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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending May 6, 2001

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FLORIDA  
AGRICULTURE



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Significant rain fell over many localities during the week of April 29 through May 5. Rainfall ranged from traces to over three inches. Temperatures at the major stations averaged normal to three degrees below. Most daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s while most nighttime lows were in the 50s, 60s and 70s.

**FIELD CROPS:** Topsoil moisture throughout the State is very short to short with scattered areas of adequate moisture. Wild fire problems are on the increase. Dry conditions are delaying cotton and peanut planting. Irrigated corn, sugarcane, and tobacco are in good condition. Dryland crops are showing stress from drought. Hay fields are showing drought signs. Growers reported 32 percent of the peanuts are planted.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	37	35	59	43
Short	59	60	36	52
Adequate	4	5	5	5
Surplus	0	0	0	0

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** In most areas of the State only irrigated pastures and hay fields are showing good growth. Dryland pastures are showing drought stress. In the Panhandle and northern Peninsula, cattle are in good to fair condition. In the rest of the State, cattle are mostly in fair to poor condition with scattered areas in good condition. Pastures throughout the State are in fair to poor condition with scattered areas of good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	10	0	0	0
Poor	40	55	25	25
Fair	50	45	70	65
Good	0	0	5	10
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** Virtually all of Florida's citrus belt received light, daylong scattered rains on Monday and Monday night. This rain and the rain last week have greatly improved tree condition in most groves. Most trees are starting to show a darker green color reflection, a generally healthier condition. Some of the fruit that was softening has firmed with the recent moisture. New crop fruit is making normal progress in well-cared-for groves. Harvest of Valencia oranges for processing is very active in all areas. Movement of grapefruit for fresh use is slowing as the bulk of the remainder of these crops will be utilized in the processing plants. Harvest of Honey tangerines is about over for the season as supplies are running out.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops for fire protection and prior to harvesting. Hedging, topping and piling of grove limbs and general debris continues. Spraying and fertilizing have been reported in all areas.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Apr 22	Apr 29	May 6
Valencia oranges	7,736,000	7,633,000	7,215,000
All grapefruit	1,579,000	1,631,000	1,034,000
Honey Tangerines	64,000	63,000	43,000

**VEGETABLES:** Wet ground delayed some field activities in isolated areas about mid-week with most harvesting very active. Vegetables available include tomatoes, potatoes, sweet corn, peppers, watermelons, cucumbers, cabbage, squash, snap beans, cantaloups, eggplant, lettuce, radishes, escarole, endive, blueberries, okra, parsley, and Chinese cabbage.

**SNAP BEANS:** North--Picking is gaining momentum. Quality is mostly good. Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Picking remains steady. Quality is good. Everglades--Harvesting of light supplies is active. West Central--The crop is in poor to fair condition. Picking is slowing seasonally with some acreage open to U-Pic harvesting. Quality is poor to fair. Dade--Harvesting remains active with a fair volume available. Quality is good. Supplies continue to decrease seasonally with picking expected to continue over the next two weeks. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. Hand picks are yielding a light volume. Quality and color are good.

**BLUEBERRIES:** Central--Picking is active. 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--Harvesting is very active. Quality is excellent with supplies available through June. Zellwood--Harvesting is active. Quality is mostly good. Dade--The season is finished.

**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 available. Color and sizes are increasing. East Coast--Crop condition remains mostly good for the late spring harvest. Runners are forming and plants are blooming and setting fruit. Harvest volume is moderate from all picks. Quality and color are good. Workers are mowing older fields with plastic being pulled up. Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Growth and development are good. Harvest is steady. Quality of fruit is fair to good.

**PICKLES:** West Central--The crop is in fair condition. Growth and development are slow but normal. Harvesting is steady. Fruit quality and color are fair but good. Dade--Harvest is complete. 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 mostly good. Harvest is active.

**EGGPLANT:** Southwest--Condition is rated fair to good. Harvesting remains steady. Quality is fair to good. West Central--Condition is fair. Cutting of a light volume is active. Quality is fair. Sizes are small to medium. East Coast--Plant growth is good. Cutting of regular and Italian types is active with a light volume available. Quality and color are good with fancy and medium grades available. Dade--Cutting continues to slow. Volume is light. Quality is good.

**ENDIVE/ESCAROLE:** Everglades--Harvesting continues to slow.

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

**LETTUCE:** Everglades--Harvesting is active but slowing seasonally. Quality is good with light volume available through mid-May.

**OKRA:** Dade--Rainfall boosted crop development. Harvesting is active with a good volume available. Quality is good.

**BELL PEPPERS:** Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Picking is steady. Quality is good. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. Crown and limb harvesting of green Bells is yielding good quality. Picking of red and yellow Bells is producing a light volume. Workers are cutting strings, pulling stakes, removing plastic and mowing plants on acreage completely harvested. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition.

**HOT PEPPERS:** Southwest--Crop condition is good. Picking remains steady. Quality is good.

**POTATOES:** Hastings--Digging is active. Quality is mostly good. West Central--Condition is rated fair to good. Harvesting is winding down. Quality is good. Sizes are fair to good. Southwest--Digging is finished.

**RADISHES:** Everglades, Lake Placid--Digging is active and is expected to continue over the next seven to ten days. Quality is good.

**SQUASH:** Southwest--Crop condition is good. Picking is slowing seasonally. Quality is good. East Coast--Crop condition is good. Harvesting is active with a light volume of zucchini and yellow types available. Quality and color are good with fancy and medium grades available. Dade--Picking is nearing the end. Quality is good. Volume is light with light supplies available for the next two weeks. West Central--Picking of a light volume remains active. Quality is mostly good.

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

**TOMATOES:** Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is rated fair. Harvesting is very active. Quality is fair to good. Sizes are variable. Southwest--The crop is in fair condition. Harvesting is winding down with most producers finished. Quality is good. First and second picks are producing 5x6 and 6x6 sizes with some third picks not made due to the low market. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Strong winds caused some foliage damage in isolated areas. Wet ground delayed field activities mid week in some localities. Harvesting continued with good quality and variable sizes available. Dade--Harvesting is virtually done with some pinhooking still active. Quincy--Harvesting is expected to start in late May or early June.

**CHERRY TOMATOES:** Southwest--Crop condition is good. Picking is steady. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Harvesting is starting to slow seasonally. Quality, sizes and color are good.

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

**WATERMELONS:** Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Picking is steady. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair to good. Harvesting is gaining momentum. Quality is good. Sizes are medium with some large sizes available. Jefferson County--Fruit is starting to set.

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