WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending November 23, 2003

WEATHER SUMMARY: Cooler temperatures were felt in most areas during the week of November 16 through 22. Temperatures averaged normal to five degrees above in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s. Nighttime lows were in the 40s, 50s and 60s with MacClenny and Brooksville recording at least one low in the 30s. Rainfall ranged from none at Tavares and Umatilla, to one and three quarters inch at Quincy. Most Peninsula localities reported a half inch or less of rain for the week.

FIELD CROPS: Cotton harvesting in Santa Rosa County is over 90% complete with showers delaying some progress. Peanut digging is virtually done. Sugarcane harvesting remains active in the Everglades region. Rains in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula increased soil moisture with supplies rated mostly adequate. Light showers over the central and southern Peninsula maintained most soil moisture supplies at adequate levels. Only the southeastern coastal area and a few spots in the northern Peninsula reported very short to short soil moisture supplies. Some localities in Okaloosa, Seminole and Brevard counties reportedly have surplus topsoil moisture.

VEGETABLES: Potato field preparation and planting are active in the Hastings area. Growers continued harvesting to help meet the holiday demand. As more harvesting occurs, volume for processing is expected to increase. As more harvesting crews arrive, volume for processing is expected to increase.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Statewide, pasture is in good condition with several locations hurt by drought. In the Panhandle and northern areas, winter forage crops are mostly planted with a few ranchers still sowing. Earlier planted small grain forage has received enough moisture to grow well, and some will be ready for grazing by Thanksgiving Day. Bahia grass is playing out seasonally, though warm daytime temperatures are permitting some grass growth. Patchy frost is reducing grass growth. In the west central areas, pasture greened up following light rains. Southwest, the condition of most of the state is a cold front moved through in the middle of the week. Only trace amounts occurred in most areas with up to one half inch reported by some stations. Most growers are irrigating in the sand hill groves to maintain surface moisture levels. Warmer temperatures prevailed early in the week and then turned cooler as the front passed through the State. Cover crop control ahead of harvest and dead tree removal and replacement continues. Fruit growth is reported good and the majority of trees are in excellent condition. Growers and packers report good natural color and excellent external appearance on early tangerines, early oranges, and grapefruit. Most fresh fruit packing houses are open. Varieties being packed include early oranges (Navels, Ambersweet, and Hamlin’s), white and colored grapefruit, Sunburst tangerines, and Nova and Orlando tangelos. All processing plants are reported open and receiving eliminations and field run fruit. As more harvesting crews arrive, volume for processing is expected to increase.

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