered areas of adequate moisture. Most farmers are delaying cotton and peanut planting because of dry soil. A small number of farmers are planting in dry soil in hopes of rain. Growers report 72 percent peanuts planted. Irrigated tobacco is in good condition. The sugarcane crop is being irrigated and is in good condition. Even irrigated corn is beginning to show drought stress due to the heat and drying winds pulling moisture out of leaves faster than plants can replinsh it. Many of the irrigation systems are not able to keep up with the demand of the crop. Small grain harvest is progressing at a rapid pace. Some of the corn is tasseling but without rain the grain production from these fields will be lost. There have been a number of wild fires on the Peninsula due to the lack of rainfall.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	47	64	42	50
Short	52	35	32	36
Adequate	1	1	26	14
Surplus	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Pastures in the Panhandle, north and central counties, except for isolated locations, are in very poor to poor condition due to drought. Ranchers are feeding hay and monitoring water supplies. Pastures which received some rain will still be awhile getting into production. In the southwest, pastures on some high areas dried up and the grass is dead. Cattle are traveling to find water and grass. Statewide, the condition of the cattle decreasing and pasture and range deteriorated. Ranchers are beginning to cull cows and some calves are being marketed underweight.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	30	45	5	10
Poor	55	35	15	40
Fair	15	20	75	45
Good	0	0	5	5
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: This was the hottest week of the year. There were very few rains except on the lower east coast and a few spots in the lower interior where there were scattered showers of less than one-half inch. A few non-irrigated blocks of fruit are

showing wilt, leaf loss, and some new crop droppage. Growers and caretakers are irrigating around the clock where there is sufficient water for continuous use. Trees are still shedding their excessive little green new crop fruit that they cannot carry for next fruit season. This is a normal process. Valencia harvest is slowing under the hot sun. Fruit supplies and pickers are running low in some areas. Grapefruit harvest continues to slow with most of the remaining crops located on the east coast. Honey tangerine harvest is about over.

Caretakers are cutting cover crops and herbiciding. Summer sprays have started along with the June fertilizations. Hedging and topping continue in all areas. Burning of debris is currently banned.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	May 14	May 21	May 28
Valencia oranges	7,290,000	6,584,000	6,848,000
All grapefruit	1,232,000	1,158,000	1,145,000
Honey tangerines	98,000	44,000	60,000

VEGETABLES: Hot, dry conditions continue to cause stress to plants. Harvesting is slowing seasonally for southern Peninsula acreage. Major vegetables available include potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, blueberries, cucumbers, okra, squash, sweet corn, and watermelons.

SNAP BEANS: West Central--U-Pic harvesting continues with activity to continue over the next ten to fourteen days. Southwest--Picking is finished. Dade--The season is complete. Producers are discing fields and planting cover crops. East Coast--Picking is completed.

BLUEBERRIES: North, West Central, South--Picking is active. Quality is good.

SWEET CORN: North--Harvesting is getting underway with activity to continue through early July. Zellwood--Harvesting continues with picking to remain active through mid-June. Quality is mostly good. Everglades--Picking is winding down. Producers will make the last picks over the next five to seven days. Quality is mostly good. East Coast--Pulling is finished.

CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market: West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Harvesting is slowing seasonally with some growers finished. Quality and color are fair. Sizes are variable. Southwest--Condition is fair. Picking of a light volume continues. Quality is fair to good. East Coast--The season is finished. Workers are cleaning fields and pulling plastic.

PICKLES: West Central--Condition is fair to good. Picking is mostly steady but starting to slow with a few producers done. Quality and color are fair to good. Sizes are normal. Zellwood--Harvesting is nearly finished.

EGGPLANT: Southwest--Harvesting of a light volume remains active. Quality is fair to good. East Coast--Crop condition is fair to good. Cutting of regular and Italian types remains active. Quality and color are mostly good. Growers are removing strings and stakes before mowing down plants completely harvested. Dade--Harvesting of a small volume mainly for local market sales is active. Quality is fair. Yield is low. West Central--Harvesting is virtually finished with U-Pic still active. Quality is fair. Sizes are small to medium.

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

OKRA: Dade--The crop is in very good condition. Harvesting of a good supply is active. Quality is good. Workers are irrigating as needed.

PEPPERS: West Central--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Harvesting continues to slow seasonally. Quality is fair to good. Sizes are variable. Color is good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is slowing seasonally. Quality is fair to good. East Coast--Crop condition is fair to mostly good. The hot, dry conditions continue to stress plant growth. Picking of a limited acreage of green Bells is active. Quality from first picks is good with variable sizes available. Harvesting of a small volume of red Bells is yielding mostly good quality and sizes. Growers are mowing down acreage completely picked and removing plastic.

POTATOES: Hastings--Harvesting is slowing seasonally. Quality is good. Other North--Digging is active. Quality is good.

RADISHES: Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvesting is finished.

SQUASH: North--Picking continues. Quality is mostly good. Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Picking of a small volume is active. Quality is good. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. U-Pic harvesting remains active but is slowing seasonally. Quality is fair to good. Sizes are variable. Color is good. East Coast--Crop condition is rated fair. Cutting of both zucchini and yellow types is nearing the end with a light supply available. Quality and color are mostly good. Dade--The season is finished. Workers are removing plastic from acreage completely harvested and planting cover crops.

TOMATOES: Quincy--Picking is getting underway. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair. Most plants show effects of the hot, dry weather. Picking continues to slow with activity expected to proceed for another two to three weeks. Quality is fair to good with sizes running 6x7 to 6x6. East Coast--Dry, hot conditions continue to affect plant growth and fruit development. Harvesting is producing some good quality and variable sizes. Dade--Pinhooking continues on a very small acreage. Southwest--The season is completed.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting is winding down. Quality is fair to good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is fair to good. The hot, dry weather is stressing plants. Harvesting is slowing with some growers finished. Quality is fair to good. Sizes are normal.

PLUM TOMATOES: Southwest--Condition is rated fair to good. Picking is slowing with light supplies available. Quality is fair to good. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting is nearing the end. Quality and color are good. Sizes are normal.

WATERMELONS: North--Harvesting is gaining momentum as more growers begin picking. Quality is mostly good. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Harvesting is slowing seasonally with some producers finished. Quality is fair to good. Sizes are running medium to large with some small sizes available. Yield is good. Southwest--Condition is fair. Harvesting is winding down. Quality is good.

To receive this report via e-mail, send an e-mail message to nass-state-releases@news.usda.gov with the following message:
subscribe fl-crop-weather. The report will be e-mailed automatically to your e-mail address each week.