WEATHER SUMMARY: Showers near the end of the week barely settled the dust in most localities during the week of March 17 through 23 with several areas reporting no measurable rain for the week. The danger of wildfires remains high in most central Peninsula localities. Rainfall totaled two-tenths inch or less at most stations except for Homestead which recorded about an inch, Tallahassee with about three-quarters inch, and Jacksonville with nearly two-thirds inch. Temperatures averaged two to five degrees above normal for the week although thermometers plunged at the end of the week bringing lows in the 40s to many central Peninsula areas on Saturday, March 23. Tallahassee and Pensacola reported at least one low in the 30s for the week. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s while most lows were in the 50s and 60s. Umatilla recorded at least one high in the 90s on Tuesday, March 19.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are mostly short to adequate with nearly all areas reporting some short supplies. Northern producers are currently assessing damage from the cold to small grains and other field crops planted. Most growers have not started planting spring field crops. Tobacco transplanting is getting underway. Sugarcane harvesting is slowing in the Everglades region with some mills closed.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and north, good growing conditions brought on growth in Bahia grass in many locations. Small grain forage is generally in good condition. However, grass growth in much of the area is limited by dry conditions. In the central counties, pastures remain green, however there is little grass growth due to very dry and windy conditions. Statewide, the condition of cattle ranges from poor to good, with most in fair condition.

VEGETABLES: The cold caused no significant damage to tomatoes around Quincy. Northern watermelon growers are currently assessing effects of the cold temperatures on recent sets. The temperatures were not low enough to cause major damage to acreage in the central and southern Peninsula. Vegetables available include tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, parsley, potatoes, radishes, snap beans, squash, sweet corn and strawberries.

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