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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending February 22, 2004

Released 4:00 P.M.

February 23, 2004

WEATHER SUMMARY: Cool and mostly dry weather let fieldwork progress at a normal pace during the week of February 15 through 21. Temperatures in the major cities averaged two to five degrees below normal for the week. Daytime highs were in the 60s and 70s with very few reports of at least one high in the 80s. Nighttime lows were in the 30s and 40s with only extreme southern Peninsula localities reporting lows averaging in the 50s. Rainfall totaled from none in several localities to about a third inch in Immokalee. Most rain totals were none to only traces for the week. On Sunday, February 22, temperatures warmed into the 80s along the Atlantic coast and some inland areas.

FIELD CROPS: Sugarcane harvesting continues in the Everglades. Tobacco beds are in good condition in the northern Peninsula and Panhandle. Land preparation for peanut planting remains active. Most topsoil and subsoil moisture is rated short to mostly adequate. Some areas of surplus soil moisture exist in Madison and Brevard counties while spots of some very short supplies were reported for Broward and Union counties.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	1	1	4	1	1	9
Short	14	14	31	14	14	24
Adequate	81	80	63	82	83	66
Surplus	4	5	2	3	2	1

VEGETABLES: The cool temperatures slowed some harvesting with most on schedule. Potato digging is active in southern Peninsula localities. Other vegetables and non citrus fruit available include snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, peppers, radishes, squash, strawberries and tomatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Pasture in the northern half of the State ranges from very poor to excellent with cold temperatures limiting some growth. In the Panhandle, cattle are in fair to good condition and most pasture is in good condition. Some pasture renovation started. Permanent pasture grass is starting to regrow. Winter forage is coming on strong and clover looks good. In the north and Big Bend areas, cattle and pastures are in fair to good condition. Winter grazing is taking off following recent rain and

warmer days. In the central area, range and pasture condition varies from very poor to good. In the southwest area, most of the range is in good condition with some locations poor to fair. Statewide, cattle are mostly in good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	4	5	0	0
Poor	10	15	5	10
Fair	40	45	25	40
Good	45	35	70	50
Excellent	1	0	0	0

CITRUS: Wide ranging temperatures with lows in the 30s and highs in the 70s prevailed during the week as a dry cold front moved through mid-week. Most stations reported very little rainfall. Growers are reporting abundant feathery new growth and bloom buds beginning to show on oranges and grapefruit. Cultural practices in anticipation of bloom are beginning and include fertilizing 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 declining as grapefruit amounts increase.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22
Navel oranges	24,000	7,000	2,000
Early and Mid oranges	7,375,000	6,478,000	5,089,000
Valencia oranges	129,000	238,000	889,000
Grapefruit	1,569,000	1,838,000	2,207,000
Early tangerines	6,000	4,000	4,000
Honey tangerines	130,000	152,000	127,000
Tangelos	33,000	36,000	11,000
Temples	123,000	109,000	124,000

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