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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending November 4, 2001

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**FLORIDA  
AGRICULTURE**



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Mostly dry and cooler weather prevailed during the week of October 28 through November 3. Temperatures at the major stations averaged from one degree above normal at Daytona Beach and West Palm Beach, to three degrees below at Jacksonville. Daytime highs were mostly in the 70s and 80s. Nighttime lows averaged from the upper 40s at Tallahassee to the low 70s at Miami and West Palm Beach. Tallahassee and Alachua recorded at least one low in the 30s. Precipitation ranged from none to over an inch with most localities reporting traces to a third inch. Hurricane Michelle passed through the Florida Straits beginning on Sunday, November 4 with wind and rain damage in Dade County and other southern Peninsula localities currently being assessed.

**FIELD CROPS:** Topsoil moisture supplies are mostly short to adequate with mainly southern areas reporting surplus supplies and several northern Peninsula and Panhandle areas reporting very short supplies. Subsoil moisture is mostly short to adequate with some northern Peninsula and western Panhandle areas reporting short to very short supplies and a few southern Peninsula localities reporting surplus supplies. Planting of small grains remains active with many Panhandle and northern localities needing rain to boost germination and growth. Peanut digging is 98 percent finished. Last year growers dug 95 percent of peanuts by this date. The five-year progress for peanuts harvested is 96 percent done by this date. Picking of cotton made rapid progress with some harvesting finished. Sugarcane condition remains good. Sugarcane harvesting started about mid-October with both planting and harvesting interrupted by rains from Hurricane Michelle. Haying is active in southern Peninsula areas.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	2	10	6	7
Short	27	24	19	20
Adequate	50	58	50	62
Surplus	21	8	25	11

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** The Panhandle is dry, with fair pasture condition and good cattle condition. Winter forage is being planted. Pasture in some locations is in very poor condition and the condition of the cattle is fair. Hay is being fed to supplement poor pasture. In the north, permanent pasture grass stopped growing due to seasonal cool temperatures and cool season forage growth slowed dramatically due to dry weather. In the central area, pasture condition is poor to fair due to continued drought. The planting of small grains for winter forage is held up due to dry soil conditions. In the southwest, pasture is in poor to good condition as grass growth is slowing. In the southeast, some pastures have standing water from recent heavy rains.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	5	10	0	5
Fair	30	45	20	25
Good	65	45	80	70
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** Most areas of Florida's citrus belt received light, scattered showers with a good amount of variable winds. There were a few isolated thunderstorms associated with Hurricane Michelle that deposited up to an inch of rain in a few of the southern-most citrus groves. Some caretakers are irrigating to maintain good tree condition, primarily in the high sand hill groves. Cool night time temperatures greatly slowed the new growth patterns. Most of the early fruit has good on-tree coloring, with Sunburst tangerines and young tree Navels currently showing some of the best color. Fresh fruit packing houses are shipping Navels, Hamlins and a few Ambersweet oranges along with white and colored grapefruit, tangerines and a few tangelos. Most processors are taking packing house eliminations and a few are now accepting field-run early oranges.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops prior to harvesting. A few clean up sprays are being applied for mid and late season fresh crops. Dead tree removal and burning of grove trash continues in all areas. A few growers are still resetting older blocks of fruit.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Oct 21	Oct 28	Nov 4
Navel oranges	165,000	169,000	124,000
Early & Mid oranges including Ambersweet	125,000	258,000	777,000
All grapefruit	544,000	550,000	377,000
Tangerines	167,000	140,000	218,000
K-Early Citrus Fruit	7,000	9,000	0

**VEGETABLES:** Rain bands from Hurricane Michelle interrupted some planting and harvesting as it passed to the south at the end of the week. Crops available include tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, pickles, eggplant, squash, okra and watermelons.

**SNAP BEANS:** Dade--Young acreage is in good condition. Growers disced some of the oldest acreage due to mold. Planting remains active. Picking is getting underway with a fair volume available. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is steady. East Coast--Plant growth and bean development are fair to mostly good. Strong winds caused some bloom losses. West Central--Crop condition is rated fair to good.

**SWEET CORN:** Zellwood--Picking is nearing the end. Everglades--Harvesting is expected to begin in late November. East Coast--Strong winds laid over some of the oldest plants with recovery expected. Producers are preparing ground for winter crop planting. Southwest--Condition is fair to good.

**CABBAGE:** Dade--The crop is in good condition. Oldest acreage is beginning to form heads. Planting is active.

**CUCUMBERS, fresh market:** Palmetto-Ruskin, Plant City--Crop condition is fair to good. Picking is steady. Quality is fair to good. Color is good. Sizes are variable. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting continues at a steady pace. Picking of a light volume is active with good quality available. East Coast--Crop condition is fair to mostly good. Planting is winding down. Picking began with good quality and color available. Strong winds damaged some foliage with recovery expected.

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

**CUCUMBERS, pickles:** West Central--Condition is rated fair to good. Harvesting is gaining momentum. Quality is fair to good. Zellwood--Harvesting is virtually done. Dade--Picking continues. Quality is good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting of a small acreage continues. Harvesting started with good quality available.

**EGGPLANT:** East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Young plant growth is good. Strong winds tossed plants and caused some bloom loss. Planting of a small acreage is active. Harvesting of Italian and regular types continues with good quality and color available. Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Planting of a small acreage is active. Harvesting started with fair to good quality available with some fruit showing sand scars. Dade--The crop is in very good condition. Planting is steady.

**ENDIVE/ESCAROLE:** Everglades--Planting is active.

**LETTUCE:** Everglades--Planting remains active.

**OKRA:** Dade--Harvesting of a light volume is active. Quality is good.

**BELL AND OTHER SWEET PEPPERS:** Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting remains steady. Harvesting of Bell varieties is underway with fair quality available. Picking of other sweet varieties is steady with fair to good quality available. East Coast--Harvesting of green Bells and cubanelles continued with mostly good quality available. Growers increased picking near the end of the week to avoid possible losses due to Hurricane Michelle. Planting also slowed. West Central--Condition remains fair to good.

**HOT PEPPERS:** Southwest--Crop condition is good. Planting is steady. Picking of a very light volume is active with good quality available. East Coast--Harvesting continued with good quality available.

**POTATOES:** Southwest--Planting remains active. Dade--Planting is getting underway as weather permits. West Central--Ground preparation continues.

**SQUASH:** Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Strong winds broke some stems and leaves. Planting and picking are steady. Quality is good. East Coast--Crop condition is fair to mostly good.

Strong winds caused some bloom drop and stem breakage. Picking is active with good quality and color available. Sizes available include medium and fancy grades. Workers pulled plants completely picked. Dade--Young acreage is in good condition. Planting continues. Picking of a small volume started. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair. U-Pic harvesting is active.

**STRAWBERRIES:** Plant City, Dover, Floral City, Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in good condition. Dade--Planting of U-Pic acreage began.

**TOMATOES:** Quincy--Harvesting continues. Quality is mostly good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Fruit set and sizing are good. Transplanting is steady. Harvesting is slowly gaining momentum. Volume is light. Quality is fair with some fruit showing stem and shoulder cracks caused by excessive rains during most of September. Spraying, staking, pruning and tying continue as needed. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Fruit sizing is fair. Harvesting is slow with fair to good quality available. Spraying and tying are active. East Coast--Young plants are in good condition. Strong winds buffeted plants with some blooms lost and some foliage damaged. Plants are expected to recover. Planting remained active but slowed at the end of the week to avoid possible losses from Hurricane Michelle. Other field activities include staking, tying and spraying for the control of insects and disease. Dade--Plants are in good condition. Oldest plants are starting to bloom. Transplanting started to increase early in the week but slowed as Hurricane Michelle passed to the south at week's end. Workers continue to make beds, lay plastic, spray and stake as needed.

**CHERRY TOMATOES:** West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is steady. Color and quality are good. Sizes are normal. Volume is fair to good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting continues.

**PLUM TOMATOES:** West Central--Condition is fair to good. Picking is gaining momentum. Quality is fair to good. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is steady.

**WATERMELONS:** West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking remains steady. Quality is fair to good. Color is good. Sizes are mostly medium with some large sizes available. Southwest--Harvesting is finished.

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