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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending October 22, 2000

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October 23, 2000

## FLORIDA AGRICULTURE



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Mostly dry and cool conditions persisted during the week of October 15 through 21. Rainfall at the major stations ranged from none to about an inch. Most stations reported from no measurable rain to traces for the week. Temperatures averaged from normal to four degrees below. Daytime highs were mostly in the 80s. Most nighttime lows ranged from the 40s at Tallahassee to the 70s at Miami.

**FIELD CROPS:** Southern Peninsula topsoil moisture is adequate. Topsoil moisture throughout the rest of the State is short to adequate with scattered areas of very short moisture. Cotton harvest is in progress. Sugarcane harvest and soybean harvest are underway. Haying is active, weather permitting. Dry weather has delayed planting of winter forages in some areas. Ninety percent of the peanuts for nuts are reported harvested.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	2	11	5	5
Short	43	46	25	48
Adequate	51	43	60	47
Surplus	4	0	10	0

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** Statewide, pasture is mostly in fair condition with condition reduced slightly by drought and by seasonally cooler weather. In the Panhandle and northern counties, it was too dry to plant winter forage. In the central area, the condition of range started to show result of lack of rain. Ponds and lakes are drying up. Statewide, cattle and calves are mostly in good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	5	5	0	0
Fair	35	45	30	30
Good	60	50	70	70
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** There was very little, if any, rain this week in most citrus groves and the temperatures were very mild. Rain is needed in all areas. Growers are irrigating with all types of equipment to maintain good tree condition and to increase sizes on most types of fruit. There is some split fruit showing up in those areas that had a lot of rain the last of September and the first of October. There are good early stages of color break on Hamlins, Navels and Ambersweet oranges, most young tree grapefruit, some of the early tangerines and a few K-Early Citrus Fruit. About half of this State's fresh fruit packing houses are open and shipping fruit in limited amounts. Several juice plants are open and receiving packing house eliminations.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops that have grown tall and out of control. Growers are still trying to remove the vines that covered some of their trees during the summer. Dead tree removal and burning of the stumps and limbs continues in all areas. Fresh fruit growers are still applying clean up sprays. Hedging and topping are slowing as the winter season approaches.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Oct 8	Oct 15	Oct 22
Navel oranges	36,000	60,000	108,000
Early & Mid oranges			
Including Ambersweet	48,000	91,000	143,000
All grapefruit	140,000	260,000	391,000
Tangerines	86,000	124,000	116,000
K-Early Citrus Fruit	--	2,000	1,000
Tangelos	--	4,000	--

**VEGETABLES:** Dry weather increased the need for irrigation. Tomato picking started in the Palmetto-Ruskin region and is getting underway in the East Coast area. Cutting of eggplant began in the East Coast region. Other vegetables available include cucumbers, pickles, peppers, squash, and watermelons.

**SNAP BEANS:** Dade--Most acreage is in very good condition. Planting is very active. Picking is expected to start by mid-November. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Plant growth and bean development are normal. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting continues at a steady pace. East Coast--The crop is in fair to good condition. The oldest acreage is nearing maturity.

**CABBAGE:** West Central--Condition is good. Planting is slowly increasing. Dade--Oldest acreage is making a good stand. Planting is on schedule. Workers are irrigating as needed. Hastings--Planting continues.

**SWEET CORN:** East Coast--The crop is in fair to good condition. Workers continue to prepare land with planting to resume by mid-November. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Dade--Planting will begin by early November.

**CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market:** West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is underway with fair to good quality available. Sizes are variable with some large sizes available. Color is good. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is steady. Harvesting started with good quality available. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. Oldest plants are starting to set fruit. Planting is steady. Workers continue to thin as needed.

**PICKLES:** West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting is gaining momentum. Quality is fair to good. Sizes are variable. Color is good.

**EGGPLANT:** West Central--Condition is fair to good. Harvesting started with good quality available. Sizes are medium and large. East Coast--Crop condition is good. Harvesting started with good quality, color, and fancy grades available. Southwest--Condition is rated fair to good. Planting remains active. Dade--Crop condition is good. Blooming continues to increase. Staking continues.

**OKRA:** Dade--Crop condition is very good. Harvesting continues. Yield and quality are good.

**BELL PEPPERS:** Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting remains steady. West Central--The crop is in good condition. Planting is complete. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. Laying of plastic and planting remain active. Harvesting is increasing. Crown picks are yielding mostly good quality and sizes.

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

**HOT PEPPERS:** East Coast--Picking is active. Volume remains light. Southwest--Crop condition remains fair to good. Planting is active.

**POTATOES:** West Central--The crop is in good condition. Dade--Growers are preparing land for planting which is expected to start over the next five to seven days. Southwest--Planting is gaining momentum.

**RADISHES:** Everglades, Lake Placid--Planting is steady.

**SQUASH:** Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting is steady. Picking began with good quality available. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. U-Pic harvesting started. East Coast--Young plants are in good condition. Workers are cleaning acreage completely picked.

**STRAWBERRIES:** Plant City--Transplanting is nearly finished. Picking is expected to start in late November. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is good. Planting is finished. Harvesting will get underway in early November.

**TOMATOES:** Quincy--Harvesting is steady. Quality is mostly good. East Coast--The crop is in fair to mostly good condition. Transplant

ing continues. Harvesting is getting underway. Palmetto-Ruskin--Young acreage is in good condition. Older fields are in fair condition. Picking started with fair quality available. Sizes are fair. Yield is below normal. Southwest--Condition remains fair to good. Cooler temperatures are helping fruit to set. Fruit sizing is good. Planting is steady. Dade--The crop is in good condition. Transplanting continues to increase.

**CHERRY TOMATOES:** Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Picking is gaining momentum. Quality is fair to good. Sizes are normal. Color is good. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting continues at a steady pace.

**PLUM TOMATOES:** Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Plant growth and fruit development are normal. Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting is steady.

**WATERMELONS:** Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is steady. Quality is fair to good with variable sizes available. Color is good. Yield is fair to good. Southwest--Condition is rated fair to good. Plant growth and fruit development are normal but slow.

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