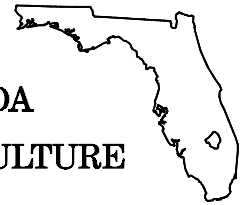




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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending October 13, 2002

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Scattered showers dropped varying amounts of rain during the week of October 6 through 12. Several central and southern Peninsula localities reported no rainfall for the week; almost an inch and a half was reported in Immokalee and Pensacola. A few central and northern Peninsula localities also recorded over an inch of rain for the week. Temperatures at the major stations averaged two to eight degrees above normal. Daytime highs were in the 80s and 90s. Nighttime lows were in the 60s and 70s.

FIELD CROPS: Rains over some Panhandle areas improved soil moisture conditions. However, most Panhandle and northern Peninsula soil moisture is rated short to adequate with a few localities reporting surplus supplies. Central and southern Peninsula soil moisture is rated mostly adequate with pockets of short moisture in areas not receiving recent rains. Recent rains reduced the quality of some cotton in the Panhandle with heavy showers causing some cotton to fall to the ground. High humidity delayed some peanut digging until mid day or later in most Panhandle areas. Peanut harvesting is 70 percent done compared with 78 percent finished by this date last year and the five year average of 76 percent completed. Sugarcane is in good to excellent condition. Sugarcane harvesting is expected to get underway this week after the threat of tropical storms passes. Small grain planting is slowly increasing. The rainfall delayed some hay harvesting with peanut hay making gaining momentum in the Panhandle.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	5	5	7	5	5	4
Short	20	15	19	20	20	19
Adequate	70	60	64	70	55	62
Surplus	5	20	10	5	20	15

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, the planting of small grains for winter forage began. Planting was held up in many locations due to the rainy weather and wet soil conditions. Pastures in the north and Big Bend counties are mostly in fair condition due to dry soil conditions. In the central counties, the breakout of armyworms was short and the pasture is mostly in good condition. In the south, pasture is fair to good. Statewide, the condition of cattle is mostly good.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	5	5	0	5
Fair	30	15	20	10
Good	65	75	80	80
Excellent	0	5	0	5

CITRUS: The rainfall this week was generally of a light scattered nature that was hit and miss in most areas. Due to the limited rains the past few weeks some growers and caretakers have started irrigating in spite of the heavy rains all summer long. Groves and trees are generally in very good condition. Some of the new foliage is starting to turn darker green as the days get shorter and the average daily temperature gets lower. A lot of the early fruit is showing fairly good on-tree color break. Harvest of Navels, Ambersweet and Hamlin oranges, early tangerines and white and colored grapefruit continues to increase in all areas. Virtually all of this early fruit is going to the fresh packing houses. There are just a few small processors taking packing house eliminations. Several of the larger processors are planning to open in the next few weeks.

Caretakers are very busy mowing, chopping and discing cover crops that have grown tall and out of control. Vines are still being removed from the tops of trees before they shade out some of the new crop fruit. Dead trees are being cut down, pushed out and burned. A few resets are still being planted where available. Fall fertilizing, spraying, and herbiciding are winding down in most areas.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Sep 29	Oct 6	Oct 13
Navel oranges	30,000	56,000	90,000
Early & Mid oranges including Ambersweet	48,000	81,000	110,000
All grapefruit	155,000	311,000	414,000
Tangerines	92,000	98,000	90,000
Tangelo	0	1,000	3,000

VEGETABLES: Strawberry planting is 40 percent completed with growers to transplant late maturing varieties this week. Strawberry picking is expected to begin in early November with increased supplies available for the Thanksgiving holiday. Harvesting is slowly increasing in southern Peninsula areas. Tomato harvesting continues around Quincy while picking is getting underway in southern Peninsula localities. The cutting of okra is active in Dade County. Growers are marketing very light supplies of watermelons, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, and squash.

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