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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending December 7, 2003

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December 8, 2003

WEATHER SUMMARY: Cold, dry weather during the week of November 30 through December 6 increased the danger of wild fires in most localities except for the western Panhandle. Temperatures averaged two to seven degrees below normal in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 60s and 70s with most central and southern Peninsula localities recording at least one high in the 80s. Nighttime lows averaged from the 30s in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula areas, to the 60s in Miami and other southern Peninsula localities. Several Panhandle and northern Peninsula areas reported at least one low in the 20s. Rainfall ranged from none in several localities to a little over a half inch in Jay, Pensacola and West Palm Beach. Most cities received traces or less.

FIELD CROPS: Pecan harvesting is active in Jefferson County with fair yields and good quality being produced by commercial groves. Sugarcane harvesting remains active in the Everglades area. Picking of most cotton acreage is finished in the Panhandle. Dry conditions over the Peninsula and eastern Panhandle lowered soil moisture supplies. Western Panhandle soil moisture remains mostly adequate. Elsewhere, supplies are short to adequate with very short supplies reported for scattered localities over the Peninsula.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	10	1	2	8	1	3
Short	20	24	36	17	14	28
Adequate	69	74	61	74	84	69
Surplus	1	1	1	1	1	0

VEGETABLES: Celery harvesting is getting underway in southern Peninsula localities. The harvesting of cabbage, squash and leafy vegetables is active in the Hastings area. Okra harvesting is slowing seasonally. Other vegetables available include snap beans, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, peppers, radishes and tomatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Cattle and pasture condition remains fair to mostly good. Cattle condition is deteriorating due to dry grazing in some southern Peninsula areas. Small grain and clover pastures in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula are in mostly good condition with most acreage growing well. Frosts and hard freezes over the Panhandle and northern Peninsula

stopped the growth of warm season grasses and some winter grazing in low lying areas. The cool, dry weather slowed the growth of central Peninsula pastures with most southern Peninsula grazing escaping significantly cold temperatures.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	2	0	0	0
Poor	8	5	5	0
Fair	35	35	30	25
Good	50	55	60	70
Excellent	5	5	5	5

CITRUS: The only rainfall this week occurred in the lower interior and east coast producing areas in conjunction with a cold front that moved through the state late in the week. Only trace amounts occurred in other areas. Temperatures reached the mid and high 30s as far south as Immokalee for the second week. Most growers continue to irrigate to maintain surface moisture levels. 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 as they enter a semi-dormant condition from the cold weather of the last two weeks. 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 and Hamlins), white and colored grapefruit, Sunburst tangerines, 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 increasing.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Nov 23	Nov 30	Dec 7
Navel oranges	274,000	224,000	483,000
Early and Mid oranges	6,022,000	5,917,000	7,527,000
Grapefruit	897,000	709,000	758,000
Tangerines	284,000	157,000	291,000
Tangelos	43,000	49,000	124,000

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