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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending July 13, 2003

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**FLORIDA
 AGRICULTURE**



WEATHER SUMMARY: Scattered showers brought varying amounts rain during the week of July 6 through 12. Only traces of rain fell in some northern Peninsula, some Panhandle and most southeastern coast localities. Other areas received from a half inch to over two and a half inches with Dover reporting over three and a half inches for the week. Temperatures in the major cities averaged from one degree below to three degrees above normal with cloud cover keeping temperatures down for most of the week. Daytime highs were mostly in the 90s while nighttime lows were mostly in the 70s. Outer bands of rain spawning off Tropical Storm Claudette brought heavy showers and thunderstorms to nearly all Gulf coast and many inland Peninsula areas on Sunday, July 13.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are mostly adequate to surplus in the Panhandle with short supplies reported for some northern and northcentral Peninsula localities. Southeastern Peninsula soil moisture supplies are very short to short. Elsewhere, soil moisture is adequate. Drying conditions in Taylor County allowed some producers to bale hay. Corn silage harvesting is getting underway in Washington County with corn and cotton reportedly in good condition. Some Columbia County producers are just starting the second tobacco picking while others are finished, with overall progress nearly two thirds complete. Virtually all Columbia County tobacco harvest is expected to be completed over the next two weeks. Some tobacco growers in Madison County have picked at least to the fourth leaf level on the stalk. Some cover crops are showing stress due to drought in St. Johns County. Santa Rosa cotton fields are under stress due to nematode infestations with some stunting occurring. Overall, peanuts and cotton are in good condition in Santa Rosa. Peanut condition, Statewide, is rated 1% fair, 69% good and 30% excellent. Eighty percent of peanuts are pegged compared with 80% last year and the five-year average of 69% pegged.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	1	1	1	0	0	2
Short	19	5	4	5	5	13
Adequate	75	51	49	85	52	42
Surplus	5	43	46	10	43	43

VEGETABLES: Melon harvesting is finished in Columbia County but continues in Taylor County. Columbia county reports that other vegetable harvesting is very active, while in Taylor County growers continue to pick peas and cut okra. Tomato picking is active in the Quincy area. Most southern Peninsula growers are preparing fields for fall crop planting which is expected to start in late July or early August.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Range and pasture throughout the State is in generally good condition. However, some pasture in the Panhandle is stressed by grasshoppers. Haying in the Panhandle and northern counties is active when and where weather permits. Statewide, the condition of cattle is mostly good.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	0	5	0	0
Fair	5	5	5	5
Good	85	85	90	90
Excellent	10	5	5	5

CITRUS: The citrus belt experienced typical summer weather, hot and humid. Some areas had some of the highest temperatures of the summer before showers and thunderstorms cooled it down. Storms were widely scattered with some areas receiving up to three or four inches from one storm and other areas receiving nothing. Tropical Storm Claudette provided some outer bands of showers later in the week as it passed through the Gulf. West coast and interior areas received more rain than the East coast. Growers and caretakers are busy with summer cultural practices including cover crop control, summer spraying for mites and insects, and dead tree removal. Replanting continues in all areas.

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