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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending October 19, 2003

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Mostly drier weather during the week of October 12 through 18 allowed vegetable and field crop harvesting to progress rapidly. Rainfall ranged from none to about an inch and a half. The most rain fell over north central Peninsula localities in Alachua, Levy, Marion, St. Lucie, St. John's and Volusia counties with totals ranging from about three quarters of an inch to almost one and a half inches. Elsewhere, most rainfall totaled less than half an inch with most reports showing none to only traces falling. Temperatures in the major cities averaged one degree below normal to two degrees above. Daytime highs were mostly in the 70s and 80s with a few central and southern Peninsula localities reporting at least one high in the 90s. Nighttime lows were mostly in the 50s, 60s and 70s. Several localities recorded at least one low in the 40s.

permanent pasture slowed considerably with the cooler temperatures. The grass has responded to the earlier rains, however quality varies from not very good to fairly good. In the northern counties, the cool season small grain forage planting is in full swing. Pastures and hay fields are still suffering from armyworms. There is damage from dollar-spot in forages. Making of hay from warm season forage continues. Armyworms are active in pastures and forage. Pasture in the west and central areas is mostly fair, and the range in the southwest is mostly good. Statewide, most of the cattle are in good condition.

FIELD CROPS: Peanut and cotton harvesting are proceeding at a rapid pace with the clear conditions providing nearly ideal weather to complete field tasks. Jackson County cotton yields are reportedly good. Planting of rye in Baker County is active. Haying continues. Sugarcane harvesting is advancing with mills starting to open. Soils dried due to the lack of rain in many areas with soil moisture supplies rated short to mostly adequate. A small area of the southeast coast and a few spots in the northern Peninsula report some areas of short to very short soil moisture while a small area of the southwestern Peninsula reports some spots of surplus soil moisture supplies.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	0	5	0	1
Fair	20	30	0	15
Good	75	60	95	80
Excellent	5	5	5	4

CITRUS: Rainfall was widely scattered with some interior and southern areas receiving very little. Coastal areas received light amounts with Ft. Pierce reporting less than one inch. Warmer temperatures returned with highs in the upper 80s accompanied by higher humidity levels. Growers welcomed the drier weather. Fall cultural practices include limited spray applications in some groves with fresh fruit crops receiving more sprays than normal to keep insect populations from building up. Cover crop control and dead tree removal and replacement are also occurring in some groves. Fruit growth is reported good and the majority of trees in sand hill locations are in excellent condition because of all the summer rainfall. Natural color break is showing on more crops including early tangerines, early oranges, and grapefruit. Most fresh fruit packing houses are open. Varieties being packed include early oranges (Navels, Ambersweet, and Hamlins), white and colored grapefruit, and Fallglo and sunburst tangerines. Several processing plants are receiving eliminations and others are field testing fruit to schedule harvest beginning times.

Percentage of Peanuts Harvested To Date

This year	90
Last year	83
5 - year average	82

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	1	1	1	0	1	1
Short	14	19	24	20	17	24
Adequate	80	64	70	70	63	70
Surplus	5	16	5	10	19	5

VEGETABLES: Clear conditions continued to boost the growth and development of crops in the central and southern Peninsula, and allowed planting to progress normally. Growers have planted about half of intended strawberry acreage. Although the first flat of strawberries was harvested during the week, most producers expect to begin picking the oldest acreage about early-to-mid November. Tomato picking continued in the Quincy area. Other vegetables available include very light amounts of cucumbers, eggplant, okra, peppers, squash and watermelons.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19
Navel oranges	18,000	74,000	127,000
Early & Mid oranges	17,000	69,000	111,000
Grapefruit	121,000	334,000	559,000
Tangerines	84,000	89,000	110,000

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, some small grain for grazing is up, and more is being planted. Growth of

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