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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending April 28, 2002

Released 4:00 P.M.

April 29, 2002

WEATHER SUMMARY: Hot temperatures persisted during the week of April 21 through 27. Temperatures at the major stations averaged three to seven degrees above normal. Daytime highs were mostly in the 80s and 90s. Nighttime lows were in the 50s, 60s and 70s. The clash of the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico sea breezes brought thunderstorms to some inland Peninsula areas with mostly a half inch or less rain accumulating. However, most localities recorded no measurable rain for the week. The danger for wildfires remains high in most central and southern Peninsula areas.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are rated mostly short to adequate with some very short supplies reported for the north central Peninsula. The recent lack of significant rains over the Panhandle and the Peninsula is causing soils to become drier. Ten percent of peanuts are planted with more growers planning to start this week. Cotton planting is in full swing in the western Panhandle. Tobacco remains in good condition.

| Moisture Rating | Topsoil | | | Subsoil | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | This week | Last week | Last Year | This week | Last week | Last Year |
| | Percent | | | | | |
| Very short | 2 | 1 | 37 | 2 | 1 | 59 |
| Short | 72 | 23 | 59 | 62 | 31 | 36 |
| Adequate | 26 | 76 | 4 | 36 | 68 | 5 |
| Surplus | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, several counties are dry, however some areas have received showers. Bahia grass is showing drought signs. In the north and central counties, drought is limiting grass growth. The condition of the pasture is mostly fair to good. Pasture in the southwest ranges from poor to good, with most reported to be in fair condition. Statewide, the condition of cattle and calves is mostly fair.

| Condition | Range | | Cattle | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | This week | Last week | This week | Last week |
| | Percent | | | |
| Very poor | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Poor | 10 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Fair | 60 | 45 | 75 | 50 |
| Good | 30 | 50 | 25 | 45 |
| Excellent | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

CITRUS: Most of this week was hot and dry with near record high temperatures in some areas of the citrus belt. However, on Friday night, there were some general storms in the northern and coastal counties that provided badly needed moisture to many groves. Growers in all areas have been irrigating to maintain good tree condition during the current all important fruit setting period. Most trees are normally shedding a lot of the new little fruit that they can't carry next season. Harvesting of Valencia oranges is very active in all areas with most of these late oranges going to the processors. Grapefruit movement is slowing a little as supplies are running low in some areas. The juice plants are taking most of the grapefruit. However, there are both white and colored fresh shipments moving primarily from the lower east coast. Temple and Honey Tangerine harvests are nearly complete for this season.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops in all areas for moisture preservation and fire protection. Dead and dying trees are being clipped, pushed out and burned. Resets are being planted mainly in the larger groves. Growers are spraying, fertilizing and herbiciding.

| Estimated boxes harvested week ended | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Crop | Apr 14 | Apr 21 | Apr 28 |
| Valencia oranges | 7,401,000 | 7,998,000 | 8,081,000 |
| All grapefruit | 2,044,000 | 1,821,000 | 1,529,000 |
| Honey tangerines | 80,000 | 32,000 | 18,000 |
| Temples | 19,000 | 14,000 | 16,000 |

VEGETABLES: Supplies from central and northern areas are slowly increasing. Hot temperatures continue to reduce supplies from the southern Peninsula. Vegetables available include tomatoes, peppers, blueberries, Chinese cabbage, celery, cantaloupes, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, parsley, potatoes, radishes, snap beans, squash, sweet corn and watermelons.

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