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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending June 18, 2000

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**FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE**



WEATHER SUMMARY: Welcome rains fell over the western Panhandle and Big Bend areas during the week of June 11 through 17 with scattered storms also bringing relief to some dry areas of the Peninsula. Rain for the week at the major stations ranged from two tenths of an inch at Tallahassee to over one and two thirds inches at Pensacola. Rainfall around Immokalee ranged from traces to about two and three quarters inches. The Palmetto-Ruskin area rainfall ranged from an inch to over four inches with Bradenton recording almost two and a quarter inches. Dover reported over an inch and a half and Ocklawaha, almost an inch and two tenths. Ft. Pierce reported an inch and three fourths for the week. Rainfall in other localities ranged from none to about an inch. Temperatures during the week at the major stations averaged normal to two degrees above. Most highs were in the 80s and 90s while most lows were in the 60s and 70s with Alachua reporting at least one low in the 50s. Storms on Sunday, June 18 dumped over two and a quarter inches over Fort Myers and a half inch or less on other Peninsula localities.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture throughout the State is very short to short with scattered areas of adequate moisture. Some irrigation wells are reported drying up. Some farmers are waiting for rain to plant the last of their cotton and peanuts. Irrigated tobacco is in good condition. Tobacco harvest is starting. The irrigated sugarcane crop is in good condition. Sand land sugarcane is stressed by drought. The dry land corn crop is lost. Haying is delayed due to the lack of plant growth. There have been many wild fires on the Peninsula due to the lack of rainfall. Growers report peanut condition at 25% very poor, 38% poor, 30% fair, and 7% good. Growers reported 21 percent peanuts pegged.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	69	47	55	63
Short	25	37	42	35
Adequate	6	16	3	2
Surplus	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Statewide, range and pasture condition continues poor to fair due to persistent drought. In the Panhandle, some farm wells have gone dry. Cattlemen are feeding hay in the Panhandle, north and central counties. Hay supplies and pasture remain critical. Cattle in some locations are losing weight due to feed shortage. Pastures in the central area are poor to good. In the westcentral and southwest counties, pastures were beginning to recover following rain. Statewide, cattle were in poor to fair condition, unchanged from the previous week.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	40	25	5	5
Poor	50	60	60	60
Fair	10	15	30	35
Good	0	0	5	0
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: Finally, there were scattered rains and thunderstorms in virtually all areas of Florida's citrus belt. Many growers and caretakers are still running their irrigation equipment as the rains at this time are not arriving on a regular basis. New crop fruit continues to make good progress in spite of the prolonged spring drought. Valencia harvest is slowing as supplies are running out in many areas. Grapefruit movement is just about over for this season with most of the remaining supplies coming from the lower east coast. Very few Honey tangerines remain to be picked except for a few late bloom crops.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops. Summer herbiciding, spraying and fertilizing are active in all areas. Hedging and topping have been reported in most counties.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Jun 4	Jun 11	Jun 18
Valencia oranges	5,741,000	4,958,000	4,897,000
All grapefruit	772,000	487,000	283,000
Honey tangerines	11,000	10,000	10,000

VEGETABLES: Recent rains are helping to replenish soil moisture with lots more needed. Major vegetables available include watermelons, okra, and tomatoes.

SNAP BEANS: West Central--Picking is virtually finished.

SWEET CORN: North--Picking is active. Zellwood, Everglades--Picking is virtually done with some acreage to be abandoned due to low prices and a shortage of trucks.

CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market: Dade, East Coast, Southwest, West Central--Harvest is complete. North Central--Harvest is virtually complete.

PICKLES: Dade, West Central--Harvest is complete. North Central--Harvest is virtually complete.

EGGPLANT: North--Harvesting of a small supply continues. Quality is mostly good. East Coast, West Central--Harvesting is finished.

OKRA: Dade--The crop is in very good condition. Recent rains knocked off some blooms which will lower yield a little for a couple of weeks. Harvesting continues. Good supplies are expected for the summer with some growers to plant in July for harvest in August.

PEPPERS: North--Picking of a small volume is virtually done. West Central, Southwest, East Coast--Picking is finished.

POTATOES: Other North--Harvesting is nearing the end. Hastings--The season is virtually done.

SQUASH: East Coast, Southwest, West Central--The season is finished.

TOMATOES: Quincy--Harvesting is very active. Quality is mostly good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair. Harvesting is almost finished. The burning ban was lifted so farmers

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

could light propane burners from tractors for spring crop clean up. East Coast, Dade, Southwest--Harvesting is finished.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Palmetto-Ruskin, Southwest--The season is over.

PLUM TOMATOES: Quincy--Picking is gaining momentum. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin, Southwest--Picking is completed.

WATERMELONS: North and Panhandle--Picking is active. Quality is mostly good. Volume is decreasing seasonally. West Central--Harvesting is 95 percent done with U-Pic and pinhooking active. Quality is fair. Sizes are variable. Southwest--Harvesting is done.

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