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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending November 19, 2000

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FLORIDA AGRICULTURE



WEATHER SUMMARY: Cold fronts passing over the State brought cooler temperatures to many localities during the week of November 12 through 20. Lows during the week dipped into the 30s in most western Panhandle, most northern and some central Peninsula areas with Alachua recording at least one low at 28 degrees. Most central and southern localities reported lows in the 40s, 50s and 60s. Most daily high temperatures were in the 60s, 70s and 80s. Most localities received only traces of rain, if any, for the week, except for Pensacola with almost two and a quarter inches, Pierson with about one and a quarter inches and Tallahassee with about three quarters of an inch. Drought conditions persist in many northern, central and some southern Peninsula areas. Some water allocations are being reduced.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture throughout the State is very short to short with scattered areas of adequate moisture. Scattered showers occurred but more rain is needed. Cotton harvest is winding down. Sugarcane harvest is active. Dry weather is delaying the planting of winter forages. Virtually all of the peanuts for nuts are reported harvested.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	49	22	14	18
Short	43	68	76	62
Adequate	8	10	10	20
Surplus	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Statewide, pasture condition is starting to improve in some areas due to the scattered showers. Planting of winter forage is delayed in many areas by dry soil conditions. Growers are feeding hay due to poor forage growth caused by the drought. In the west central areas, pasture condition is declining seasonally and growth is slackening due to drought. In the southwest, pasture condition is poor due to extreme dry conditions. Statewide, the condition of cattle is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	10	5	0	0
Poor	35	15	5	5
Fair	50	80	70	65
Good	5	0	25	30
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: All areas of Florida's citrus belt continued their dry pattern again this week. There were a few insignificant, light, scattered showers in some groves, however caretakers are irrigating around the clock to maintain good tree condition. On-tree fruit color is good but fruit sizes are generally small. There is very little new growth except in a few young tree groves in the southern part of the State. Harvesting crews are moving larger quantities of early oranges to the processors as the pounds solids and the sugar-to-acid ratios are improving. Most fresh fruit packing houses are working long hours to meet the Thanksgiving market demands.

Caretakers are cutting cover crops prior to harvest and for fire protection. A few clean up sprays continue on fresh fruit crops. Growers in the northern part of the citrus belt have started banking

young trees for cold protections. Dead tree removal has been reported in most areas.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Nov 5	Nov 12	Nov 19
Navel oranges	207,000	187,000	284,000
Early & Mid oranges			
Including Ambersweet	1,084,000	2,654,000	4,113,000
All grapefruit	546,000	475,000	747,000
Tangerines	181,000	290,000	291,000
K-Early Citrus Fruit	7,000	8,000	4,000
Tangelos	6,000	43,000	77,000

VEGETABLES: Producers are harvesting to meet the holiday demand. Vegetables available include snap beans, cucumbers, pickles, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, okra, peppers, squash, strawberries, sweet corn, radishes, tomatoes and watermelons.

SNAP BEANS: Dade--The crop is in very good condition. Picking is gaining momentum. Volume is good. Yield is mostly good except for fields hurt by the early October rains. Planting, spraying and irrigating continue. West Central--Crop condition is fair. Harvesting is slowly increasing. Quality and color are fair to good. Sizes are fair. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is steady. Harvesting is gaining momentum. Quality is good. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. Hand harvesting is active. Quality is mostly good. Volume is very light.

CABBAGE: Dade--Cabbage is being planted on a weekly schedule. Early fields are growing well with cool weather helping. West Central--Crop condition is good. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is starting. Hastings--Growers are actively planting cabbage. Crop is in good condition. Growth and development are normal. Zellwood--Growth has been good. Both red and green harvest will start next week.

SWEET CORN: Everglades--Picking continues. Volume is increasing seasonally. Zellwood--Harvesting is steady. Volume is light. Picking is expected to continue through early December. Dade--Young fields are in good condition. Planting continues. Workers are irrigating as needed. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Oldest plants are nearing maturity. Land preparation and planting of winter crop acreage is active.

CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market: West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is steady. Fruit quality is fair to good. Fruit size is variable. Color is good. East Coast--Crop condition is good. Oldest plantings are picked over, mowed down, and plastic pulled up. The next crop provides good quality and color with all sizes available. Plant growth is good. Plants are blooming and forming runners. Very light planting is under way. Southwest--Planting is light. Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is steady and fruit quality and sizes are good.

PICKLES: West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is active. Fruit quality is good. Zellwood--Harvest is active. Quality and yield are good. Dade--Pickles are in good condition. Plants are putting out runners.

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

EGGPLANT: West Central--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Picking is mostly steady. Quality is fair to good. Sizes are medium to large. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting remains light. Cutting is increasing seasonally. Quality is good. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting of regular and Italian types is active. Quality and color are mostly good. Volume is light. Dade--The crop is in good condition.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE: Everglades--Harvesting continues.

LETTUCE: Everglades--Harvesting is active.

OKRA: Dade--Harvesting is active. Volume is declining seasonally with a small supply available through mid-December. Growers are discing some fields due to poor quality caused by lower temperatures discoloring pods.

BELL PEPPERS: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is steady. Picking is increasing seasonally. Quality is fair to good. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. Picking of green and red types continues. Quality and sizes are good to very good. Laying of plastic and transplanting are active. West Central--The crop is in good condition. Picking is slowly gaining momentum. Quality and color are good. Volume is light with small, medium and large sizes available.

HOT PEPPERS: East Coast--Picking remains active. Southwest--Condition is rated fair to good. Planting continues at a steady pace. Picking is steady with good quality available.

POTATOES: Dade--Youngest fields are up to good stands. Planting is on schedule and will continue through late December. Southwest--Crop condition is good. Planting is steady. West Central--Workers continue to prepare land for spring crop planting which is expected to begin in about five to seven days.

RADISHES: Everglades, Lake Placid--Digging is active.

SQUASH: Dade--Picking continues. Quality is good. Planting is active with growers irrigating as needed. Southwest--The crop is in

fair to good condition. Planting is steady. Picking is active with good quality available. West Central--Condition is fair to good. Picking is steady. Quality is good. Sizes are variable. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting of zucchini and yellow varieties continues. Volume is light. Quality and color are good with fancy grades available.

STRAWBERRIES: Plant City--Cooler temperatures are aiding fruit development. Picking is active with a very light volume available. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is good. Harvesting is underway with fair to good quality available. Sizes are good. Volume is light. Dade--The crop is in good condition. U-Pic harvesting is expected to begin by mid-December.

TOMATOES: Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Fruit setting and sizing are good. Planting is steady. Harvesting continues to increase seasonally. Fruit quality is fair to good. Sizes are variable with 6x6 and some 5x6 sizes available. Yield is improving. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting continues with fair to good quality available. Sizes are running mostly 6x6 and 6x7 with some 5x6 sizes available. Yield is mostly fair to good. East Coast--Young plants are in good condition. Picking is active with mostly good quality available. Sizes are variable. Quincy--Picking continues with volume declining seasonally. Quality is mostly good. Most harvesting is expected to finish over the next seven to ten days. Dade--The crop is in very good condition. Planting remains active.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is steady. Quality and color are good. Sizes are normal. Volume is fair. Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting is active. Harvesting is gaining momentum. Quality is good.

PLUM TOMATOES: Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting is steady. Quality is good. Southwest--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Planting remains steady. Harvesting is gaining momentum. Quality is good.

WATERMELONS: Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair. Harvesting is winding down. Quality is fair. Color is fair to good. Sizes are small to medium. Southwest--Condition is fair to good.

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