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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE



Week ending May 13, 2001

Released 4:00 P.M.

May 14, 2001

WEATHER SUMMARY: Rainfall amounts were mostly light during the week of May 6 through 12. No rainfall was reported at Tampa, Bradenton, Dover, Okahumpka, Ona and Tavares; a little over an inch was reported at Jacksonville. Other localities received mostly traces with a few areas receiving a quarter to a half inch. Temperatures at the major stations averaged one to four degrees below normal. Most daytime highs were in the 80s while nighttime lows were in the 50s, 60s and 70s. Alachua recorded at least one low in the 40s.

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. Farmers are cutting hay in irrigated hay fields. Growers reported 43 percent of the peanuts are planted compared with 37 percent last year and a five-year average of 49 percent.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	35	57	43	44
Short	60	39	52	51
Adequate	5	4	5	5
Surplus	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Statewide, pasture condition is lower due to prolonged drought. Supplemental hay feeding is again active in the northern part of State due to short pasture. The fire hazard increased due to drought. In the Panhandle, grass growth is slow due to drought and cool night temperatures. In the north counties pasture condition is poor. Only irrigated pastures are growing. Hay supplies are running out. The water table is low and water holes are drying up. In the central area, hay feeding is active in some locations as pasture is very short due to drought. In the west central counties, pastures need rain and water holes are drying up. The grass is green but getting brittle. Statewide, the condition of cattle, calves is poor to fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	5	0	0
Poor	55	70	25	10
Fair	45	25	65	85
Good	0	0	10	5
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: There were only a few isolated, light scattered showers this week. However, it was quite windy which accelerated evaporation on the east coast where there was only light rains. Growers and caretakers are continuing to irrigate around the clock where and when sufficient water is available. Rain is badly needed in all areas. Many lakes, ponds and water reservoirs are too dry for current use. New crop fruit is making seasonal progress in well-cared-for groves. Those groves with little or no irrigation have trees showing various stages of stress and limited new crop fruit. Harvest of Valencia oranges continues active in all areas with most of the fruit going to the processors. Grapefruit harvest continues to slow as good quality crops

are limited. Honey tangerines are just about over for the year.

Caretakers are cutting cover crops, spraying, fertilizing, hedging and topping. Burning permits are limited due to the dry conditions.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Apr 29	May 6	May 13
Valencia oranges	7,786,000	7,215,000	7,504,000
All grapefruit	1,492,000	1,034,000	1,151,000
Honey Tangerines	66,000	43,000	7,000

VEGETABLES: Producers are harvesting to meet the Memorial Day demand. Some tomato growers increased picking due to a higher market price. Vegetables available include potatoes, tomatoes, watermelons, sweet corn, peppers, cucumbers, cantaloups, squash, snap beans, cabbage, eggplant, radishes, escarole, endive, lettuce, blueberries, okra, parsley, and Chinese cabbage.

SNAP BEANS: North--Harvesting is steady. Quality is mostly good. Southwest--Crop condition remains good. Harvesting is steady with good quality available. Everglades--Picking is active. Volume is light. Dade--The crop is in good condition. Picking continues with good quality available. Volume is declining seasonally with harvesting to continue over the next ten to fourteen days. Growers are clearing acreage completely picked and planting cover crops. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Picking of a light volume remains active. West Central--Harvesting of U-Pic acreage remains active.

BLUEBERRIES: Central--Harvesting is starting to slow seasonally. Quality is mostly good.

CABBAGE: Dade, Southwest, Zellwood--Harvesting is complete. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal. Harvesting is winding down. Quality is good. Sizes and color are good. Hastings--Harvesting is virtually complete.

SWEET CORN: Everglades--Picking continues with mostly good quality available. Harvesting is expected to continue through June. Zellwood--Picking continues with mostly good quality available.

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 good. East Coast--Crop is in fair to good condition. Runners are forming, blooming, and setting fruit on the late crop. Harvest volume is moderate. Quality and color remain good. Clean up is active. Growers are mowing off and pulling up plastic on harvested fields. Southwest--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 to good condition. Growth and development are normal. Harvesting is steady. Fruit quality and color are fair to good. Dade--Harvesting is complete. Southwest--Crop is in fair condition. Growth and development are normal. Harvesting is winding down. Zellwood--Crop progress is generally good. Harvesting is active.

EGGPLANT: East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Cutting of a light volume continues. Quality and color are good. West Central--Harvesting is active. Supplies are light. Quality is mostly good. Southwest--The crop condition is rated fair. Cutting is winding down. Quality is fair to good. Dade--Harvesting is nearly finished. Quality is good. Supplies are light.

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

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

LETTUCE: Everglades--Harvesting is nearly finished.

OKRA: Dade--The crop is in very good condition with recent rains boosting development. Harvesting continues with good quality and supplies available. Volume is expected to be good over the next six weeks.

BELL PEPPERS: West Central--Crop condition is good. Picking started with good quality available. Sizes are medium and large. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Harvesting remains steady with fair to good quality available. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Picking of green Bells is providing large sizes from first picks and variable sizes from second and other picks. Producers are removing stakes, strings and plastic from fields completely picked.

HOT PEPPERS: Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting is steady with good quality available.

POTATOES: Hastings--Harvesting continues with mostly good quality available. West Central--Digging of table type for local sales is active.

RADISHES: Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvesting is nearly complete.

SQUASH: Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting is mostly steady. Quality is good. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Picking of a light volume is active. Quality and color are good. Workers are clearing acreage completely picked. Dade--Harvesting of a limited acreage remains active. Supplies are very light.

Picking of a light volume is expected to continue for ten to 14 days.

STRAWBERRIES: Dade--U-Pic harvesting is done. Plant City, Floral City--Harvesting is virtually over.

TOMATOES: Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair condition. Virtually all fruit has set. Sizing is fair. Picking continues at a very active pace. Fruit quality is fair to good. Pinhooking and U-Pic harvesting are active. Southwest--Condition is fair. Sizing is good. Picking picked up momentum when the market improved. Quality is fair to good. Vine ripe harvesting and pinhooking are very active. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. Picking increased when the market improved with first and second picks yielding good quality and extra large to large sizes. Third picks are providing variable sizes. Quality is good. Dade--The season is over except for some pinhooking. Quincy--Picking is expected to begin in late May or early June.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting remains steady with good quality available. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is steady. Quality and color are good. Sizes are normal. Supplies are fair to good.

PLUM TOMATOES: Southwest--Condition is fair. Harvesting continues at a steady pace. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair to good. Picking is mostly steady. Quality is good with supplies increasing seasonally.

WATERMELONS: Southwest--Condition is good. Harvesting is steady with good quality available. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is increasing seasonally. Quality and color are good. Sizes are variable.

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