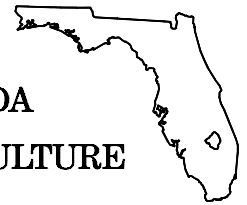




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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending May 26, 2002

Released 4:00 P.M.

May 28, 2002

WEATHER SUMMARY: Cooler temperatures prevailed during the week of May 19 through 25. Temperatures averaged from two degrees below normal to nine degrees below at the major stations. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s while nighttime lows were in the 50s and 60s. Tallahassee and Alachua each recorded at least one low in the 40s. Rainfall varied from traces to over four and a half inches. Southeastern coastal localities and a few inland areas of the southern Peninsula recorded heavier amounts of rain as a low pressure system passed off the east coast on a north bound journey. A few localities reported no measurable rain for the week.

FIELD CROPS: Scattered storms left some areas wet and others dry. Topsoil and subsoil moisture remains mostly short in the northern Peninsula and Panhandle areas, while central Peninsula soil moisture varies from very short to adequate according to the amount of rain received recently. Southern Peninsula localities report mostly short soil moisture supplies. The danger of wildfire is high. Seventy-five percent of peanuts are planted equal to a year ago but below the five-year average of 79 percent. Dry soils are delaying some planting of cotton and peanuts. Producers replanted some cotton acreage due to grasshoppers and poor germination caused by dry soils in the Panhandle. Cool temperatures are slowing the growth of peanuts and cotton. Corn condition is rated excellent in localities that received recent rainfall but varies in drier areas.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	8	44	43	12	23	39
Short	76	43	44	76	64	47
Adequate	16	13	14	12	13	14
Surplus	0	0	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Pasture condition ranges from poor to good in the Panhandle region with localities receiving recent rainfall reporting better conditions. Northern Peninsula pastures are rated very poor to fair while central and southern Peninsula range condition is mostly poor to fair. Ranchers located in drier areas are feeding supplemental hay to animals. Most cattle are rated in fair condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	5	5	5	5
Poor	40	40	5	10
Fair	45	50	85	75
Good	10	5	5	10
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: Most areas of Florida's citrus belt were very dry this week with some growers reporting windy conditions. There were a few insignificant showers in some of the coastal groves. However, caretakers are still irrigating around the clock to maintain good tree condition. There is some wilt in those groves with little or no supplemental water supplies. New crop fruit continues to make good progress. Most shelling off of excessive new little green fruit is complete as most trees have adjusted to the size crop they can carry for the next fruit season. Harvest of Valencia oranges continues active with some areas slowing due to picker shortages, dwindling supplies and a few processors shutting down for the season. Movement of white and colored grapefruit is slowing due to limited supplies and the closing of fresh fruit packing houses. Temple and Honey tangerine harvests have been completed.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and disking cover crops for fire protection and moisture conservation. Harvested groves are being hedged and topped with the limbs being burned where permits are available. Dead trees with Tristeza and other types of decline are being pushed out and stacked for future burning. Resets are being planted in the larger groves. Growers are spraying and fertilizing in all areas.

Estimated boxes harvested week ended			
Crop	May 12	May 19	May 26
Valencia oranges	6,895,000	7,386,000	5,498,000
All grapefruit	1,083,000	656,000	360,000
Honey tangerines	1,000	0	0
Temples	1,000	0	0

VEGETABLES: Harvesting of most crops slowed for the Memorial Day observance. Watermelon picking gained momentum to meet the holiday demand. Tomato picking is underway in the Quincy area. Supplies of blueberries, cantaloupes, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, squash and snap beans are declining seasonally as hot temperatures bring harvesting to an end in some central and most southern Peninsula areas. Other vegetables and melons available include tomatoes, peppers, okra, potatoes, radishes, sweet corn and watermelons.

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