



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service  
1222 Woodward Street  
Orlando, Florida 32803  
407 / 648-6013

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>

# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending January 28, 2001

Released 4:00 P.M.

January 29, 2001

## FLORIDA AGRICULTURE



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Cool, dry conditions prevailed during the week of January 21 through 27. Temperatures at the major stations averaged five to ten degrees below normal. Daytime highs were mostly in the 50s and 60s although several stations recorded 70s on at least one day. Lows were in the 20s, 30s and 40s. Most stations recorded no significant rain for the week except for Jacksonville, West Palm Beach and Ft. Pierce reporting about one third inch accumulation.

**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. Peninsula winter pastures are under drought stress. The freezing temperatures and drought are increasing wild fire hazards throughout the State. Sugarcane is in poor condition. Growers are harvesting the frost damaged sugarcane as fast as possible.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	33	20	40	34
Short	61	70	57	63
Adequate	6	10	3	3
Surplus	0	0	0	0

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** Statewide, pasture is mostly in poor to fair condition. Growers are feeding hay because of poor forage growth due to the cool temperatures and drought. In some areas hay is starting to run low. Statewide, cattle are mostly in poor to fair condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	25	30	0	0
Poor	50	60	15	15
Fair	25	10	85	80
Good	0	0	0	5
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** Florida's citrus groves were treated to cool days and cold nights until Saturday and Sunday when the daytime temperatures reached the 70-degree mark. The cold nighttime temperatures have helped refrigerate most of the fruit and minimize any juice loss from the freezing temperatures the first of the year. There were a few scattered rain showers the first of this week. More rain is needed in all areas. Growers and caretakers are irrigating to help maintain good tree condition and to try to improve juice levels. Early and midseason orange harvest continues at a very active pace with just about a million boxes per day average. All juice plants are very busy. The fresh fruit packing houses are shipping all types of citrus with very little difficulty.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops prior to harvesting for fire protection. Hedging and topping continue active in harvested groves and some Valencias. Some burn permits are being issued where groves are isolated and where the burn pile is near a water source. There have been some pre-bloom fertilizer applications primarily in the southern areas of the citrus belt.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Jan 15	Jan 21	Jan 28
Navel oranges	156,000	117,000	112,000
Early & Mid oranges			
Including Ambersweet	11,350,000	6,729,000	8,195,000
All grapefruit	1,072,000	856,000	1,152,000
Early Tangerines	78,000	19,000	16,000
Honey Tangerines	117,000	97,000	123,000
Tangelos	191,000	116,000	101,000
Temples	70,000	45,000	63,000

**VEGETABLES:** Cooler weather is slowing plant growth and development. Watermelon planting began around Immokalee. Squash and Bell pepper planting for spring crop harvesting is underway in the West Central area. Vegetables available include snap beans, cabbage, tomatoes, squash, eggplant, sweet corn, peppers, endive, escarole, lettuce, and radishes.

**SNAP BEANS:** Dade--Condition is improving as plants recover from the recent cold temperatures. Harvesting is active with good quality available. Yield is average. Planting continues with young fields making good stands. Workers are irrigating as needed. East Coast--Condition is improving. Planting of a small acreage is active. Hand picks are yielding mostly good quality. Supply is very light. Southwest--The crop is in fair condition. Planting is steady. Picking stopped.

**CABBAGE:** Dade--Cabbage is looking good. Cool weather has been beneficial. Harvest is active with average yield and good quality. Volume will be steady for the rest of the season as weekly plantings are cut on schedule. West Central--Crop condition is good. Planting is complete. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is starting. Hastings, Zellwood--The crop is in good condition. Growth and development are normal. Growers are actively harvesting cabbage.

**SWEET CORN:** Dade--Harvesting continues. Quality is good. Some growers are planting in old potato fields. Everglades--Planting continues. East Coast--Crop condition continues to improve. Oldest plants are tasseling and showing ears. Workers continue to cultivate and fertilize young plants.

**CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market:** West Central--Harvest is complete for the fall season. East Coast--Crop conditions are mostly good. Plants that came up after the cold weather are in good condition. Warmer weather is increasing plant growth. Germination is good from recent plantings. Southwest--Crop is in fair condition. Growth and development are slow. Harvest is winding down. Fruit quality is fair.

**PICKLES:** West Central, Zellwood--Harvest is complete for the season. Dade--Cukes are slowly coming out of frost damage. Fields are showing some improvement.

**EGGPLANT:** Dade--Cutting is increasing. Quality is good. Southwest--The crop is in poor condition. Harvesting of a very light amount is active. Quality is fair. East Coast--Crop condition is improving. Harvesting is producing a very light supply. Quality and color are good. Planting of a small acreage is active. Palmetto-Ruskin--Planting is expect to begin in February.

**ENDIVE/ESCAROLE:** Everglades--Harvesting of a light volume continues.

**LETTUCE:** Everglades--Harvesting is active. Volume is light.

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

**OKRA:** Dade--Planting is expected to start in late February.

**BELL PEPPERS:** Southwest--Crop condition is fair. Planting is winding down. Picking is steady with fair to good quality available. Volume is down. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Trans-planting is active. Picking continues with good quality available. Workers are leveling acreage and laying plastic. West Central--Planting is underway with condition rated fair to good.

**HOT PEPPERS:** Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is slowing seasonally. Picking is steady with fair to good quality available. Supply is light.

**POTATOES:** Southwest--Growers are starting to kill foliage in preparation of harvest. West Central--Condition is fair to good. Plant growth is normal but slow.

**RADISHES:** Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvesting continues. Quality is good. Supplies are increasing.

**SQUASH:** Dade--Crop condition is rated good. Planting is active with plants making good stands. Picking continues with good quality available. Volume is good. Southwest--Crop condition is fair. Planting is slow. Picking is slowing down. Quality is fair. East Coast--The crop is in fair to good condition. Cutting of a very light volume continues. West Central--Condition is fair to good as planting gets underway.

**STRAWBERRIES:** Plant City, Floral City--Harvesting slowed due to cold weather early in the week. Warmer temperatures are increasing supplies with fair to good quality available. Palmetto-Ruskin--

Condition is fair to good. Harvesting is steady with fair to good quality available. Sizes and color are fair to good. Yield is good. Dade--U-Pic harvesting is active. Quality is good.

**TOMATOES:** Dade--Condition is good. Plant growth is slow due to cooler temperatures. Fruit setting is good. Fruit sizing is very good. Planting is slowing. Picking is increasing. Quality is good. Sizes are running 6x6 and larger. Packout is good. Southwest--The crop is in fair condition. Plants are slowly recovering from the recent freeze with cool temperatures slowing growth. Planting is near the end with young plants in fair to good condition. Picking is slow. Supply is light. Quality is fair. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. Cool temperatures continue to slow fruit maturation. Picking continues with good quality available. Sizes are variable. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Planting is increasing slowly. Staking continues. Quincy--Producers are preparing beds.

**CHERRY TOMATOES:** Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is winding down. Picking is steady. Quality is fair to good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is fair to good. Planting is increasing.

**PLUM TOMATOES:** Southwest--Condition is rated fair to good. Planting is slowing seasonally. Picking is steady with fair to good quality available. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is gaining momentum.

**WATERMELONS:** Southwest--Planting started with the crop rated in fair condition. Palmetto-Ruskin--Planting is expected to begin in early February.

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