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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending May 23, 2004

Released 4:00 P.M.

May 24, 2004

**FLORIDA  
 AGRICULTURE**



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Mostly dry, sunny days with a few scattered showers occurred in most areas during the past week of May 16 through May 22. Most rainfall totals for the week were less than a quarter of an inch. Exceptions were in Marianna, Key West, Tallahassee, and West Palm Beach where almost three quarters of an inch were reported. Temperatures at the major stations averaged from 3 degrees below at Key West to two degrees above at Jacksonville and Tampa. Daytime highs were in the 80s and 90s. Nighttime lows ranged from the upper 50s, 60s to 70s.

**FIELD CROPS:** Cotton and peanut planting continued in the Panhandle and Northern Peninsula with some areas nearing completion. Growers report 60 percent of the peanuts planted compared to 40 percent last week and 68 for last year and the five year average. "Green peanuts" will continue to be planted later through the season. Rain is needed in most fields to help the crops get a good start. Haymaking remains active in many areas. Tobacco transplanting is underway. Most fields of corn could use some rain to maintain good condition. Soil moisture supplies vary by area with reports ranging from very short to adequate. Most areas report a need for more rain.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	13	5	8	10	4	6
Short	50	40	24	50	38	23
Adequate	37	49	61	40	52	64
Surplus	0	6	7	0	6	7

**VEGETABLES:** Vegetable harvesting activities continued at the normal pre-Memorial Day pace. Vegetables and non-citrus fruit available include snap beans, blueberries, cabbage, cantaloupes, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, okra, peppers, potatoes, radishes, squash, tomatoes, and watermelons.

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** In the Panhandle, pasture condition improved following rains of a week ago. The condition of the cattle is mostly good. Mole crickets are evident. In the northeast counties, cattle are in fair condition. Drought is hurting the pasture, most of which is in fair condition. Pond water levels continue to go down. Mole cricket damage is in pastures and hayfields. Pastures are starting

to green up and grow so cattle are looking better. In central Florida, pasture and cattle are in fair to good condition. In major cattle areas of the southwest, cattle and pasture are in very poor to good condition, with most in good condition. The low condition of the pasture is due to drought. Statewide, condition of cattle and calves is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	5	5	1	0
Poor	15	10	4	5
Fair	45	40	40	35
Good	35	45	50	60
Excellent	0	0	5	0

**CITRUS:** Dry weather prevailed this week in the citrus belt with daytime high temperatures reaching into the 90s in most areas several days. Growers in all areas report needing rain as soil moisture levels have declined dramatically. Several stations reported some rainfall with the east coast recording up to one quarter inch in several locations. Irrigation is being used extensively to maintain soil moisture levels in this important fruit set period. Cultural practices are continuing including fertilizations, hedging following harvest, and resetting of young trees. Many fresh fruit packinghouses are closed for the season but several continue packing Valencia oranges and decreasing amounts of colored grapefruit and Honey tangerines. Processing plants are receiving and processing fruit with weekly volumes of grapefruit declining. Valencia orange harvest continues at peak levels, near eight million boxes weekly.

**ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED WEEK ENDED**

Crop	May 9	May 16	May 23
Navel oranges	3,000	1,000	1,000
Valencia oranges	8,269,000	8,378,000	7,887,000
Grapefruit	525,000	310,000	265,000
Honey tangerines	43,000	16,000	1,000

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