WEATHER SUMMARY: Winds stirred up dust in many areas during the week of March 7 through 13. Most localities reported no measurable rain falling during the week except for a third inch falling in Live Oak, less than a quarter inch in Belle Glade and MacClenny and traces in a few other scattered localities. Temperatures in the major cities averaged three to five degrees below normal. Daytime highs were mostly in the 70s with most localities reporting at least one high in the 80s. Nighttime lows were in the 40s, 50s and 60s with several cities recording at least one low in the 30s. MacClenny and Alachua reported one low in the 20s. Some localities in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula experienced daytime highs in the 70s and frost at night.

FIELD CROPS: Corn planting is active in Leon County. Tobacco transplanting is in full swing in Union County. Flowering trees and shrubs grown as ornamental nursery crops are blooming and transplanting is in full swing in Union County. Flowering trees and shrubs grown as ornamental nursery crops are blooming and transplanting is in full swing in Union County. Florida Agricultural Statistics Service

VEGETABLES: Vegetable planting is in full swing in Union and Leon counties while southern Peninsula planting continues. Tomato transplanting is active in the Quincy area. Blueberries are in full bloom in Jackson County. Oldest potato plantings are in full bloom in Jackson County. Some localities in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula experienced daytime highs in the 70s and frost at night.

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VEGETABLES: Vegetable planting is in full swing in Union and Leon counties while southern Peninsula planting continues. Tomato transplanting is active in the Quincy area. Blueberries are in full bloom in Jackson County. Oldest potato plantings are in good condition while the harvesting of cabbage, broccoli, onion and leafy greens continues in the Hastings area. Other vegetables and non citrus fruit available include snap beans, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, escarole, endive, lettuce, peppers, radishes, squash, strawberries and tomatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, warm temperatures during the day are helping winter forage growth but two weeks of drought is limiting growth in many locations. Some bahia grass pasture is being established. In the north, dry conditions and wildfire danger are preventing cleanup pasture burning.

Cattlemen are still feeding hay to livestock. In the central counties, summer pasture (bahia) started growing. Warmer temperatures combined with heavy grazing pressures are taxing pastures. In the southwest cattle condition is mostly fair. Statewide, the condition of cattle is mostly fair, down from mostly good last week.

FLORIDA AGRICULTURE

WEATHER & CROP NEWS
Week ending March 14, 2004 Released 4:00 P.M. March 15, 2004

PEOPLE: None

CITRUS: Spring like, mild weather prevailed throughout the citrus belt this week with daytime high temperatures in the upper 70s and lows only into the lower to mid 40s on one morning. No rainfall was reported for the second week. Growers are returning to frequent irrigation as trees enter into various stages of bloom. Growers are reporting abundant new growth and bloom from the swelling bud state, to full, open bloom on oranges and grapefruit. Lower interior areas are showing open bloom on oranges and grapefruit while coastal and upper interior areas are entering into the open bloom stage. Cultural practices in anticipation of bloom are continuing including fertilizations and hedging following harvest. Most fresh fruit packinghouses are packing all available varieties with emphasis on export grapefruit. Varieties being packed include Valencia oranges, white and colored grapefruit, and Honey tangerines. Processing plants are receiving and processing fruit with weekly volumes of early-mid oranges declining as grapefruit and Valencia orange amounts increase.

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