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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE



Week ending January 21, 2001

Released 4:00 P.M.

January 22, 2001

WEATHER SUMMARY: Temperatures warmed somewhat during the week of January 14 through 20. Temperatures at the major stations averaged four to eight degrees above normal. Daytime highs were in the 60s, 70s and 80s while nighttime lows were mostly in the 40s and 50s. Several western Panhandle, northern and central localities recorded at least one low in the 30s during the week. Scattered showers brought from traces to a half inch of rain to most areas. Pensacola recorded almost two inches of rain for the week while Immokalee reported almost an inch falling. Temperatures on Sunday, January 21 dipped to freezing levels over the northern and most central Peninsula areas with Dover, Hastings, Ona and Pierson recording at least one low at about 30 degrees.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture throughout the State is very short to short with scattered areas of adequate moisture. Cold temperatures and drought continue to limit growth of small grains and all cool season forages. The Peninsula winter pastures are under drought stress. The freezing temperatures and the drought are increasing the wild fire hazard throughout the State. Sugarcane harvest is making good progress. Sugarcane is in poor condition. The cool, dry weather is helping growers to salvage frosted sugarcane.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	24	33	22	40
Short	68	61	75	57
Adequate	8	6	3	3
Surplus	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Statewide, range and pasture is in very poor to fair condition. Drought and cold remain vital factors in the poor production of winter forage for cattle. Freezing temperatures have burned small grain forage growth in the Panhandle and north. Ranchers are feeding hay in the north and central areas. Statewide, cattle and calves are mostly in fair condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	30	25	0	0
Poor	55	50	15	15
Fair	15	25	75	85
Good	0	0	10	0
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: Most of this week was mild with cool nights and moderate to warm days. A cold front on Friday night and Saturday brought some scattered showers to most of the citrus belt. Much more rain is needed as growers are irrigating to help keep their trees in good condition following the first of the year cold periods. Some trees are showing signs of pushing out new growth and there are even a few small pin head bloom buds showing on some trees. Harvesting crews are rapidly moving any damaged fruit to the processors. Most processors are running around the clock and some are limiting the loads from the field so that the fruit will not be left on their yards over night. Most fresh fruit packing houses are not having any problems finding fruit suitable for shipments.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Jan 7	Jan 15	Jan 21
Navel oranges	97,000	156,000	117,000
Early & Mid oranges			
Including Ambersweet	8,081,000	11,352,000	6,721,000
All grapefruit	742,000	1,072,000	856,000
Early Tangerines	101,000	78,000	19,000
Honey Tangerines	44,000	117,000	97,000
Tangelos	141,000	191,000	116,000
Temples	31,000	70,000	45,000

Presented below are the results of a fruit cutting survey conducted January 18, 2001 with comparisons to the last major freeze in the 1989-90 season. Data users are cautioned that evidence of damage does not necessarily mean loss of fruit. Weather conditions over the next several weeks and harvesting and processing practices will affect any potential loss.

Florida Citrus: Condition of fruit on trees in sample groves with comparison

Season	Fruit type		Damage				
	Freeze date	Survey date	No Damage	Damage at 1/4"	1/2"	Center	
						Minor	Major
			Percent				

Valencia Oranges:

2000-01	Jan 5	Jan 18	97	2	1	--	--
1989-90	Dec 24-25	Jan 4-5	44	27	19	9	1

Seedless Grapefruit:

2000-01	Jan 5	Jan 18	100	--	--	--	--
1989-90	Dec 24-25	Jan 4-5	37	19	20	19	5

Florida Citrus: Leaf damage observed in sample groves January 18, 2001

Fruit type	Damage			
	None	Minor	Serious	Very Serious
Valencia Oranges	95	5	--	--
Seedless Grapefruit	96	4	--	--

VEGETABLES: Warmer temperatures are helping crops to recover from the recent freeze. Vegetables available include snap beans, cabbage, tomatoes, squash, eggplant, sweet corn, peppers, endive, escarole, lettuce, and radishes.

SNAP BEANS: Dade--The crop is in mostly good condition. Plants singed by the recent freeze are recovering well. Planting is active. Picking continues with a good supply available. Workers are irrigating as needed. East Coast--Plant growth and bean development are slow. Picking of a small acreage is active. Supply is very light. Southwest--Crop condition is fair. Plant growth is slow. Planting continues. Producers continue to make salvage picks from plants damaged by the recent freeze.

CABBAGE: Dade--Cabbage harvest is underway with average yield and good quality. Planting is complete. West Central--Crop condition is good. Planting is complete. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is starting. Hastings--The crop is in good condition. Growth and development are normal. Growers are actively harvesting cabbage. Zellwood--Harvest is active. The crop is in good condition.

SWEET CORN: Everglades--The recent freeze killed most of the older crop. Some younger fields are recovering from the cold damage. Producers continue to replant spring crop acreage lost to the freeze. Dade--Young plants are in good condition. Picking is active. Quality is good. East Coast--Crop condition is improving. Some older plants

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

are slowly recovering from the recent freeze damage. Workers are cultivating and fertilizing younger fields.

CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market: West Central--Harvest is complete for the fall season. East Coast--Crop is in fair to good condition. Germination is fair to good. Growers are slowly planting the spring crop. Older acreage is being cleaned up. Moisture is needed. Southwest--Crop condition is fair. Covered acreage is all that survived the freeze. A small acreage of cukes are being planted. Growth and development are slow. Harvest is slow. Fruit quality is fair.

PICKLES: West Central--Harvest is complete. Zellwood--Harvest is complete. Dade--Pickles not recovering will be replanted in February.

EGGPLANT: Dade--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting continues with good quality available. Southwest--Condition remains poor to fair. Plants are starting to recover from the recent freeze damage. Salvage harvesting is nearing the end. Quality is fair. East Coast--Condition is rated fair to good. Warmer temperatures are aiding fruit sizing. Harvesting of very light supplies continues. Quality and color are mostly good. Some scarred fruit is not meeting grade standards. Palmetto-Ruskin--Planting of spring crop acreage is expected to begin in February.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE: Everglades--Harvesting is slowly increasing with growers allowing plants to recover from the recent freeze damage. Outer leaves received heavy freeze damage with growers pulling damaged leaves prior to marketing. Yield prospects are below normal.

LETTUCE: Everglades--Outer leaves sustained heavy damage from the recent freeze. Growers are pulling outer leaves prior to marketing. Yield prospects are below normal.

OKRA: Dade--Harvesting ended. Planting is expected to begin in late February.

BELL PEPPERS: Southwest--Young plants and acreage protected from the recent freeze are in good condition. Plants with freeze damage are in fair condition. Planting is slowing. Picking is steady. Supply is light. Quality is fair to good. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Young plant growth is slow. Older plants show some bloom and small fruit drop. Harvesting is active. First picks are yielding good quality and sizes. Supplies are light to moderate. Transplanting of spring crop acreage continues. Other field work includes laying of plastic and mowing of acreage completely harvested. West Central--Planting is expected to start in February.

HOT PEPPERS: Southwest--Crop condition is fair. Planting is steady. Picking continues with a light supply available. Quality is fair to good.

POTATOES: Southwest--Plants are recovering well from the recent freeze damage. Planting is finished. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting is expected to start in February. Dade--Growers are killing vines but will not dig due to the early December

rain damage.

RADISHES: Everglades, Lake Placid--Digging is active with increasing supplies available. Quality is good. Planting continues. Some acreage was not dug because machines could not harvest the plants that lost leaves in the recent freeze.

SQUASH: Dade--Most acreage is in good condition. Plants hurt by the recent freeze are recovering well. Planting continues. Harvesting is active. Foggy mornings are causing some stem rot but yield is still fair. Quality is good. Southwest--The crop is in fair condition. Planting of a limited acreage is steady. Picking is steady but slow. Quality is fair to good. East Coast--Warmer temperatures are helping to improve plant growth and development. Fruit setting and sizing are slow. Harvesting is active with fancy and medium grades of good quality and color available. Supply is light.

STRAWBERRIES: Plant City, Floral City--A few fields in colder localities were irrigated to avoid freeze damage on Sunday, January 21. However, temperatures for most of the acreage did not get cold enough to run the sprinklers. Harvesting continues. Quality is fair to mostly good. Supplies are increasing. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in good condition. Picking is mostly steady. Quality is good. Sizes and color are improving. Supplies are increasing slowly. Dade--U-Pic acreage is in good condition. Picking is active with good quality available.

TOMATOES: Dade--The crop is in good condition. Fruit sizing is good. Planting continues. Harvesting is increasing slowly. Quality is good. Sizes are running 6x6 and larger with growers getting a good packout. Supplies are increasing slowly with good volume expected throughout February. Southwest--Most acreage is in poor to fair condition. A small acreage is in fair to good condition. Planting is slowing seasonally. Spot planting of freeze damaged plants is nearly done. The sun is blistering some fruit on plants that lost foliage to the freeze. Picking is slowing. Producers have salvaged most of the mature marketable fruit. East Coast--The crop is in fair to mostly good condition. Harvesting is active with good quality available. Sizes are variable. Recent cool temperatures slowed fruit maturation with some picking delayed. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is slow. Staking of the youngest acreage started.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Southwest--The crop is in fair condition. Planting remains steady. Picking of fruit not damaged by the recent freeze is steady. Quality is fair to good. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is gaining momentum.

PLUM TOMATOES: Southwest--Crop condition is fair. Planting is steady. Harvesting of fruit not damaged by the recent freeze is steady. Quality is fair to good. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is increasing slowly.

WATERMELONS: Palmetto-Ruskin--Producers are getting land ready for spring crop planting.

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