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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending February 17, 2002

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Some southern and southeastern coastal localities received significant rainfall during the week of February 10 through 16. West Palm Beach recorded almost six inches of rain for the week. Ft. Lauderdale and Ft. Pierce reported around two inches. Elsewhere, rainfall totaled from traces to about two-thirds inch. The danger of wildfire continues to increase over the northern and central Peninsula and in a few western Panhandle areas. Temperatures at the major stations averaged from one degree below normal to two degrees above. Daytime highs were mostly in the 60s and 70s with several localities recording at least one high in the 80s. Most daily lows were in the 40s, 50s and 60s. Tallahassee, Jacksonville, and Pensacola each recorded at least one low in the 30s.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture supplies are short to mostly adequate with some surplus moisture reported for the Everglades. Subsoil moisture supplies are short to mostly adequate with scattered areas of very short supplies over the western Panhandle and over the northern and central Peninsula. Surplus subsoil supplies exist in the Everglades region with producers draining fields as needed. Land preparations for the planting of tobacco, pastures and other crops are slowly increasing in the northern Peninsula and Panhandle areas. Transplants in tobacco hot beds are doing well. Excessive rains in the Everglades region delayed some sugarcane harvesting with most on schedule.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	4	0	4	2
Short	47	31	58	35
Adequate	49	63	38	57
Surplus	0	6	0	6

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, small grain pasture is in good shape. Permanent pasture Bahia grass began to green up following warmer temperatures. In the north counties, cool season forage picked up. However, some ranchers are concerned with hay supplies running low. Statewide, cattle are in fair to good condition, up slightly from the previous week.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	10	0	0	0
Poor	20	25	5	5
Fair	65	60	65	60
Good	5	15	30	35
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: There were spotty showers during the week in virtually all areas of the citrus belt as a fast moving cold front finally settled Saturday night and Sunday morning. Surface soil moisture is generally adequate on the east coast and lower interior as a result of a few hard rains. Most other areas are still irrigating to maintain good tree condition for the upcoming bloom period. Some trees in all areas have varying amounts of open bloom, however, most of the feathery new growth and pin head bloom buds are just starting to proliferate. Early and midseason harvest is slowing as supplies are running low in many of the major producing areas. Grapefruit harvest for processing is increasing as more of the juice plants are now taking field run fruit. Fresh grapefruit movement continues strong on the lower east coast.

Caretakers are busy mowing, chopping and discing cover crops for fire protection and prior to harvesting. New trees are being set in the warmer locations. Dead and dying trees are being pushed and burned in all areas. Late winter and early spring fertilizations are being applied in most counties.

Estimated boxes harvested week ended			
Crop	Feb 3	Feb 10	Feb 17
Navel oranges	113,000	122,000	41,000
Early & Mid oranges	7,786,000	7,259,000	6,800,000
Valencia oranges	74,000	118,000	275,000
All grapefruit	1,327,000	1,650,000	2,055,000
Early tangerines	22,000	11,000	14,000
Honey tangerines	149,000	126,000	134,000
Temples	80,000	119,000	142,000
Tangelos	104,000	94,000	86,000

VEGETABLES: Spring crop planting is gaining momentum in the Palmetto-Ruskin area. Planting and harvesting continue at a normal pace around Immokalee, Jupiter and Stuart. The rain delayed some vegetable harvesting around Homestead with most on schedule. Growers continue to harvest tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, celery, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, parsley, potatoes, radishes, snap beans, squash, sweet corn and strawberries.

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