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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending April 25, 2004

Released 4:00 P.M.

April 26, 2004

WEATHER SUMMARY: Virtually no rain fell during the week of April 18 through 24. Only Pierson, Pensacola and Ft. Lauderdale reported traces to a tenth of an inch of rain for the week. Temperatures averaged three degrees below normal to one degree above in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s while nighttime temperatures were in the 40s, 50s, and 60s. Miami recorded no lows below 70 for the week.

FIELD CROPS: In the Panhandle, very little planting is being done. The soil is too cold to plant peanuts at many locations. Corn and soybean planting has slowed. Some farmers are holding off planting peanuts till May due to the tomato wilt virus. The corn looks pretty good where irrigated, but otherwise needs moisture. Some cotton has been "dusted in"; a few acres of peanuts have been planted. Soil moisture is very short to short throughout the State. Polk and Highlands counties were the exceptions with adequate moisture.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	25	5	7	15	10	4
Short	45	45	50	40	40	37
Adequate	30	49	37	45	49	58
Surplus	0	1	6	0	1	1

VEGETABLES: Chipper potato digging is getting underway in the central Peninsula and Hastings area as table type harvesting continues in the central and southern Peninsula. Cabbage cutting is slowing seasonally. Other vegetables and non-citrus fruit available include snap beans, blueberries, cantaloupes, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, okra, peppers, radishes, squash, tomatoes and watermelons. In the Panhandle, some squash is being harvested. Watermelon and cantaloupe, under irrigation, are doing great. In the north area, irrigated vegetables look very good. In the west-central area, U-pick berries including blueberries is active. Vegetable planting is busy but planted vegetable crops are behind due to cool night temperatures.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Pasture in the Panhandle is in very poor to good condition due to drought. Pastures are short and regrowth is slow due to drought and cool nighttime temperatures. Winter forage is finished. In the north and Big Bend counties, cattle and pasture are in poor to fair condition due to drought. In the central area, cattle con-

dition is fair to good. The condition of pasture is fair due to dry soil conditions. Low humidity and windy conditions, combined with normal low rainfall at this time of year, have resulted in poor condition of pasture. In the southwest area, pasture and cattle condition are mostly fair. Statewide, condition of cattle is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	5	1	1	0
Poor	25	20	3	5
Fair	50	60	55	55
Good	20	19	40	40
Excellent	0	0	1	0

CITRUS: Typical spring weather continued this week in the citrus belt with daytime high temperatures reaching into the mid and upper 80s and lows into the mid and upper 50s. Very little rainfall was recorded this week. Growers are continuing to irrigate to maintain upper soil moisture levels as trees show abundant new growth. Cultural practices are continuing including fertilizations, hedging following harvest, and post bloom spray applications. Most fresh fruit packinghouses are packing all available varieties including Valencia oranges, decreasing amounts of 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 peak levels, over eight million boxes weekly.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED WEEK ENDED

Crop	Apr 4	Apr 11	Apr 18
Navel oranges	3,000	2,000	1,000
Early and Mid oranges	3,000	0	0
Valencia oranges	8,093,000	7,544,000	8,441,000
Grapefruit	1,501,000	1,153,000	1,220,000
Honey tangerines	164,000	139,000	114,000
Temples	30,000	14,000	21,000

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