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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending September 30, 2001

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**FLORIDA
 AGRICULTURE**



WEATHER SUMMARY: A tropical disturbance in the Gulf of Mexico combined with a cold front passing over the Peninsula brought abundant rains to many southern Peninsula localities during the week of September 23 through 29. Immokalee, Miami and Ft. Lauderdale recorded around seven to eight inches of rain for the week. West Palm Beach received about three and a half inches while central and northern Peninsula localities reported from a third to almost two inches. Most western Panhandle and some northern areas were drier with Pensacola reporting only traces of rain for the week. The cold front brought cooler conditions with temperatures at the major stations averaging from two to eight degrees below normal. Most daytime high temperatures were in the 70s and 80s. Low temperatures were mostly in the 50s over the Panhandle and some northern Peninsula counties, and in the 60s and 70s elsewhere with Tallahassee recording at least one low temperature in the 40s.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are mostly adequate to surplus with a few localities not receiving the heavy rains in northern and western Panhandle areas reporting short supplies. Peanut condition is rated 9 percent poor, 10 percent fair, 71 percent good, and 10 percent excellent. Peanut digging is 50 percent complete with the recent heavy rains delaying some harvesting. Cotton harvesting continues with most acreage escaping the brunt of the recent rain. Northern producers are planting small grains for pasture and picking corn as weather permits. The rain delayed some planting of sugarcane. Haymaking is active between showers with some northern growers finishing the last cut. Most pecan trees are still holding leaves with a moderate harvest expected.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	3	0	5	0
Short	11	5	9	8
Adequate	48	57	49	56
Surplus	38	38	37	36

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern counties, winter forage land preparation and seeding is underway. Shorter days and seasonally cooler nights are slowing grass growth in permanent pastures. Some leaf hopper and army worm problems were noted in hay fields. In the central area, stock pond and lake levels are rising somewhat but are still below normal. The pasture looks good. In the southwest, pastures in low areas are flooded from rains of the last few days. Statewide, cattle and calves are mostly in good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	10	0	0	0
Fair	15	25	10	10
Good	75	75	90	90
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: Most areas of Florida's citrus belt were wet again this week. Rainfall accumulations were generally in the one to two inch range

with a few areas getting some scattered thunderstorms and minor flooding. Some of the groves and roads had standing water and a little ponding. Most of the water reservoirs and lakes have finally refilled following two years of below average rainfall. There is an abundance of new foliage everywhere. New crop fruit continues to make very good progress. Splitting is showing on some early fruit in the wetter areas. Harvesting crews are moving Navels, Ambersweet oranges, white and colored grapefruit, Fallglo and Robinson tangerines into several fresh fruit packing houses for fresh fruit shipments.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops that are making rapid growth with the current tropical weather. Spraying of fruit going into the fresh markets is active between the rains. Growers are removing dead trees and replanting. Dead trees, limbs and general grove debris are all being burned or removed from the groves.

VEGETABLES: Heavy rains interrupted some field activities and reduced yield prospects for some crops in southern Peninsula localities. Tomato picking started in the Quincy area.

SNAP BEANS: Dade--The crop is in good condition. Planting continues to gain momentum. Everglades--Planting continues as weather permits. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is active. East Coast--Producers are planting a small acreage.

SWEET CORN: Everglades--Some planting was delayed up to ten days by recent rains. Crop damage from the heavy rains is currently being assessed. Harvesting is expected to begin in late November. Zellwood--Recent rains boosted crop development. East Coast--Planting is underway. Growers continue to disc land for planting and clean ditches.

CUCUMBERS, fresh market: Zellwood--Picking started. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Plant growth and development are good. Planting is active. East Coast--Seeding is gaining momentum. Oldest fields are germinating well. West Central--Rains delayed some field activity.

EGGPLANT: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting continues to increase. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. Workers are staking and tying oldest plants. Dade--Crop condition is rated very good. Plants are making good stands. Transplanting is active.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE: Everglades--Rains delayed some planting.

LETTUCE: Everglades--Recent rains slowed some planting.

OKRA: Dade--Cutting slowed due to a low market. Growers are starting to harvest younger acreage.

BELL PEPPERS: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting continues. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. Fruit is gaining size on oldest plants. Transplanting continues. Workers are discing, leveling land, laying plastic, staking, tying and spraying as needed. West Central--Some planting was delayed by recent rains.

HOT PEPPERS: Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is active. East Coast--Transplanting continues.

SQUASH: Southwest--Crop condition is good. Planting continues to increase. East Coast--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Oldest plants are blooming. West Central--Planting continues with some planting slowed by the recent rains.

STRAWBERRIES: Plant City, Dover, Floral City, Palmetto-Ruskin--Transplanting is getting underway.

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

TOMATOES: Quincy--Picking began. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Transplanting and other field work continue as weather permits. Damage from the most recent heavy rains is currently being assessed. West Central--Transplanting is virtually finished. East Coast--Crop condition is rated mostly good. Oldest plants are near the top of stakes. Transplanting remains active. Rainfall at the end of the week delayed some field work. Dade--Crop condition is good for the limited acreage planted. Transplanting is slow with most growers to start about mid-October.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is increasing.

PLUM TOMATOES: Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is mostly steady.

WATERMELONS: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition.

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