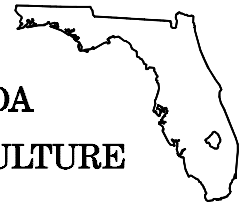




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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending January 11, 2004

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Warm temperatures during the first part of the week of January 4 through 10 plunged to below normal during the last half as an Arctic cold air mass covered the State. Temperatures averaged from one degree above to three degrees below normal in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 60s and 70s with several localities recording at least one high in the 80s. Nighttime lows averaged in the 40s, 50s and 60s with several reports of at least one low in the 30s and 20s. Frosts and hard freezes hit the Panhandle, most northern Peninsula and some central Peninsula localities. Most areas received only traces of rain. Several Panhandle and central Peninsula localities recorded from about a quarter of an inch to three-quarters of an inch of rain. The danger of wildfire is increasing in several Big Bend, northern Peninsula and southeastern Peninsula counties.

FIELD CROPS: Sugarcane harvesting continues in the Everglades area. Rainfall replenished some soil moisture supplies but dry weather in most areas lowered supplies. Most soil moisture supplies are short to adequate. Very short soil moisture supplies were reported for spots in Columbia, Baker, St. John's, Lake and Broward counties. Surplus soil moisture was reported for a few areas of Seminole County. In higher elevations of Miami-Dade County, growers are running irrigation at 125 percent of normal or more. In low lying areas of Miami-Dade County, groundwater levels are still high enough that some areas are permanently wet.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	3	2	1	2	2	1
Short	32	38	4	28	33	4
Adequate	64	60	80	69	65	76
Surplus	1	0	15	1	0	19

VEGETABLES: Strawberry producers in the Plant City area kept nighttime surveillance as temperatures plunged to near freezing levels during the latter part of the week with picking remaining active. Tomato harvesting is near the end in the Palmetto-Ruskin region, steady in the Immokalee-Naples area and increasing around Homestead. Potato planting is delayed in the Hastings region because of a lack of available contracts. Cabbage and broccoli harvesting around Hastings is active with good quality available. Other vegetables available include snap beans, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, peppers, radishes, squash, and tomatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, pasture and cattle are mostly in good condition. In the north and central areas, pasture is in fair condition. Most of the winter forage crops are at a standstill because of drought and cold temperatures. Pasture in the southwest is in fair to good condition. Statewide, range and pasture are mostly in fair condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	5	0	0	0
Poor	10	15	0	5
Fair	50	70	30	35
Good	35	14	69	59
Excellent	0	1	1	1

CITRUS: More typical winter weather prevailed during the week. Virtually no rainfall occurred in citrus areas. Morning lows reached into the 30s on several mornings with daytime highs into the low 70s. Some growers returned to irrigation to maintain tree condition and encourage continued fruit growth. With the colder weather, trees are hardy and should withstand any later cold weather. Growers and packers report good natural color and excellent external appearance on tangerines, early oranges, and grapefruit. Most fresh fruit packinghouses returned to normal packing schedules with emphasis on the export of grapefruit increasing. Varieties being packed include early and midseason oranges (Navels, Hamlins, and Pineapple), white and colored grapefruit, Sunburst and Honey tangerines, tangelos, and Temples. Processing plants are open to receive and process fruit on a continuous basis with volumes reaching peak levels.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11
Navel oranges	78,000	57,000	47,000
Early and Mid oranges	5,502,000	8,854,000	9,536,000
Grapefruit	539,000	721,000	995,000
Early tangerines	131,000	95,000	59,000
Honey tangerines	29,000	78,000	149,000
Tangelos	26,000	26,000	46,000
Temples	4,000	21,000	51,000

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