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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending September 5, 2004

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Rain totals in the major cities for the week of August 29 through September 4 ranged from less than half an inch at Orlando to over nine inches at West Palm Beach. Temperatures in the major cities hovered within two degrees of normal with daytime highs in the 80s and 90s and nighttime lows in the 60s and 70s. Post Hurricane Frances preliminary rain totals for seven days ending on Labor Day were eight to twelve inches in most southeastern Peninsula counties, four to twelve inches in some inland central Peninsula counties, one to eight inches over the northwest Peninsula and one to four inches in the Panhandle. A few localities in the Panhandle and a large portion of Miami-Dade County did not receive any rain from Hurricane Frances. Strong winds tossed crops and heavy rains flooded fields in areas affected by the storm.

tropical system while a few others may not plant fall crops. Some producers sprayed plants for disease control after the hurricane passed. Most acreage in Miami-Dade County escaped damage from Hurricane Frances with okra harvesting very active prior to the storm.

FIELD CROPS: In Washington County, corn harvesting is ahead of schedule. Peanuts, cotton, as well as soybeans needed some precipitation prior to the hurricane. Peanuts, statewide, were rated one percent poor, 23 percent fair, 55 percent good and 21 percent excellent. Producers in Madison County increased peanut digging due to the anticipation of prolonged wet weather. Wet fields are delaying some peanut harvesting over the northern Peninsula and Panhandle. Topsoil and subsoil moisture were mostly adequate to surplus, and a few localities in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula reported short to very short moisture supplies prior to the storm. Storm damage to peanuts and cotton is currently being assessed with early reports showing only limited damage over the Panhandle. Acreage in the far western Panhandle suffered no effects from the storm.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: All areas have some flooded pastures. Heavy rain and high winds from Hurricane Francis damaged some dairies in the Panhandle and in the southeastern and central Peninsula. Power outages have delayed milking on some dairies in the hurricane's path. Scheduled milk pickup was disrupted by weather problems at some plants. Pasture conditions Statewide, before the hurricane, were mostly good. 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	0	0	0	0
Poor	5	5	0	0
Fair	5	15	5	5
Good	70	70	90	85
Excellent	20	10	5	10

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	4	1	1	1	1	0
Short	5	9	4	9	9	2
Adequate	57	40	40	57	50	44
Surplus	34	50	55	33	40	54

CITRUS: For the second time in nearly three weeks, a strong hurricane crossed the state affecting citrus growing areas; this time, causing major loss to grapefruit. Hurricane Frances entered the state on the east coast near Stuart and moved west northwest through St. Lucie, Okeechobee, central Polk and Hillsborough counties, and exited the State north of Tampa. The paths of the two storms crossed just south of Alturas in south central Polk County. Winds up to and exceeding 100 mph were experienced in all areas of the east coast from north Volusia to Palm Beach counties. The wind gusts extended inland enough to affect most citrus in all the east coast counties. Reports are very preliminary but indicate more fruit loss on grapefruit than oranges with limited tree mortality. Heavy rainfall has left high water in many groves and ditches, and a high priority is being placed on moving this water away from tree roots. As the hurricane moved through other areas of the State, it remained strong but winds diminished as it moved further west and north. Groves hard hit from Hurricane Charley continue to drop fruit as growers assess damage and move downed trees to provide access to groves. Cultural practices continue in unaffected areas including fertilizations, hedging, mechanical and chemical weed control and the resetting of young trees.

VEGETABLES: Strong winds tossed plastic laid for fall crop planting and tattered leaves on crops planted earlier in some southern Peninsula areas with most acreage expected to recover. Growers in East Coast areas are currently assessing damages with some losses expected. Wind-borne sand blasted immature fruit in some older fields. Some producers are delaying planting to avoid possible damage from another

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