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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending October 26, 2003

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**FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE**



WEATHER SUMMARY: Dry conditions continued in most areas during the week of October 19 through 25. Most localities recorded no measurable rain for the week except for the southeastern Peninsula. Ft. Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, Ft. Pierce and Homestead recorded from about a quarter inch to nearly one and two-thirds inches for the week. Most temperatures in the major cities averaged one degree above normal with Pensacola temperatures averaging four degrees above. A cold front sweeping across the southeastern United States on Sunday, October 26, brought from traces to over an inch and a half of rain to many Panhandle and a few central and northern Peninsula localities.

FIELD CROPS: Dry soils are hindering the digging of some peanuts, especially in Washington County. Peanut digging is nearly finished in Jackson County. Corn harvesting is finished in Jefferson County where producers continue to plant small grains. Cotton picking is about half done in Santa Rosa County with yields varying widely due mostly to nematode damage. Cotton yield is currently averaging about two bales per acre in Santa Rosa County with the better fields averaging nearly three bales per acre. Hay baling is active. Sugarcane harvesting is active in the Everglades area. Soils continued to dry with most supplies rated short to adequate. Several localities from the Panhandle to the central and southern Peninsula reported very short to short supplies. A very small area of the inland southern Peninsula reported surplus soil moisture.

Percentage of Peanuts Harvested To Date

This year	95%
Last year	94%
5 - year average	93%

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	5	1	4	5	0	4
Short	35	14	21	30	20	21
Adequate	59	80	70	60	70	70
Surplus	1	5	5	5	10	5

VEGETABLES: Sweet corn picking is slowly gaining momentum in the Everglades area. Tomato harvesting remains active in the Quincy area. A very light supply of tomatoes were picked in the Palmetto-Ruskin area with most harvesting to begin in early-to-mid November. Tomato producers in the Immokalee area are expected to begin picking within the next two to three weeks. Dade County tomato growers are staking the oldest fields while beans are starting to set fruit. Strawberry planting in the Plant City region remains active while harvesting is slowly gaining momentum with most growers hoping to begin picking in early-to-mid November. Producers in the Hastings area continue to plant cabbage and broccoli. Other vege-

tables available include very light amounts of cucumbers, eggplant, okra, peppers, squash and watermelons.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle areas, some armyworm and spittle bug damage reported in pastures. There is enough soil moisture in most fields to drill small grains. Some hay baling continues. In the north counties, mole cricket damage is showing up on pastures. Land preparation for winter forage crops is delayed in many locations by dry soil condition. In the central area, the pasture is mostly in good condition. In the southwest, the pasture is in fair to good condition, reflecting cooler weather and dryer soil conditions. Statewide, the condition of range is from poor to excellent, with most in good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	5	0	5	0
Fair	35	20	20	0
Good	50	75	65	95
Excellent	10	5	10	5

CITRUS: Virtually no rainfall occurred this week in citrus producing areas of the state. Even with three weeks of dryer weather, no tree stress has been reported or observed. Some growers have returned to infrequent irrigation in the sand hill locations to maintain surface moisture levels. Warmer temperatures prevailed early in the week with cooler temperatures moving into the state later. 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. Natural color break is showing on all crops of 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.

Estimated boxes harvested week ended

Crop	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26
Navel oranges	74,000	127,000	162,000
Early and Mid oranges	69,000	111,000	421,000
Grapefruit	334,000	559,000	688,000
Tangerines	89,000	110,000	182,000

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