



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service  
 1222 Woodward Street  
 Orlando, Florida 32803  
 407 / 648-6013

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>

# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending March 17, 2002

Released 4:00 P.M.

March 18, 2002

**FLORIDA**  
**AGRICULTURE**



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Storms near mid-week brought light showers to many localities during the week of March 10 through 16. Rainfall ranged from traces at Miami to an inch and a third at Pensacola with most localities reporting a half inch or less. Homestead, Lake Alfred and Ona recorded no measurable precipitation for the week. The threat of wildfires is increasing, especially over central Peninsula areas. Temperatures warmed with the weekly averages for the major stations, from normal to five degrees above. Daytime highs were mostly in the 70s and 80s. Nighttime lows were mostly in the 40s, 50s and 60s with Tallahassee reporting at least one low in the 30s.

**FIELD CROPS:** Soil moisture supplies are declining in most areas. Topsoil and subsoil moisture is mostly short to adequate. Field preparation for the planting of spring crops remains active across the northern and central Peninsula and over the Panhandle. Corn planting is active. Barley yellow dwarf virus continues to cause damage to small grains, especially oats, across the Panhandle and northern Peninsula. Some yield loss is expected from this infestation.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	0	13	0	0
Short	34	29	39	47
Adequate	64	58	61	53
Surplus	2	0	0	0

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** In the Panhandle and north, pasture and forage growth in most locations improved due to adequate soil moisture and favorable temperatures. However, the condition of some oats planted for forage was hurt by disease. Warm season pastures are still dormant and hay feeding of livestock continues. Some locations still have drought. In the central area, the pasture is recovering slowly from cold and frost of recent weeks. Most locations still have drought. Statewide, most of the cattle are in fair to good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	5	0	5
Poor	15	15	5	5
Fair	75	65	55	40
Good	10	15	40	50
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** There were only a few light scattered showers the first of the week and then summer-like weather arrived with hot daytime temperatures near the 90 degree mark. Growers are irrigating in all areas to keep trees in good condition during the current bloom period. Virtually all commercial citrus trees are covered with new growth and all stages of bloom. Some trees have had varying degrees of petal drop. Harvest of early and midseason oranges is just about over. Picking crews are scrapping some smaller crops, door yard trees and a few abandoned groves as the early portion is nearly completed. Valencia harvest is rapidly increasing as the processing plants are wanting the more highly colored juice. Also, more grapefruit are now going to the juice plants as they are maturing to a higher acid to solids ratios. Harvest of Honey tangerines and Temples continues active for both fresh and processing.

Caretakers are busy mowing, chopping and discing cover crops prior to harvesting and following hedging and topping. Dead trees are being pushed out and burned in all areas. Post bloom spraying is underway.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Mar 3	Mar 10	Mar 17
Navel oranges	11,000	4,000	1,000
Early & Mid oranges	3,860,000	2,373,000	1,362,000
Valencia oranges	1,164,000	2,351,000	3,435,000
All grapefruit	2,151,000	2,980,000	2,887,000
Early tangerines	9,000	7,000	3,000
Honey tangerines	159,000	159,000	180,000
Temples	175,000	130,000	90,000
Tangelos	32,000	15,000	8,000

**VEGETABLES:** Mostly mild weather kept planting and harvesting on schedule. Watermelon planting is gaining momentum in northern areas. Vegetables available include tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, parsley, potatoes, radishes, snap beans, squash, sweet corn and strawberries.

To receive this report via e-mail, send an e-mail message to [listserv@newsbox.usda.gov](mailto:listserv@newsbox.usda.gov) with the following message: **subscribe usda-fl-crop-weather your.name** An example: **subscribe usda-fl-crop-weather John Smith**. The report will be e-mailed automatically to your e-mail address each week.

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