WEATHER & CROP NEWS
Week ending February 9, 2003

WEATHER SUMMARY: Slightly warmer temperatures, especially over the southern Peninsula, aided crop growth and development during the week of February 2 through 8. Most temperatures for the week averaged one to two degrees below normal in the major cities except for two to three degrees above at Miami and West Palm Beach. Most daytime highs were in the 60s and 70s with several southern Peninsula localities recording at least one high in the 80s. Nighttime lows were mostly in the 40s, 50s and 60s with most localities reporting at least one low in the 30s. Showers brought nearly two inches of rain to some Panhandle and northern Peninsula areas while several central and most southern Peninsula areas recorded from none to only traces of rain for the week.

FIELD CROPS: Mostly rainy conditions over the Panhandle and most of the northern Peninsula increased most topsoil moisture supplies. Mostly drying conditions over the central and southern Peninsula lowered soil moisture. Topsoil moisture supplies, statewide, are rated mostly short to adequate while subsoil moisture is short to mostly adequate. The moisture supplies, statewide, are rated mostly short to adequate. The southeastern Peninsula reported very short topsoil moisture. Producers are preparing land for planting of spring acreage. Tobacco growers are tending hot beds. Sugarcane harvesting and southern Peninsula lowered soil moisture. Topsoil moisture supplies. Mostly drying conditions over the central and most of the northern Peninsula increased most topsoil moisture. Producers are preparing land for planting of spring acreage. Tobacco growers are tending hot beds. Sugarcane harvesting remains active in the Everglades.

VEGETABLES: Warmer and mostly dry weather over the major areas of production boosted the growth and development of most crops. Potato digging is getting underway. Vegetables available include snap beans, carrots, cabbage, celery, cilantro, cucumbers, sweet corn, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, miscellaneous herbs, parsley, peppers, radishes, squash, strawberries, tomatoes and very light supplies of potatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Pastures from the Panhandle through the central area are in very poor to good condition. Freezing temperatures and drought are limiting grass growth. In the south, the condition of range is slightly improved, but growth of grass is held back by drought. Statewide, the condition of cattle is mostly fair.

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

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