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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending February 15, 2004

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Significant rains fell over most Panhandle and northern Peninsula localities, and a few central areas, during the week of February 8 through 14. Homestead and Immokalee reported no rainfall for the week; nearly 4 inches were reported in Pensacola. Temperatures for the week averaged three degrees below to three degrees above normal. Daytime highs were in the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s. Nighttime lows were in the 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s with several Panhandle and northern localities recording at least one low in the 20s

FIELD CROPS: Harvesting of sugarcane in the Everglades is active. Tobacco beds are in good condition in Columbia County. Marion County growers are preparing land for peanut planting. Most soil moisture supplies in the Panhandle are adequate to surplus with a few spots of short topsoil moisture which missed the recent rains. A few spots of very short soil moisture were reported in Broward and Baker counties. Elsewhere, soil moisture is short to adequate with areas getting the recent rain reporting mostly adequate supplies.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	1	1	1	1	1	1
Short	14	14	43	14	24	23
Adequate	80	80	56	83	74	76
Surplus	5	5	0	2	1	0

VEGETABLES: Mostly clear weather again helped keep planting and harvesting on schedule in the Immokalee, Homestead and Palmetto-Ruskin areas while the recent rain delayed some land preparations in Duval County. Jefferson County producers are preparing land for spring crop watermelons. 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, cold, frosty nights and mornings have prevented winter forage growth. In some areas, surplus moisture and trampling by livestock have reduced much forage. In Leon County winter forage is in good shape with adequate moisture. Permanent pasture is beginning to return. In the northern counties, cool season forage is growing well following light rain. The cool, rainy conditions of the past week have been stressful on livestock. In the west central area, the condition of cattle and pasture is mostly good. In the southern

area, the condition of the range is poor to good with most in good condition. Statewide, most cattle are in good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	5	5	0	0
Poor	15	15	10	5
Fair	45	60	40	40
Good	35	20	50	55
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: Warm, pleasant weather occurred during the week with moderately cool nights and warm days. Temperatures were in the low to mid 50s most mornings with daytime highs reaching to the 80s on several days. Late morning fog occurred several mornings. Near the end of the week, a fast moving cool front moved across the State bringing varying amounts of rainfall. Amounts reported ranged from 1/4 inch to 1 1/4 inches in interior and west coast areas. Growers are reporting abundant feathery new growth. Bloom buds are beginning to show on oranges and grapefruit. Cultural practices, in anticipation of bloom, are beginning, including fertilizations and hedging following harvest. Most fresh fruit packinghouses are packing all available varieties with emphasis on the export of grapefruit. Varieties being packed include oranges (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		
	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15
Navel oranges	35,000	12,000	7,000
Early and Mid oranges	7,560,000	7,313,000	6,478,000
Valencia oranges	49,000	117,000	238,000
Grapefruit	1,425,000	1,373,000	1,838,000
Early tangerines	3,000	2,000	4,000
Honey tangerines	113,000	127,000	152,000
Tangelos	23,000	27,000	36,000
Temples	114,000	101,000	109,000

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