



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service
1222 Woodward Street
Orlando, Florida 32803
407 / 648-6013

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>



WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending November 24, 2002

Released 4:00 P.M.

November 25, 2002

WEATHER SUMMARY: Cooler temperatures prevailed during November 17 through 23. Temperatures averaged four to seven degrees below normal in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 60s and 70s with a few southern Peninsula areas recording at least one high in the 80s. Nighttime lows were in the 40s, 50s, and 60s with at least one low in the 20s recorded across the Panhandle and northern Peninsula, and at least one low in the 30s recorded by some central Peninsula localities. Rainfall ranged from traces to over an inch. Most localities recorded less than a half inch of rain for the week.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are mostly adequate in all areas with a few pockets of very short to short supplies where the recent rains missed. Soil moisture remains surplus in areas receiving the brunt of recent rains. Drier conditions allowed some drying of peanut and cotton fields in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula. However, some acreage remains too wet to harvest with producers reporting abandonment of some fields. Peanut harvesting is 98 percent finished compared with 100 percent for acreage dug by this date last year and for the five-year average harvest progress. The recent rain boosted growth of small grains planted this fall. Sugarcane harvesting remains active in the Everglades.

| Moisture Rating | Topsoil | | | Subsoil | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | This week | Last week | Last year | This week | Last week | Last Year |
| | Percent | | | | | |
| Very short | 1 | 3 | 13 | 1 | 3 | 10 |
| Short | 9 | 25 | 22 | 19 | 22 | 16 |
| Adequate | 80 | 62 | 63 | 70 | 70 | 64 |
| Surplus | 10 | 10 | 2 | 10 | 5 | 10 |

VEGETABLES: Mostly clear weather allowed field work to progress on schedule. Producers are harvesting to meet the holiday demand. Vegetables available include snap beans, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, okra, peppers, radishes, squash, tomatoes and very light supplies of parsley, strawberries and watermelons. Strawberry growers welcomed the cooler temperatures which aid fruit maturation. Recent heavy rains damaged some tomatoes with reduced yield expected.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, generally cool temperatures, with isolated frost, reduced the quality of annual summer pasture. Small grain pasture growth is late in developing in some locations because they were planted late. In the north, cool season forages are doing well, due to adequate and timely rainfall. In the central counties, pasture and cattle are in fair to good condition. In the southern area, the condition of pasture and cattle is good. Statewide, the cattle condition 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 | 0 |
| Fair | 40 | 50 | 25 | 35 |
| Good | 50 | 40 | 75 | 60 |
| Excellent | 5 | 5 | 0 | 5 |

CITRUS: Many areas in Florida's citrus belt dried out this week following last weekend's drenching downpours. The lower interior and west coast were the wettest. This week was generally dry and cool, with cold temperatures on Friday and Saturday nights. There was no frost in the citrus growing counties. Fewer hours of daylight and cool night time temperatures are greatly reducing tree growth. Groves, trees and new crop fruit are all in very good to excellent condition. There is some splitting of fruit on the heavier soils that have had a lot of rain since September. Harvesting crews are very active picking crops for both fresh and process use. All of the processors are open and taking both field run fruit and packing house eliminations.

Caretakers are busy mowing, chopping, discing and generally clean cultivating cover crops for the winter season. Herbicides are still being applied to some young trees and resets. Some of the late season fresh crops are still being sprayed. Heaters have been fueled and placed in a few cold pockets in northern groves.

| Crop | Estimated boxes harvested week ended | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Nov 10 | Nov 17 | Nov 24 |
| Navel oranges | 261,000 | 172,000 | 229,000 |
| Early & Mid oranges including Ambersweet | 3,126,000 | 3,980,000 | 6,002,000 |
| All grapefruit | 856,000 | 542,000 | 713,000 |
| Tangerines | 312,000 | 208,000 | 230,000 |
| Tangelos | 39,000 | 76,000 | 74,000 |

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