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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending May 11, 2003

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Dry, hot conditions prevailed during the week of May 4 through May 10. Temperatures averaged four to nine degrees above normal in the major cities. Most localities baked as daytime highs reached into the mid to upper 90s. Many cities set new daily record highs during the week. Nighttime lows were in the 60s and 70s. Rainfall ranged from zero to about a third inch at Ocklawaha. Most areas recorded no measurable rain for the week. Then danger for wild fires is increasing.

FIELD CROPS: High temperatures, strong winds and a lack of rain are drying soils. Topsoil moisture supplies are rated mostly short to adequate in the Panhandle and across the northern Peninsula. Subsoil moisture is mostly adequate in the Panhandle but is short to adequate across the northern Peninsula. Soil moisture is mostly short to adequate in the central and southern Peninsula. Pockets of very short moisture remain in the extreme southeastern Peninsula and are starting to show up in a few central and northern Peninsula localities. The dry conditions prevented some planting in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula. Peanut planting is 25 percent done compared with 34 percent last year and the five-year average progress of thirty-seven percent finished by this date. Some cotton planting is nearly finished. Hay making is active in all areas.

| Moisture Rating | Topsoil | | | Subsoil | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | This week | Last week | Last year | This week | Last week | Last Year |
| | Percent | | | | | |
| Very short | 10 | 1 | 47 | 1 | 0 | 24 |
| Short | 50 | 24 | 49 | 39 | 25 | 72 |
| Adequate | 40 | 60 | 4 | 60 | 60 | 4 |
| Surplus | 0 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 0 |

VEGETABLES: Growers stepped up harvesting to meet the Memorial Day demand. A truck shortage is slowing some movement, especially for watermelons. Vegetables available include cantaloupes, cucumbers, sweet corn, eggplant, okra, peppers, potatoes, squash, tomatoes, watermelons and light supplies of blueberries. The volume of cabbage, carrots, celery, endive, escarole and radishes is declining seasonally.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern counties, pasture condition decreased due to hot temperatures, steady winds and drought. Cattle condition is improving with better grass now in the pastures. Haying is active. In the central areas, pasture condition is down due to seasonal hot, dry conditions. Haying is active. In the south, pasture condition is lower due to hot, dry winds, with the condition somewhat

balanced by recent scattered rainfall. Statewide, condition of cattle and calves is mostly good.

| Condition | Range | | Cattle | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | This week | Last week | This week | Last week |
| | Percent | | | |
| Very poor | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Poor | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Fair | 40 | 30 | 15 | 25 |
| Good | 50 | 60 | 75 | 65 |
| Excellent | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |

CITRUS: The first full week of May was very warm and dry. Rain is needed in all areas. Growers and caretakers are irrigating in an all out effort to maintain good tree condition during this all important time when their trees are setting next seasons fruit crops. A few non irrigated groves are starting to show some afternoon leaf curl and wilt as a result of the current dry conditions and high temperatures. Harvesting crews are still very active moving the remaining Valencias to the processors. Some picking crews are quitting in the early afternoon because of the high temperatures. There are still several thousand boxes of both colored and white grapefruit to be harvested. Most of the remaining grapefruit are going to the processors. Several fresh fruit packing houses closed this week as their supplies have run out. Temple harvest is virtually completed for this season as only a few thousand boxes remain to be picked.

Caretakers are very busy mowing, chopping, and discing cover crops to help conserve sub-surface moisture levels. Hedging and topping continue in harvested groves in all areas. Dead trees are being pushed, cut out and burned. Some burn permits are being restricted due the dry and windy conditions. Spring and early summer sprays and fertilizations are both being applied all over the citrus belt. New trees are only going into groves with permanent irrigation.

| Crop | Estimated boxes harvested week ended | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Apr 27 | May 4 | May 11 |
| Valencia Oranges | 7,285,000 | 5,891,000 | 7,467,000 |
| All grapefruit | 731,000 | 493,000 | 180,000 |
| Honey tangerines | 92,000 | 66,000 | 54,000 |

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