

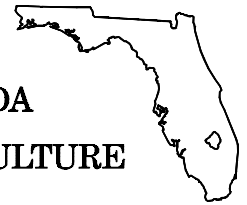


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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE



Week ending December 3, 2000

Released 4:00 P.M.

December 5, 2000

WEATHER SUMMARY: Cool temperatures persisted during the week of November 27 through December 2. Temperatures at the major stations averaged one to five degrees below normal. Daytime highs were mostly in the 60s and 70s with southern Peninsula localities recording at least one high in the 80s. Lows in western Panhandle and northern Peninsula areas were mostly in the 40s. Central Peninsula localities recorded lows mostly in the 50s while southern Peninsula areas reported most lows in the 60s. Several western Panhandle, and northern and central Peninsula areas reported at least one low in the 20s or 30s. Scattered showers brought varying amounts of rain to some localities with amounts ranging from traces to about an inch and a quarter.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture in the Panhandle is mostly adequate with scattered areas of short moisture. Moisture throughout the Peninsula is very short to short with scattered areas of adequate moisture. Brush fires are becoming a problem due to the drought. A hard freeze on November 21 put a halt to late cotton. Winter forage planting was active in areas where moisture was available. Cotton harvest is winding down. Sugarcane harvest is active. Sugarcane is in good condition.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	16	7	16	19
Short	57	77	53	69
Adequate	27	16	31	12
Surplus	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Statewide, a killing frost Thanksgiving week ended warm season pasture in the Panhandle, north and much of central counties. In the Panhandle, winter forage is being planted. A hard freeze ended warm season pasture. Seasonally cool temperatures and drought have reduced growth of winter forage. In the north counties, cool weather and a freeze Thanksgiving week reduced pasture conditions. Cool season forage is being planted, while forage already up is drought stressed. In the central counties, severe drought continues. In the west central area there have been brush fires and water restrictions are in place. The cattle condition is falling off due to grass shortage. Haying is active. In the southwest, winter die-back and drought reduced pasture condition to fair. Statewide, cattle and calves are in fair condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	5	5	0	0
Poor	15	25	5	5
Fair	35	65	50	75
Good	45	5	45	20
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: This was another dry and unseasonably cool week in Florida's citrus belt. There were very few, if any, scattered showers. Rain is badly needed all over the State. Water reservoirs of all kinds are at very low levels. Growers and caretakers are irrigating to maintain good tree condition and to try to improve fruits sizes. Early and midseason fruit have good on-tree color. Fresh fruit packing

houses are all very busy trying to meet the Christmas holiday shipping demands. Most processing plants are open and taking field run fruit and packing house eliminations.

Caretakers are cutting cover crops for fire protection prior to harvest. A few clean-up sprays are still being applied to some of the midseason and late season crops. Dead tree removal and resetting continue in all areas in larger groves. There is limited hedging and topping of harvested groves in the southern counties. Burning of grove trash and dead trees is active where burn permits are being issued.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Nov 19	Nov 26	Dec 3
Navel oranges	284,000	160,000	388,000
Early & Mid oranges			
Including Ambersweet	4,113,000	3,884,000	6,307,000
All grapefruit	747,000	546,000	707,000
Tangerines	291,000	169,000	231,000
K-Early Citrus Fruit	4,000	0	2,000
Tangelos	77,000	50,000	127,000

VEGETABLES: Mostly clear weather is helping to keep planting and harvesting on schedule. Most producers are preparing 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. Planting is active with some fall crop acreage being planted for a second crop. Harvesting continues with good quality available. Demand is exceeding the supply. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is mostly steady. Quality is fair to good. Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting and picking are steady. Quality is good. East Coast--The crop is in very good condition. A limited hand harvest is yielding good quality and color. Supply is very light.

CABBAGE: Dade--Cabbage looks very good. Early fields are starting to head. Planting continues on schedule. West Central--Crop condition is good. Planting is steady. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is starting. Hastings--Growers are actively planting cabbage. Crop is in good condition. Growth and development are normal. Growers are making preparations to start harvest. Zellwood--Harvest is getting underway. Volume is expected to be good during December. Quality is good.

SWEET CORN: Everglades--Harvesting of a light volume is active. Volume is expected to increase over the next seven to ten days. Zellwood--Picking is active. Volume is light with supplies available for the next five to seven days. Dade--The crop is in very good condition. Oldest plants are expected to start tasseling in about ten days. Workers continue to irrigate as needed. East Coast--Planting is on schedule for winter crop acreage. Recent plantings show good germination. Workers are discing ground for future planting.

CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market: West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is winding down. Fruit quality is fair to good. Fruit size is variable. Color is good. There was little damage from the cold last week. East Coast--Cooler temperatures slowed development this past week. Crop is in mostly good condition. Mid-growth plants are forming runners, blooming, and setting fruit. Fruit near maturity is having good

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

quality and color available for harvest. Southwest--Planting is light. Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are slow. 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 winding down. Fruit quality is fair to good. Zellwood--Harvest is active. Quality and yield are good. Dade--Pickles look good with light harvest. Quality is good. Yields will increase next week.

EGGPLANT: West Central--Condition is rated fair to good. Harvesting is mostly steady but starting to slow seasonally. Quality is fair to good. Sizes are variable. Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Cutting is steady. Quality is good. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Cutting of regular and Italian varieties continues. Quality and color are good with fancy grades available. Dade--Condition is good. Planting is slowing seasonally with all planting expected to be finished before the new year. Fruit is sizing well. Harvesting is expected to begin in about ten days.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE: Everglades--Harvesting is active with a fair volume available. Supply is expected to increase over the next two weeks.

LETTUCE: Everglades--Harvesting of head and Romaine types continues. Supplies are light but are expected to increase over the next seven to ten days.

OKRA: Dade--Harvesting is slowing seasonally. Cool temperatures are causing some off color. Producers are starting to harvest a small winter crop acreage.

BELL PEPPERS: Southwest--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Planting and picking are steady. Quality is good. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Picking of green and red types continues with good quality available. Transplanting of winter crop acreage is active. Workers are leveling blocks and laying plastic. West Central--Condition is fair to good. Harvesting is mostly steady. Quality is good. Supplies are increasing seasonally with medium to large sizes available.

HOT PEPPERS: East Coast--Harvesting continues with good quality available. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting and picking are steady. Quality is good.

POTATOES: Dade--A mid-week shower helped replenish soil moisture as planting continued. Oldest plants are up to good stands. Planting is scheduled to end before the new year. Southwest--

Condition is good. Planting remains steady. West Central--Condition is rated fair to good. Planting is slowly gaining momentum.

RADISHES: Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvesting continues. Quality is good.

SQUASH: Dade--The crop is in good condition. Planting continues. Harvesting is active with good quality available. Workers are irrigating as needed. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Both planting and harvesting are steady. Quality is good. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is steady with U-Pic harvesting active. Quality and color are fair to good. Sizes are variable. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting of zucchini and yellow types is active. Color and quality are good with fancy and medium grades available.

STRAWBERRIES: Plant City--Picking of a light volume is active. Quality is mostly good. Supplies are expected to increase seasonally. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in good condition. Picking is gaining momentum. Quality and sizes are good. Dade--Crop condition is good. U-Pic harvesting is expected to begin in about two weeks.

TOMATOES: Dade--Crop condition is good. Transplanting continues. Picking is getting underway. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Transplanting is steady. Cooler temperatures are slowing plant growth and fruit sizing. Picking is steady with good quality and supplies available. First picks are yielding mostly 5x6 and 6x6 sizes. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is steady with good quality available. Supplies are available over the next two to three weeks with a light volume scheduled for picking in January. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Growers are making the first through fourth picks with mostly good quality available. Workers are starting to clear acreage completely harvested. Quincy--Harvesting is finished.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting and harvesting are steady. Quality is good. Sizes are normal. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting remains steady. Picking is steady with good quality available.

PLUM TOMATOES: Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Picking remains steady. Quality is fair to good. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting and picking are steady. Quality is good.

WATERMELONS: Southwest--The crop is in fair condition. Harvesting is steady. Quality is fair to good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is fair. Picking is nearing the end. Quality is fair with small to medium and a few large sizes available.

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