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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending November 3, 2002

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Mostly cooler weather arrived in central and southern areas near the middle to the end of the week of October 27 through November 2. Temperatures in the major cities averaged three to six degrees above normal. Daytime highs were mostly in the 70s and 80s with some central and southern Peninsula localities recording at least one high in the 90s. Nighttime lows varied from the 40s and 50s across the Panhandle and in most northern and some central Peninsula areas, to the 60s and 70s elsewhere. Rainfall varied from none in Immokalee, West Palm Beach and Lake Alfred to nearly three inches in Marianna with reports of up to eight inches falling in the Chipley area.

FIELD CROPS: Heavy rains in some Panhandle localities replenished topsoil moisture with surplus supplies reported by areas receiving the rainfall. Some Big Bend, northern Peninsula and southeastern localities report short to very short soil moisture. However, most topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are rated adequate. Plentiful rains in many Panhandle areas during October hampered both cotton and peanut harvesting with some peanut fields abandoned and cotton picking well behind normal. Peanut digging is 96 percent done compared with 98% last year and the five-year average progress of 97% finished. Some open cotton bolls have seed starting to sprout in fields not yet picked. Some fields are too muddy to support the cotton harvesting equipment. Hay making continues as weather permits. Sugarcane harvesting continues in the Everglades region.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	1	5	9	3	5	7
Short	24	20	24	29	20	20
Adequate	68	70	57	65	70	60
Surplus	7	5	10	3	5	13

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern counties, permanent pasture grass growth is slowing as temperatures are cooler and days are shorter. The planting of small grains for winter forage is going well. In the central areas, the pasture condition is improved from the previous week. Statewide, cattle are mostly in good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	0	5	0	0
Fair	25	25	15	20
Good	70	70	80	80
Excellent	5	0	5	0

CITRUS: The first of the week was very warm and dry, then a fast-moving cold front on Wednesday dumped varying amounts of much needed rain throughout the citrus belt. Rain is still needed in most areas. Some growers and caretakers are irrigating to maintain good tree condition. A lot of the fall flush of growth is turning darker green with the help of shorter days and cooler nights. New crop fruit continues to make rapid improvement with advanced maturity. Harvest of early and midseason oranges is progressing as several crops are being picked for field run movement. Many processing plants are open and taking both packing house eliminations and field run fruit. Virtually all of the processors plan to be open for full operations by mid-month. There are still good quantities of fresh shipments of Navels and other early oranges, grapefruit, early tangerines and tangelos.

Caretakers are very busy cutting cover crops for the upcoming winter season. Main grove ditches are being cleaned with banks mowed for efficient water movement. Fresh crops are still getting some sprays applied. Dead trees are being pushed out and burned. A few resets are still being planted in some of the larger groves.

Estimated boxes harvested week ended			
Crop	Oct 20	Oct 27	Nov 3
Navel oranges	111,000	119,000	169,000
Early & Mid oranges including Ambersweet	114,000	250,000	1,102,000
All grapefruit	522,000	621,000	693,000
Tangerines	98,000	153,000	221,000
Tangelos	1,000	2,000	25,000

VEGETABLES: Fall crop harvesting is gaining momentum in central and southern Peninsula localities. Producers are marketing tomatoes, peppers, snap beans, cucumbers, eggplant, okra, squash, sweet corn and watermelons. The tomato harvest around Quincy is nearly finished with fall crop yields reportedly below normal due to rain damage. Strawberry growers in the Plant City area welcomed the cooler temperatures which aid fruit development. Strawberry transplanting is winding up.

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