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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending October 29, 2000

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October 30, 2000

## FLORIDA AGRICULTURE



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Mostly dry conditions continued during the week of October 22 through 28. Although isolated showers dropped from traces in several localities to almost an inch of rain at Hastings, most stations recorded no measurable rain for the week. Temperatures at the major stations mostly averaged from two degrees below normal to one degree above. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s while nighttime lows were in the 50s at Jacksonville and Tallahassee, the 60s in most central Peninsula localities, and the 70s at Miami.

**FIELD CROPS:** Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are mostly short across the State with scattered areas of very short or adequate supplies. Most areas remain dry. Growers continue to harvest cotton, sugarcane, and soybeans. Ninety four percent of the peanuts for nuts are reported harvested.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	11	11	5	7
Short	46	70	48	63
Adequate	43	19	47	30
Surplus	0	0	0	0

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** Statewide, pasture conditions are poor to good. Pastures in the north and Panhandle are in worse condition due to drought, wind, and cooler weather. Dry weather is holding back conventional cool season forage planting. Some ranchers are doing no-till seeding. In the central counties, the pastures look greener than the previous week, but actual growth has slowed as soil moisture is barely adequate. In the southwest, the pasture condition is good. Statewide, the condition of cattle and calves is mostly fair to good, slightly less than the previous week.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	5	0	0
Poor	5	25	0	5
Fair	45	40	30	45
Good	50	30	70	50
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** There were only a few scattered showers this week most of which fell on both coasts. Rain is needed in all areas as growers are irrigating to maintain good tree condition and to help increase fruit sizes. There is still some fruit droppage as a result of the heavy rains that fell the last of September and the first of October. Some of the young trees of Hamlins, Navels, grapefruit and early tangerines have very good to excellent on-tree color break. Most of the fresh fruit packers and shippers are moving all types of early fruit. Several processing plants are open and taking packing house eliminations.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops. Clean-up sprays continue on many fresh fruit crops. Dead trees are being pushed and burned in all areas. Fall herbicides are nearly completed along with vine removal.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Oct 15	Oct 22	Oct 29
Navel oranges	60,000	108,000	137,000
Early & Mid oranges			
Including Ambersweet	91,000	143,000	220,000
All grapefruit	260,000	391,000	397,000
Tangerines	124,000	116,000	153,000
K-Early Citrus Fruit	2,000	1,000	2,000

**VEGETABLES:** Irrigation continues to increase as mostly dry conditions persist. Dade County growers began to plant potatoes and pick squash. Southwestern producers started to pick tomatoes. Growers are marketing snap beans, cucumbers, pickles, peppers, squash, sweet corn, tomatoes, watermelons and okra.

**SNAP BEANS:** West Central--Condition remains fair to good. Hand picking started with a very light volume marketed. Quality and sizes are fair. Yield is poor to fair. Everglades--Condition is good. Picking of a very light volume is expected to start soon. Dade--Condition is rated very good. Planting continues. Harvesting is expected to begin in two to three weeks. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Pods are three to four inches long with picking expected to begin in seven to ten days. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. Picking of a light volume is active. Quality and color are mostly good.

**CABBAGE:** West Central--The crop is in good condition. Planting is slow. Dade--Crop condition is good. Planting remains active. Zellwood--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting is expected to begin by mid-November.

**SWEET CORN:** Zellwood--Picking is gaining momentum with yellow, white, and bi-color varieties available. Ear size is smaller than normal but is expected to improve. Everglades--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting of a light volume is active. Most growers will start picking in about three weeks. East Coast--Oldest plantings are in fair to good condition. Tasseling is increasing. Workers are applying fertilizer, cultivating, and preparing land for planting. Dade--Planting is expected to start over the next seven to ten days.

**CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market:** West Central--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Harvesting is gaining momentum. Quality is fair to good. Sizes are medium and large. Color is good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting is gaining momentum. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Strong winds blew vines and slowed pollination by bees early in the week. Harvesting is getting underway. Planting continues with fair to good germination.

**PICKLES:** Zellwood--Picking is active. Quality and yield are good. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Picking is increasing. Quality is fair to good. Color is good.

**EGGPLANT:** West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Cutting is gaining momentum. Quality is fair to good. Sizes are medium to large. East Coast--Crop condition is good. Cutting continues with good quality and color available. Regular grades are mostly fancy with a light supply of specialty varieties available. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting continues. Dade--Crop condition is good.

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

**ENDIVE/ESCAROLE:** Everglades--The crop is in good condition.

**LETTUCE:** Everglades--The crop is in good condition.

**OKRA:** Dade--The crop is in very good condition. Harvesting is active.

**BELL PEPPERS:** Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting continues. East Coast--Harvesting is active with crown picks yielding mostly good quality, color and sizes. Transplanting is active. Workers are drenching recent transplants to ensure an adequate moisture supply. Other field activities include land leveling and laying plastic.

**HOT PEPPERS:** East Coast--Harvesting continues. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting continues.

**POTATOES:** West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Dade--Planting started. Southwest--Planting is increasing seasonally.

**RADISHES:** Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvesting is expected to begin in early November.

**SQUASH:** Dade--Harvesting started. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting remains active. Harvesting is gaining momentum. West Central--Crop condition remains fair to good. U-Pic harvesting is gaining momentum. Quality is good. Sizes are variable. East Coast--Plant growth is good. Strong winds slowed pollination by bees early in the week.

**STRAWBERRIES:** Plant City--Crop condition is good. Transplanting is virtually finished. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in good condition. Picking is expected to begin in early November.

**TOMATOES:** Quincy--Harvesting remains active. Quality is mostly good. East Coast--Crop condition is fair to mostly good. Harvesting is gaining momentum. Quality is mostly good. Sizes are variable. Land leveling, laying of plastic, planting, pruning, staking, tying and spraying continue as needed. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair condition. Plant growth is fair to good. Fruit setting ranges from poor to good. Picking of a very light volume is active. Quality is fair. Yield is below normal. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking started. Transplanting continues. Dade--Crop condition is good. Planting is increasing.

**CHERRY TOMATOES:** Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is fair to good. Harvesting is increasing seasonally. Quality is fair to good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting remains active.

**PLUM TOMATOES:** Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair to good. Picking started with fair quality available. Sizes are normal. Color is fair to good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Transplanting is steady.

**WATERMELONS:** Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is fair to good. Harvesting is mostly steady. Quality is fair. Sizes are small and medium with a few large sizes available. Color is fair. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition.

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