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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending August 29, 2004

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August 30, 2004

**FLORIDA
 AGRICULTURE**



WEATHER SUMMARY: During the period of August 23 through 29, scattered rains kept most soil moisture at adequate to surplus levels. Precipitation for the week totaled from around a tenth inch or less at Marianna, Avalon, Live Oak and Ocklawaha to nearly four inches in Homestead and Lake Alfred. Most temperatures in the major cities averaged near normal while Orlando and West Palm Beach were one degree below normal. Daytime temperatures were in the 80s and 90s. Nighttime temperatures were in the 60s and 70s.

FIELD CROPS: Dryland peanuts need rain to mature in the eastern Panhandle and some northern Peninsula localities. Digging is gaining momentum in southern areas of peanut production. Tomato spotted wilt virus is lowering yields on most of the early planted peanut acreage. Overall, peanut condition is rated one percent poor, twenty percent fair, fifty-nine percent good and twenty percent excellent. Worm infestations are affecting some Panhandle and northern Peninsula cotton. In Washington County, cotton looks good with most plants gaining abundant growth from the earlier rains and now in the late bloom stage. Some Washington County cotton plants are setting bolls and squaring with picking expected to begin in about sixty days. In Jackson County, cotton leaves are wilting with lower bolls on the early planted acreage starting to open, and plants are starting to bloom at the top with defoliation to start soon. In Walton County, cotton bolls are starting to open. Soybean harvest will start in about one month in Jackson County with a lot of the acreage doubled cropped after small grains. Corn for grain yield is at high levels in some Panhandle and northern Peninsula areas. Scattered rains kept most soil moisture at adequate to surplus levels. Drier weather over the eastern Panhandle and parts of the northern Peninsula dried out some soils with very short supplies reported for some Jackson County localities. Broward County also reported some spots of 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	1	1	1	1	0	0
Short	9	9	4	9	5	1
Adequate	40	50	43	50	60	50
Surplus	50	40	52	40	35	49

VEGETABLES: Okra harvesting remains active in Miami-Dade County. Field preparation for fall crop planting continues in southern Peninsula areas. Tomatoes are in good condition in the Quincy area.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, the condition of pastures varies from fair to good with short soil moisture hurting grass growth. In the Northern areas, most pasture is in fair to good condition. In the Central area, most pasture is looking good as the area recently received a couple of very heavy rains. The condition of cattle is mostly good. In the Southwest, the condition of pasture ranges from very poor to excellent. Some pastures are flooded from recent rains and Hurricane Charley. Some fences were destroyed by the Hurricane. Statewide, most cattle are in good condition. The impact from Hurricane Charley on cattle feed, milk production and loss of livestock is still being assessed.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	5	0	0	0
Fair	15	10	5	5
Good	70	85	85	85
Excellent	10	5	10	10

CITRUS: Variable weather conditions prevailed over the State for the second week following Hurricane Charley with some rainfall but also the return of hot temperatures. High temperatures reached the low 90s on several days but were moderate on others. Slow moving but heavy thunderstorms developed over wide areas with coastal and many interior areas receiving heavy rains on several days. Lakes and rivers returned to their highest levels in many months. East coast areas reported over two inches for the week with some interior areas reporting up to four. Growers report trees in good condition because of the recent rainfall. Groves hard hit by Hurricane Charley continue to drop fruit as growers assess damage and move downed trees to provide access to groves. Cultural practices continue including fertilizations, hedging, mechanical and chemical weed control, and the resetting of young trees. Summer sprays are being applied to crops designated for fresh use as rainfall permits.

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