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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending February 8, 2004

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Temperatures during the week of February 1 through 7 averaged from one degree below to six degrees above normal in the major cities with most three to five degrees above. Daytime highs were in the 60s, 70s and 80s. Nighttime lows were in the 40s, 50s, and 60s. Several Panhandle and northern Peninsula localities and some central Peninsula areas recorded at least one low in the 30s during the week. On Saturday night, February 7 into Sunday morning, February 8, temperatures plunged into 30s over the Panhandle and over the northern and central Peninsula with southern Peninsula areas experiencing lows in the 40s. Strong winds accompanied the low temperatures. Rains fell mid-to-late week dropping only traces over most west central localities, and an inch to two and two thirds inches of precipitation over many Panhandle, northern Peninsula and a few central and southern Peninsula areas, especially around Hastings and Homestead.

FIELD CROPS: Sugarcane harvesting in the Everglades area continues. Ground is too dry to dig fence post holes in Union County which had some spots with very short soil moisture prior to the late week rainfall. Surplus soil moisture exists in some Panhandle localities, especially after the late week rainfall, and in some areas of Seminole County.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	1	1	1	1	1	0
Short	14	29	63	24	34	42
Adequate	80	69	36	74	64	58
Surplus	5	1	0	1	1	0

VEGETABLES: Mostly dry conditions in the Palmetto-Ruskin and Immokalee areas allowed planting and harvesting to proceed at a normal pace. Spring crop planting is active in Columbia County. Rain in the Homestead area slowed some field activities in mid-to-late week. Tomato producers in the Quincy area are planning preparations for the spring crop. Rains slowed potato planting and cabbage cutting around Hastings at the end of the week. Other vegetables and non-citrus fruit available include snap beans, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, peppers, radishes, squash, strawberries and tomatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, growth of cool season forages varies from poor to good, depending on location. Growth is helped by longer days in some locations, but cooler than normal weather is hampering growth in the area. Hay supplies are starting to get short. In the northern area, rain last

week and mild temperatures are really helping improve the condition of pastures and livestock. In the central area, soaking rains over the weekend helped rye pastures recover from dry topsoil conditions, but soil is drying again. Stock ponds remain low. In the southwest, range condition varies from very poor to good, with most being in fair condition. Statewide, most cattle are in good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	5	5	0	0
Poor	15	15	5	5
Fair	60	55	40	60
Good	20	25	55	35
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: Warmer, but still winter weather occurred during the week with moderately cool nights and warm days. Temperatures were in the mid 40s in some locations mid-week with some nighttime temperatures only into the 50s. Daytime highs reached to the 80s on several days. Near the end of the week, a fast moving cold front moved across the State bringing light amounts of rainfall and dropping temperatures to the high 30s in some locations. Less than two tenths of an inch of rain was reported in most locations. Some growers are reporting feathery new growth beginning to show on some varieties and are starting to fertilize groves in anticipation of new growth emerging. Most fresh fruit packinghouses are packing all available varieties with emphasis on export of grapefruit increasing. Varieties being packed include oranges (Navels, Pineapple, and Valencia), white and colored grapefruit, Honey tangerines, and Temples. Processing plants are receiving and processing fruit on a continuous basis with weekly volumes of oranges beginning to decline as grapefruit amounts increase.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8
Navel oranges	53,000	22,000	12,000
Early and Mid oranges	8,228,000	7,245,000	7,313,000
Valencia oranges	20,000	42,000	117,000
Grapefruit	1,462,000	1,399,000	1,373,000
Early tangerines	11,000	4,000	2,000
Honey tangerines	107,000	99,000	127,000
Tangelos	36,000	23,000	27,000
Temples	74,000	95,000	101,000

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