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WEATHER & CROP NEWS



Week ending April 22, 2001

Released 4:00 P.M.

April 23, 2001

WEATHER SUMMARY: Cool, dry weather prevailed during the week of April 15 through 21. Temperatures at the major stations averaged normal to five degrees below. Lows were mostly in the 40s, 50s and 60s. Several northern and central localities recorded lows in the 30s on at least one day with frost reported in a few northern localities. Highs were mostly in the 70s and 80s with Jacksonville, Miami, West Palm Beach, Ft. Lauderdale and Ft. Pierce recording at least one high in the 90s. Most stations recorded no measurable rain for the week.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture in the Panhandle is mostly adequate with scattered areas of short moisture. Moisture throughout the rest of the State is very short to short. Wild fire problems are on the increase. Thursday morning, April 19, frost damaged young plants in some areas of north Florida. Planting of cotton and peanuts is starting. Cool temperatures of the past week are delaying cotton planting. Growers are actively planting corn and tobacco. Early corn is up and growing well. Sugarcane is in good condition.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very short	51	37	55	58
Short	31	54	31	28
Adequate	18	9	14	14
Surplus	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, pastures and cattle are mostly in good condition. Stock ponds are starting to fill from recent rains. In the rest of the State, cattle and pastures are mostly in fair condition with scattered areas in good or poor condition. Stock ponds are low. Some pastures in north Florida were damaged by frost on the morning of April 19. Dry weather is limiting pasture growth.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	20	25	20	40
Fair	65	65	70	50
Good	15	10	10	10
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: There was no rain this week in any areas of the citrus belt. It continues to be very dry as growers and caretakers are irrigating around the clock to keep trees and fruit in good condition. Most trees are currently shedding little green fruit that the trees cannot support for next season. Many older trees that are stressed from the early stages of the Tristeza Virus and sand hill decline are now rapidly dying. Some of the non-irrigated groves are showing signs of afternoon wilt and softening of the fruit remaining to be picked. Rain is badly needed in all areas to improve the current fruit condition. Valencia harvest is very active in all areas as picking crews are moving large amounts of young tree fruit to the processors. A few of the older tree late oranges are also being picked where they have produced good maturity tests. Movement of all grapefruit continues active for both fresh and processing. However, fresh shipments are only about one fourth of the

weekly total grapefruit movement. Temple and Honey tangerine harvest is slowing as supplies are running low.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops prior to harvesting and for fire protection. Hedging and topping continue. Most of the post bloom nutritional sprays have been completed. Some of the fresh fruit growers have started their second sprays. Burn permits are limited due to the current dry conditions.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Apr 8	Apr 15	Apr 22
Navel oranges	0	1,000	1,000
Early & Mid oranges	7,000	2,000	2,000
Valencia oranges	6,239,000	6,758,000	7,261,000
All grapefruit	2,399,000	2,042,000	1,674,000
Honey Tangerines	94,000	89,000	69,000
Tangelos	24,000	5,000	5,000
Temples	1,000	0	1,000

VEGETABLES: Temperatures in the upper 80s and low 90s are affecting some crop growth adversely, especially squash in Dade County. Vegetables available include tomatoes, sweet corn, potatoes, peppers, cabbage, cucumbers, squash, snap beans, watermelons, lettuce, eggplant, radishes, escarole, endive, okra, parsley, Chinese cabbage, and blueberries.

SNAP BEANS: Everglades--Harvesting is active. Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Picking is steady. Quality is good. West Central--The crop is in poor to fair condition. Picking started with fair quality available. Color is poor to fair. Yield is low. Volume is light. Dade--Condition remains good. Harvesting is active but is slowing seasonally. Quality is good with a fair volume available over the next three weeks. East Coast--Plant growth and bean development are good. Hand picks are active with good quality and color available. Supply is very light.

BLUEBERRIES: Central--Picking continues to increase. Quality is mostly good.

CABBAGE: Dade, Southwest--Harvest is complete. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is winding down. Quality is good. Sizes and color are good. Hastings--Harvest is winding down. The crop is in excellent condition. Growth and development are normal. Zellwood--Harvest of green cabbage is complete. Light supplies of red and other kinds are available.

SWEET CORN: Everglades--Harvesting is active. Quality is mostly good. Dade--Harvesting is almost done. Quality is good. Zellwood--Condition remains good. Harvesting is expected to start about May 1.

CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market: West Central--Growth and development are slow but normal. The crop is in fair condition. Harvest is gaining with fruit of fair quality, color, and size available. East Coast--The young, late spring crop condition is improving. Strong winds tossed vines around on mid-growth plants. Harvest is active. Growers are picking fruit of all sizes. Quality and color are good. Fields are being picked over numerous times and plants mowed down. The cleanup of fields completely picked is active. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Growth and development are good. Harvest is steady. Quality of fruit is good.

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

PICKLES: West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Growth and development are slow but normal. Harvesting is gaining. Fruit quality and size are fair. Dade--Picking continues but volume is slowing. Quality and yield are good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is steady. Fruit quality is good. Zellwood--Crop progress is generally good. Harvest is starting.

EGGPLANT: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting is steady. Quality is fair to good. East Coast--Plant growth and fruit development are good. Cutting of a light volume is active. Quality and color are good. Dade--Cutting is slowing seasonally. Quality is good. Supplies are fair.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE: Everglades--Harvesting continues to slow seasonally. Volume is light with supplies available through early May.

LETTUCE: Everglades--Harvesting is slowing seasonally. Volume is light with supplies available through early May.

OKRA: Dade--Crop condition is rated good. Harvesting is active with good quality available. Supplies are good.

BELL PEPPERS: Southwest--Condition is good. Picking is steady. Quality is good. East Coast--Condition is good. First picks are providing very good quality and large sizes. Other picks are yielding variable sizes. Volume is steady. Workers are removing stakes, strings and plastic from acreage completely harvested. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition.

HOT PEPPERS: Southwest--Condition is good. Picking is steady. Quality is good. East Coast--Picking of a very light volume is active.

POTATOES: Hastings--Digging is increasing seasonally. Quality is mostly good. West Central--Condition is rated fair to good. Digging is steady. Quality is fair to good. Southwest--Harvesting is starting to slow seasonally. Quality is good.

RADISHES: Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvesting is steady. Quality is good with supplies available through mid-May.

SQUASH: Southwest--Crop condition is good. Picking is steady.

Quality is good. East Coast--Crop condition is good. Cutting of zucchini and yellow varieties is active. Quality and color are good with fancy and medium grades available. Volume is very light. Workers are cleaning blocks completely picked. Dade--Hot temperatures are affecting plant growth and fruit development. Picking is starting to slow seasonally with fair quality available. Supplies are available through early May. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is starting with fair to good quality and color available. Sizes are fair.

STRAWBERRIES: Dade--U-Pic harvesting is almost done. Plant City, Floral City--Picking is virtually completed.

TOMATOES: Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Some fruit with less foliage cover is blistering and sunburning as temperatures reach the upper 80s and low 90s. Harvesting is steady. First and second picks are producing good quality and sizes. Third pick sizes are variable but quality is good. Volume is increasing as more acreage reaches maturity. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair. Some fruit with inadequate foliage cover is sunburning. Harvesting is slow with some 5x6 and 6x6 sizes available. Fruit quality is fair. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Warmer temperatures are accelerating fruit maturation and causing some plants to wilt. First and second picks are producing good quality and large sizes. Some third picks are not being made due to the low market. Dade--The season is nearing the end with most fields turned over to pinhookers. Sizes are good. Volume is low. Quality is good with a considerable volume not meeting grade. Quincy--Harvesting is expected to start in late May or early June.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Southwest--Crop condition is good. Picking remains steady. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is rated fair to good. Harvesting is mostly steady. Quality and color are fair to good. Sizes are normal.

PLUM TOMATOES: Southwest--Condition is good. Picking is steady. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting is gaining momentum. Quality is fair to good.

WATERMELONS: Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Harvest is gaining momentum. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair to good. Runner formation and fruit development are fair to good. Harvest is expected to start in about two weeks.

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