WEATHER SUMMARY: Frequent showers brought ample moisture to all areas except parts of the southern Peninsula during the week of March 2 through 8. Rainfall ranged from no rain in Miami to nearly four inches at Daytona Beach with several localities receiving one to almost three inches. Drier areas included Bradenton, Home- stead and some areas around Immokalee. Temperatures in the major cities averaged from one to eleven degrees above normal. Daytime highs were in the 60s, 70s and 80s with Miami and West Palm Beach reporting at least one high in the 90s. Nighttime lows were mostly in the 50s and 60s with Pensacola and Tallahassee recording at least one low in the 40s. Storms crossing the Panhandle and the northern and central Peninsula on Sunday, March 9 dumped an additional two thirds to nearly three inches of rain with most southern Peninsula areas escaping the heavy showers.

FIELD CROPS: The rains replenished topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies over most of the Panhandle and the Peninsula with supplies rated mostly adequate. Several Panhandle and northern Peninsula localities reported surplus supplies while some southern Peninsula areas reported short to very short supplies. Wet soils are delaying crop plantings in the northern and central Peninsula. The warmer temperatures and adequate moisture are spurring the growth of small grains. Sugarcane harvesting continues in the Everglades with the recent rains causing only minor delays.

VEGETABLES: Soggy soils are slowing potato digging and causing rot in some fields with most acreage adequately draining off excess moisture. Wet fields are slowing land preparations for the planting of watermelons and other vegetables in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula. Mostly drier weather around Dover allowed strawberry harvesting to continue at a normal pace. Cabbage harvesting is increasing to meet the mid-March holiday demand. Mostly drier conditions in the Palmetto-Ruskin, Immokalee and Homestead areas permitted vegetable planting and harvesting to proceed with few delays. Vegetables available include snap beans, carrots, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, peppers, potatoes, radishes, squash, strawberries, tomatoes and very light supplies of cucumbers.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern counties, winter forage is growing rapidly following the rains and warmer temperatures. Some ponds have standing water for the first time in a few years. Oats forage damaged by virus appear to be recovering. Some pastures are flooded and some ryegrass and small grain forage are too wet to apply fertilizer. In the central areas, winter forage condition improved due to warmer temperatures and rain. In the southern areas, pasture condition is poor to fair. Statewide, the condition of the cattle is fair to good.

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