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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending April 29, 2001

Released 4:00 P.M.

April 30, 2001

**FLORIDA**  
**AGRICULTURE**



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Scattered showers brought welcomed rain to many localities during the week of April 22 through 28. Rainfall totaled from traces to about one and a half inches with Immokalee, Dover and Ona recording no measurable rain. East Coast localities reported from a quarter to about an inch of rain while Homestead received from three-quarters to an inch and a half. Bradenton reported only traces of rain for the week. Gusty winds buffeted crops in many central and southern Peninsula localities. Temperatures at the major stations averaged from four degrees below normal to one degree above. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s while nighttime lows were in the 50s, 60s and 70s. Alachua recorded at least one low in the 30s during the week.

**FIELD CROPS:** Topsoil moisture in the Panhandle is short to adequate. Moisture throughout the rest of the State is very short to short with scattered areas of adequate moisture. Wild fire problems are on the increase. Cotton and peanut planting is active. Early planted fields of cotton and peanuts are up to good stands. Corn, sugarcane, and tobacco are in good condition. Nitrogen fertilizer supplies were reported to be 99 percent of normal.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very short	37	37	58	59
Short	54	59	28	36
Adequate	9	4	14	5
Surplus	0	0	0	0

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** Statewide, pasture condition improved slightly. In the Panhandle, pasture condition decreased due to lack of rain. In the northern counties, recent rain helped improve pasture condition. In the central area, pasture condition was down in some areas due to severe drought, but at other locations pasture condition improved following 1.00 inch of rainfall. In the west central area, pastures are still green from new growth. Growth is held back by lack of rain. Some hay is being cut. In the southwest, pasture condition is fair to good. Statewide, cattle condition is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very poor	0	10	0	0
Poor	45	40	15	25
Fair	40	50	65	70
Good	15	0	20	5
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** There were scattered showers and a few thunderstorms Wednesday and Wednesday night throughout many areas of the citrus belt. However, the lower interior and much of the west coast got very little, if any, of the badly needed moisture. Growers and caretakers that received around an inch of rain were able to turn off their irrigation pumps for a few days and do some much needed maintenance. Some well-cared-for groves have an abundance of new growth. Many groves are in stress from the current drought and have yellowing foliage with a lot of new little fruit falling. Harvest of Valencia oranges is very active in all areas with most of these late oranges going

to the processor. Movement of white and colored grapefruit is slowing as fresh packers are having a hard time finding sufficient high quality fruit. Honey tangerine harvest is just about over for this season as pickers are moving into the smaller blocks of fruit.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops prior to harvesting and for fire protection. Hedging and topping continues in all areas. Spraying and fertilizing are active in most locations. Burn permits are limited due to the current dry conditions.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Apr 15	Apr 22	Apr 29
Valencia oranges	6,831,000	7,261,000	7,633,000
All grapefruit	2,125,000	1,674,000	1,631,000
Honey Tangerines	93,000	69,000	63,000

**VEGETABLES:** Showers in Dade County and some East Coast localities decreased the need for irrigation. Vegetables available include tomatoes, potatoes, sweet corn, peppers, cucumbers, watermelons, cabbage, snap beans, squash, lettuce, eggplant, radishes, cantaloups, escarole, endive, okra, blueberries, parsley, and Chinese cabbage.

**SNAP BEANS:** Everglades--Picking continues. Quality is mostly good. North--Harvesting is getting underway. Quality is mostly good. Southwest--Crop condition remains good. Harvesting is steady with good quality available. West Central--Crop condition is rated mostly fair. Harvesting is gaining momentum. Quality and sizes are fair. Yield is poor to fair. Dade--Young acreage is in good condition. Picking continues. Quality is good. Volume is declining seasonally with supplies available until mid-to-late May. Workers are irrigating as needed. East Coast--Plant growth and pod development are good. Hand picking remains active. Volume is very light.

**BLUEBERRIES:** Central--Harvesting is increasing seasonally. 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, Zellwood--Harvest is virtually complete.

**SWEET CORN:** Everglades--Picking continues. Quality is mostly good. Supplies are increasing. Zellwood--The crop is in good condition. Picking is getting underway. Dade--Growers finished picking near the end of the week. Quality was good.

**CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market:** West Central--Growth and development are normal. The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvest is steady with fruit of fair to good quality. Color and size are fair. East Coast--The crop is in generally good condition. The late spring crop is showing good plant growth. Mid-growth plants are forming runners and blooming with fruit setting. New fields are producing good quality fruit with good color. Harvesting is active from all picks. Older fields are being picked over and mowed down. Growers are pulling up plastic in fields completely picked over. Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Growth and development are good. Harvest is steady. Quality of fruit is good.

**PICKLES:** West Central--The crop is in fair condition. Growth and development are slow but normal. Harvesting is steady. Fruit quality

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

and color are fair to good. Dade--The crop has good quality and yield but volume is decreasing as season nears the end. 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 active.

**EGGPLANT:** Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Cutting is steady. Quality is fair to good. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting continues. Supply is light. Quality is mostly good. Workers are making the second and third ties of younger plants. Dade--Harvesting is slowing seasonally. Quality is good. Supplies are declining.

**ENDIVE/ESCAROLE:** Everglades--Harvesting is nearing the end. Supply is light.

**LETTUCE:** Everglades--Harvesting continues to slow as the season nears the end. Supplies are light.

**OKRA:** Dade--Harvesting continues. Quality is good with good supplies available. Recent rain aided crop development.

**BELL PEPPERS:** Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting continues with fair to good quality available. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Harvesting is active with variable sizes available. First picks are producing good quality. Green Bell supplies are steady with a lighter volume of red and yellow Bells available. Producers continue to clear acreage completely picked. West Central--Crop condition is rated fair to good.

**HOT PEPPERS:** Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting continues at a steady pace. Quality is good.

**POTATOES:** Hastings--Harvesting continues to gain momentum. Quality is mostly good. Supplies are increasing seasonally. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting is slowing seasonally. Quality is good. Sizes are fair to good. Southwest--Digging is nearing the end. Quality is good. Growers expect to complete harvest in the next five to seven days.

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

**SQUASH:** Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting remains steady. Quality is good. East Coast--Young plants are growing well. Harvesting of zucchini and yellow types continues with fancy and medium sizes available. Quality is mostly good. Dade--Harvesting is slowing as the season nears the end. Quality is good with fair supplies available for the next two weeks. West Central--Harvesting remains slow as the season starts. Volume is light. Quality is mostly good.

**STRAWBERRIES:** Dade--U-Pic harvesting is nearing the end. Plant City, Floral City--Harvesting is virtually finished.

**TOMATOES:** Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair condition. Picking is slowly increasing. Quality is fair with 5x6 and 6x6 sizes available. Packout is fair. Volume is light. Southwest--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Picking is slowing seasonally with some third picks not made due to the low market. Quality is good. Packout is about normal with 5x6 and 6x6 sizes available. East Coast--Condition is rated mostly good. Growers are making first and second picks. Quality is good. Producers did not make some third picks due to the low market. Dade--Picking is nearly finished. The supplies of ripens and pinks is good with pinhooking very active. Quincy--Picking is expected to begin in late May or early June.

**CHERRY TOMATOES:** Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting is steady. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair to good. Picking is mostly steady. Quality and sizes are fair to good.

**PLUM TOMATOES:** Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting remains steady. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is rated fair to good. Picking is increasing seasonally. Quality is fair to good.

**WATERMELONS:** Southwest--Crop condition is good. Harvesting is very active. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is fair to good. Picking is expected to begin within the next seven to ten days.

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