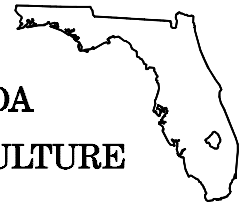




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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending April 18, 2004

Released 4:00 P.M.

April 19, 2004

WEATHER SUMMARY: Storms at the beginning of the week of April 11 through 17 gave way to dry conditions during the middle and end of the week. Rainfall totaled from less than a quarter inch to about two and two-thirds inches with central Peninsula localities receiving the bulk of the moisture. Temperatures for the week averaged three to six degrees below normal in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s. Nighttime lows were in the 40s, 50s and 60s with some northern Peninsula and Panhandle localities reporting at least one low in 30s.

FIELD CROPS: Planting is preceding at a rapid pace in Washington County and is starting to get into full swing in Jackson and Taylor counties. Santa Rosa County producers are delaying some cotton and peanut planting until adequate soil moisture is available. Corn planting was active in Madison County with some activity slowed due to gusty winds drying out soils. Sugarcane harvesting is finished in the Okeechobee region with all mills closed. The rainfall early in the week replenished some soil moisture supplies but warmer temperatures and gusty winds during the rest of the period dried out some topsoil. Soil moisture is mostly short to adequate in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula with Santa Rosa, Washington and Madison counties reporting some spots with very short moisture supplies. Soil moisture supplies in the central and southern Peninsula are short to mostly adequate with Seminole and Osceola counties reporting a few localities with surplus moisture and Charlotte County reporting a few spots with very short soil moisture supplies. The southeastern Peninsula continues to have areas with very short soil moisture.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
<i>Percent</i>						
Very short	5	15	1	10	10	0
Short	45	40	27	40	45	23
Adequate	49	44	62	49	45	73
Surplus	1	1	10	1	0	4

VEGETABLES: Irrigated acreage in Leon County is in good condition. Cool temperatures are slowing the growth of some crops in Marion County. Gusty winds continue to damage some vegetables in Madison County. Growers in the Hastings area dug the first few loads of potatoes with most fields at the full flower stage and in good condition. Cabbage and broccoli harvesting is slowing seasonally in the Hastings region and a sluggish market is hindering the movement of onions. Watermelon picking is slowly gaining momentum with most central and southern Peninsula producers to begin harvesting within the next two weeks. Watermelons in Gilchrist County are forming runners. Strawberry harvesting in the Plant City area is nearly done with several fields open to the U-Pick market. Other vegetables and non-citrus fruit available include snap beans, blueberries, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, okra, peppers, potatoes, radishes, squash and tomatoes. Most lettuce harvesting in the southern Peninsula is finished for the season.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Panhandle pasture is very short due to drought and temperatures in the high 30s. In the northern counties, pastures are looking bad and hay supplies are shrinking rapidly. Hay feeding is active at some locations. Overall weather conditions are resulting in some forage growth which is improving cattle condition. High wind is creating extremely dry conditions with rain needed to improve the forage condition. In the central Peninsula area, cool night temperatures slowed grass growth. In the southwest area, cattle are in fair condition and the range is generally in good condition. Statewide, most of the cattle are in good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
<i>Percent</i>				
Very poor	1	5	0	0
Poor	20	15	5	15
Fair	60	60	55	50
Good	19	20	40	35
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: Spring-like weather continued this week in the citrus belt with daytime high temperatures reaching into the low 80s and lows into the mid and upper 40s on several mornings. A strong cold front passed through the state early in the week bringing much needed rainfall to all citrus areas. Amounts ranged up to 1.5 inches in most interior and coastal areas. Growers are continuing to irrigate to maintain upper soil moisture levels as trees show abundant new growth. Bloom is complete in all areas. Cultural practices are continuing including fertilizations, hedging following harvest and post bloom spray applications. Most fresh fruit packing houses are packing all available varieties including Valencia oranges, white and colored grapefruit, and Honey tangerines. Processing plants are receiving and processing fruit with weekly volumes of grapefruit declining. Valencia orange harvest is at the level of over eight million boxes weekly.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED WEEK ENDED			
Crop	Apr 4	Apr 11	Apr 18
Navel oranges	3,000	3,000	2,000
Early and Mid oranges	41,000	3,000	0
Valencia oranges	8,616,000	8,093,000	7,544,000
Grapefruit	1,795,000	1,501,000	1,153,000
Honey tangerines	182,000	164,000	139,000
Temples	61,000	30,000	14,000

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