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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending November 18, 2001

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FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE



WEATHER SUMMARY: Strong winds from the Atlantic brought significant showers to some coastal and central Peninsula communities during the week of November 11 through 17. Daytona Beach reported over six inches of rain for the week. Other reports ranged from no rain falling to almost three inches at Hastings. Most Panhandle and western Peninsula counties received very little rain with many having an increased danger of wildfires. Temperatures at the major stations averaged from two degrees below to three degrees above normal. Daytime highs were mostly in the 70s. Nighttime lows were in the 40s, 50s and 60s.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture supplies are mostly short to adequate with mainly eastern coastal areas reporting surplus supplies. A few northern Peninsula areas and nearly all Panhandle localities are reporting very short topsoil moisture. Subsoil moisture is mostly short to adequate with some northern Peninsula and western Panhandle areas reporting very short supplies and a few eastern coast localities reporting surplus supplies. Germination and growth of recent small grain seedings are very poor in some Panhandle and northern counties. Cotton harvesting remains active with most acreage already picked. Hay making continues in mainly central and southern Peninsula areas. Peanut digging is virtually finished. Sugarcane planting and harvesting continue in the Everglades area.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very short	14	8	8	4
Short	28	23	29	26
Adequate	53	58	56	59
Surplus	5	11	7	11

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Pasture in the Panhandle and northern counties is in very poor to fair condition due to drought and near freezing at night. There is little growth in the winter small grain forage. Considerable small grains for forage have not been planted or have not germinated due to the dry soil condition. Ranchers are feeding supplemental hay. Wildfire potential is high. In the central area, east coast counties received ample rain and Lake County has some standing water. However, western counties could use rain. Pastures are still green but growth has slowed. Statewide cattle condition is mostly fair to good.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very poor	5	5	0	0
Poor	20	10	5	5
Fair	30	30	35	30
Good	45	50	60	60
Excellent	0	5	0	5

CITRUS: Persistent showers plagued much of the east coast the first part of the week soaking groves and slowing harvest. The rest of Florida's citrus belt was relatively dry this week with only a little rain in a few scattered areas. Early and midseason fruit are generally well colored on the trees and need very little time in the degreening rooms when being packed for fresh utilization. Some of the Sunburst

tangerines have such excellent on-tree color that they could be packed following washing. Most fresh fruit packing houses are working long hours to satisfy the markets for the Thanksgiving trade. Virtually all the large processors are open or will open very soon and are taking both field-run fruit and packing house eliminations.

Caretakers are very active mowing, chopping and discing cover crops prior to harvest. Growers in the southern part of the State are completing their fall herbiciding programs. Vines are still being removed from tree tops where they have been covering foliage and this year's fruit. Dead tree removal continues along with the burning of dead limbs and stumps.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Nov 4	Nov 12	Nov 18
Navel oranges	124,000	292,000	265,000
Early & Mid oranges including Ambersweet	777,000	3,332,000	5,293,000
All grapefruit	377,000	666,000	593,000
Tangerines	218,000	350,000	275,000
Tangelos	3,000	24,000	55,000

VEGETABLES: Producers are harvesting to meet the Thanksgiving Day demand. Vegetables available include tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, pickles, eggplant, snap beans, squash, strawberries, sweet corn, okra and watermelons.

SNAP BEANS: Dade--Young fields are in good condition. Drier weather and spraying are keeping mold in control. Planting is active with some harvested acreage being replanted to a second crop of beans. Picking is increasing. Quality is good. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Harvesting continues with some growers slowing seasonally. Quality is fair to good. Color is good. Volume is light. North--Picking remains active. Quality is mostly good. Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting continues at a steady pace. Picking began. Quality is good. East Coast--Condition is fair to good. Hand picking is underway with a very light volume available. Quality is mostly good.

SWEET CORN: Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvesting is getting underway. Quality is mostly good. Volume is light. Earlier rains caused some quality reductions but quality is expected to improve. Southwest--The crop is in fair condition. Harvesting is gaining momentum. Quality is good. Volume is very light. Zellwood--Picking remains active with harvesting to continue into early December. Quality is mostly fair. Dade--Young acreage is in good condition. Planting remains active. East Coast--Ear development is good. Planting of winter crop acreage is active.

CABBAGE: Zellwood--Plant growth is good. Harvesting is expected to start in about two weeks. Dade--The crop is in good condition. Weekly plantings are on schedule.

CUCUMBERS, fresh market: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is steady. Picking continues at a steady pace with good quality available. East Coast--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting for the late fall crop is completed. Harvesting of super selects and selects is yielding good quality and color. Palmetto-Ruskin, Plant City--Condition is rated fair to good. Picking remains steady. Quality and color are fair to good. Sizes are variable. Zellwood--Harvesting continues. Quality is mostly good.

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

CUCUMBERS, pickles: Dade--Picking is slow with oldest fields nearly harvested. Winter crop planting is active. West Central--Condition is fair. Harvesting is steady. Quality is fair to good. Southwest--Harvesting continues. Quality is mostly good.

EGGPLANT: East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. First cuts are yielding good quality and color. Mostly fancy grades are available with some choice grades available from later picks. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is steady. Quality and color are good. Sizes are variable. North--Picking continues. Southwest--Condition is good. Planting is steady. Cutting is active with good quality available. Dade--Condition is good. Harvesting started with good quality available. Most planting is finished. Staking continues.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE: Everglades--Harvesting of a light volume started.

LETTUCE: Everglades--The crop is in mostly good condition. Harvesting of a light volume is getting underway.

OKRA: Dade--Harvesting is slowing seasonally. Quality is good. Volume is light.

BELL AND OTHER SWEET PEPPERS: Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting remains steady. Harvesting is increasing. Quality is good. East Coast--Plant growth is good. Transplanting is active. First picks of green Bells are producing very good quality with jumbo and double X sizes available. Growers are also making some second picks. Picking of a light volume of red Bells and cubanelles is active. Other field activities include laying of plastic, staking and tying. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is increasing seasonally. Quality is mostly fair to good.

HOT PEPPERS: Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting is steady. Picking is increasing. Quality is good. East Coast--Harvesting continues.

POTATOES: Southwest--Condition is good. Planting remains steady. Dade--Planting is active. West Central--Planting is expected to begin over the next two to three weeks.

SQUASH: Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Planting is steady. Picking remains steady with good quality available. East

Coast--Picking of fancy and medium grades of zucchini and yellow types remains active with good quality and color available. Dade--Young acreage is in very good condition. Planting continues. Picking continues to increase. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is fair to good. Harvesting is increasing. Quality and color are good. Sizes are variable. North--Harvesting continues.

STRAWBERRIES: Plant City, Dover, Floral City, Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting of a very light volume is active. Dade--Planting continues. Picking of U-Pic acreage is expected to begin about mid-December.

TOMATOES: Quincy--Harvesting continues. Quality is mostly good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Cooler temperatures are slowing plant growth and fruit sizing. Planting continues at a steady pace. Harvesting continues to increase. First picks are yielding fair to good quality while second picks are producing good quality. Sizes are variable. Spraying, staking, pruning and tying continue as needed. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Fruit sizing remains fair. Harvesting is active. Fruit quality is fair to good. Sizes are 6x6. Spraying for the control of disease and insects is active. East Coast--Milder weather is boosting plant growth. Transplanting of winter crop acreage is active. Picking is increasing with large sizes and mostly good quality available. Other field work: making plant beds, laying plastic, staking, tying and spraying. Dade--Crop condition is good. Planting continues. Picking of a very light volume is expected to begin in early to mid-December. Making of plant beds, laying of plastic, spraying and staking continue as needed.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting remains steady. Harvesting of a light volume is active. Quality is good. West Central--Condition is fair to good. Picking is mostly steady with some progress slowing seasonally. Quality and color are good.

PLUM TOMATOES: West Central--Condition is fair to good. Picking continues with fair to good quality and color available. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is steady. Harvesting is gaining momentum. Quality is fair to good.

WATERMELONS: Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking continues to slow. Quality and color are good. Sizes are variable. North--Harvesting is virtually done.

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