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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending July 1, 2001

Released 4:00 P.M.

July 2, 2001

## FLORIDA AGRICULTURE



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Cloudy skies helped keep most temperatures below normal at the major stations during the week of June 24 through 30. Temperatures averaged normal to four degrees below at the major stations. Most daytime highs were in the 80s while nighttime lows were in the 60s and 70s. Alachua and Pierson recorded at least one low in the 50s. Spotty showers continued to replenish soil moisture supplies in many Panhandle and Peninsula localities. Rainfall for the week ranged from a little over a tenth inch at Apopka and Avalon to almost four and a half inches at Homestead and Miami.

**FIELD CROPS:** Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies vary from very short to surplus depending on the amount of rain received recently. Hay making is very active. Irrigated corn, tobacco, sugarcane and cotton are in good condition. Tobacco and corn silage harvesting is active. Most tobacco will be sold under contract with no markets scheduled to open. Peanut condition is rated 20 percent fair and 80 percent good with 65 percent of the acreage pegged.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	3	3	19	10
Short	50	25	48	45
Adequate	46	59	33	32
Surplus	1	13	0	13

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** In the Panhandle, pasture and cattle are in good condition following rain that boosted grass growth. In the north counties, recent rains have been great for pastures but have delayed haying. Pastures in the central area are in fair condition as rains have only been hit and miss. Some locations which received heavy rain also had damaging hail. The rainfall helped pond and stream levels. In the west central area, the pasture grass is growing following plenty of rain. The condition of cattle improved over previous weeks. In the southwest, the rainfall has been spotty and the pasture condition is mostly fair. Statewide, the cattle condition is mostly fair.

### VEGETABLE WEATHER SUMMARY JULY 2000 - JUNE 2001

Mostly dry conditions during July 2000 allowed producers to prepare land for fall crop planting. Palmetto-Ruskin and East Coast growers started to plant tomatoes as Quincy growers finished in late July. Rainfall during July ranged from about two and a third inches at Pensacola to about nine and three fourths inches at Melbourne with most central and southern Peninsula localities recording from four to almost nine inches for the month. The July rains were slightly above normal at some stations but most others were a half inch to over five inches below normal. July temperatures were one degree below normal to four degrees above at the major stations with most daytime highs in the 80s and 90s. Pensacola, Tallahassee, and Umatilla each recorded at least one high at 100 or more in July. Nighttime lows during July were mostly in the 70s and 80s with several stations recording at least one low in the 60s. Palmetto-Ruskin producers began watermelon and pickle planting about mid-August as East Coast growers started planting peppers. Producers in southern Peninsula areas delayed some field work in late August as Hurricane Debby approached but found relief when the storm broke up before hitting the State. Southwestern producers began planting tomatoes, eggplant, watermelon and peppers

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	5	5	5	5
Fair	70	75	80	65
Good	25	20	15	30
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** All areas of Florida's citrus belt received rain this week. The lower east coast and the upper west coast had locations with standing water in groves and ponding on dirt grove roads. Lakes, streams and water reservoirs are showing the beginnings of refilling following nearly three years of below average rainfall. Trees of all ages in well-cared-for groves have an abundance of new growth. New crop fruit continues to make good progress. There is only limited June bloom showing, generally on trees that have been stressed by the spring drought. Valencia harvest slowed considerably this week as only limited supplies remain to be picked. Movement of white and colored grapefruit is down to the last few hundred thousand boxes. There are only a few processors and fresh fruit packers still open.

Caretakers are very busy mowing, chopping, and discing cover crops that are making rapid growth with the help of the summer rains. Growers are fertilizing, spraying, hedging, topping, and burning dead trees.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Jun 17	Jun 24	Jul 1
Valencia oranges	3,861,000	3,293,000	959,000
All grapefruit	210,000	118,000	13,000

**VEGETABLES:** Okra harvesting in Dade County remains mostly steady with rainfall delaying some harvesting. Watermelon picking continues to decline seasonally in northern areas with a truck shortage slowing some movement. Tomato harvesting remains active around Quincy with mostly good quality available.

in mid to late August, as East Coast growers started tomato and eggplant planting. Rainfall during August totaled from about an inch at Moore Haven to almost eleven inches at Ft. Lauderdale. August rainfall for most localities remained below normal and ranged from almost six inches below at Archibald to almost four inches above at Tavernier. Temperatures in August averaged from two degrees below normal at Vero Beach to over three degrees above at Okeechobee.

Southwestern and Palmetto-Ruskin producers started planting cucumbers by early September. Squash planting began around Immokalee, also by early September. Tropical weather during September caused some fieldwork delays with heavy rains reducing yield prospects of some crops and causing some abandonment in flooded fields. Hurricane Gordon and Tropical Storm Helene off the west coast and over the Big Bend area in late September brought abundant rainfall to some northern areas. Quincy growers began picking tomatoes in late September. Strong winds from the Atlantic in late September brought significant precipitation to many eastern coastal localities. September rainfall ranged from less than an inch at

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

Miami Beach to almost twenty-seven inches at Jacksonville Beach. Several localities recorded above normal rains during September. Temperatures for September ranged from highs in the 70s, 80s and 90s to lows in the 60s and 70s. Tallahassee and Pensacola recorded at least one low in the 50s during September. September temperatures averaged from two degrees below normal at Pensacola to two degrees above at Sanford and St. Petersburg. A tropical disturbance passing through the Florida Straits in early October brought heavy rains and strong winds to some southern and central Peninsula localities. Heavy rains flooded some Dade County fields with snap beans suffering significant loss, while the rainfall and gusty winds increased bloom loss and fruit drop for tomatoes in the Immokalee and East Coast areas. This system brought significant amounts of rain to Vero Beach, West Palm Beach, Loxahatchee, Ft. Lauderdale, Homestead, and Tavernier with monthly totals ranging from six to thirteen inches. Elsewhere, October rainfall was limited to an inch and a third or less except for three to four inches reported in St. Augustine and Canal Point. Live Oak reported no measurable rain for the month and St. Leo recorded only traces. October rainfall was mostly from an inch to over three inches below normal. Temperatures during October were mostly one to four degrees below normal. October minimum low temperatures were in the 50s, 60s and 70s with the Crestview airport recording at least one low at 49 degrees. Harvesting of many fall vegetable crops was very active by the end of October.

Cool, dry weather continued into November. Temperatures at the major stations averaged normal to three degrees below. Most low temperatures were in the 50s, 60s and 70s while most high temperatures averaged in the 60s, 70s and 80s. Jacksonville, Pensacola and Tallahassee recorded at least one low in the 20s. November rainfall totals ranged from none at Ft. Myers to over eight inches at Pensacola. The clear weather throughout most of November allowed planting and harvesting of vegetables to stay on schedule. Dry conditions persisted during December with rains at the major stations totaling from traces at Belle Glade and Melbourne to about six inches at Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and Milligan with Niceville reporting over seven inches during the month. Homestead recorded from two to fifteen inches, nearly all on only one day in early December. These heavy showers destroyed the winter potato crop in Dade County. Frost and freezing temperatures dipped into some central Peninsula localities after mid-December with most temperatures averaging one to two degrees below normal for the month. December temperatures ranged from lows in the 30s, 40s and 50s, to highs in the 60s and 70s. Freezing temperatures reached the southern Peninsula as the New Year arrived with lowest readings recorded on New Year's Eve, New Year's Day and late in the first week of 2001. Some Homestead and Immokalee crops not protected by freeze covers or irrigation suffered significant damage from this freeze. Strawberry growers around Dover, Plant City and Floral City ran overhead irrigation to save plants and immature fruit from cold damage.

Cool temperatures throughout January slowed plant growth and fruit development with supplies of many crops significantly below normal. January temperatures averaged one to six degrees below normal. January rainfall totaled from traces to two and two-thirds inches and averaged from a third inch to almost four inches below normal. Palmetto-Ruskin growers started spring crop planting in late January and early February. Milder conditions during February allowed some acreage to recover from the freeze damages. February temperatures averaged four to almost eight degrees above normal while rain totaled from none to almost three inches. The February precipitation totals ranged from almost three to five and a quarter inches below normal. The threat of cold weather delayed the planting of some spring crops in northern Peninsula and Panhandle localities in early March. Storms during March brought welcomed rains to many Peninsula localities but strong winds caused some foliage damage with blowing sand scarring some fruit. Heavy rains during the last week of March brought light hail to some Palmetto-Ruskin localities. March precipitation totaled from about one inch at Ft. Myers and Moore Haven to almost thirteen inches at Deland. Cloud cover during the storms kept March temperatures below normal for a few days but clear skies during most of the month caused most monthly average temperatures to hover near normal. The mostly dry weather during the first three months of 2001 kept the threat of wild fires at dangerous levels with drought conditions persisting throughout the period.

Spotty showers at the beginning of April gave way to dry weather for most of the month. April rain ranged from none at Brooksville and Saint Leo to about two inches in Orlando and Ft. Lauderdale with most monthly totals from a third to over three inches below normal. April temperatures hovered within two degrees of normal at most stations. Gusty winds buffeted crops in many central and southern Peninsula localities during late April. Significant rains fell in May over many southern Peninsula localities with Hialeah recording over nine and a half inches for the month (almost three inches above normal). Other localities remained dry with Plant City and Usher Tower recording only traces of rain falling during May. The May rain total for Melbourne was about one and three fourths inches above normal while the total of about four inches at Myakka River State Park was about four tenths above. The May rain was below normal for most localities and ranged from about a tenth inch below normal at Miami to almost four inches below at St. Leo. Temperatures during May ranged from two degrees above normal at Sanford to two degrees below at Madison and Tavernier. Hot conditions in some southern Peninsula localities brought spring crop harvesting to an end in late May. Hot temperatures and nearly daily showers during late May and early June helped end harvesting in many southern and central Peninsula localities and interrupted some harvesting in northern areas. The remains of Tropical Storm Allison over the Panhandle and northern Peninsula regions about mid-June brought significant rains with Tallahassee recording over ten inches. Daytime highs soared into the mid-to-upper 90s throughout June.

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