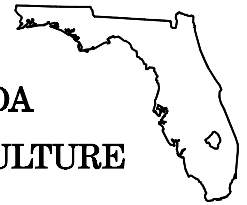




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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending October 10, 2004

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WEATHER SUMMARY: The western half of the Panhandle and many central and southern Peninsula localities received from traces to over four inches of rain from Tropical Storm Matthew during the week of October 4 through 10. Elsewhere, several areas received no measurable rain for the week. Temperatures in the major cities averaged one to four degrees above normal. Daytime highs were mostly in the 80s while nighttime lows were in the 60s and 70s.

FIELD CROPS: Drier weather over the Panhandle and across the northern Peninsula lowered soil moisture supplies with ratings ranging from short to mostly adequate. While areas in the central and southern Peninsula are reporting soil moisture levels from adequate to surplus with a few localities reporting short to very short supplies. Peanut harvesting is 65 percent done compared with 76 percent finished by this date last year and the five-year average of 72 percent completed. Growers in Live Oak were able to get back in the fields to harvest peanuts, even though some peanuts were lost due to over maturity. Most peanuts in Santa Rosa County are harvested. Favorable weather conditions in Jefferson County allowed peanut digging to advance rapidly, while cotton is difficult to pick because stalks are lodged. Peanuts that are being harvested do not look as good as the earlier crop in Madison County even with the recent drier weather, since most peanuts were in saturated fields for over two weeks. However, haying remains active in many areas. Cotton harvesting is underway in Santa Rosa.

PERCENTAGE OF PEANUTS HARVESTED TO DATE

This year	65
Last year	76
5 - year average	72

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	1	1
Short	4	19	18	4	14	15
Adequate	55	45	61	45	45	60
Surplus	40	35	20	50	40	24

VEGETABLES: Strawberry producers in the Plant City area have eighty to ninety percent of the plastic laid and twenty to twenty-five percent of intended acreage transplanted. The strawberry crop is expected to lag the usual progress by about four to five days. However, growers expect to be marketing strawberries about mid-November. Growers around Quincy continue to harvest tomatoes. Producers in the Immokalee area are picking peppers, pickles and cucumbers with tomato harvest to start before early November. Growers in both the Palmetto-Ruskin and Immokalee areas planted later than usual due

mainly to the threat and actual effects of the recent hurricanes. Sweet corn picking is underway in the Lake Okeechobee area. Squash harvesting is active with very light supplies available. Okra cutting remains active in Dade County. Eggplant harvesting is expected to begin within 7 to 10 days.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern counties, the condition of cattle is fair to excellent with most in good condition. Small grain forage planting was delayed in some locations due to dry soil conditions. In Jefferson County, land preparation is underway for planting of small grain for grazing. In Madison County, warm, dry wind this week enabled grass to grow and hay to be harvested. In the central areas, cattle are in fair to excellent condition with most in fair condition. Range condition is mostly fair. In Union and other counties, flooded conditions are preventing land preparation for winter pasture. In the Southwest, the condition of cattle is fair to good. Statewide, the condition of the cattle is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
<i>Percent</i>				
Very poor	1	5	0	0
Poor	2	20	0	1
Fair	66	35	55	34
Good	25	35	35	60
Excellent	6	5	10	5

CITRUS: Light rainfall amounts occurred in the week with most reporting stations reporting less than one-half inch. Temperatures were moderate as cooler weather patterns prevail. Many low lying groves with heavy soils in the western and central areas continue to experience soggy ground. Growers are maintaining middles and lateral ditches to keep water moving away from tree roots. Mowing and discing continue to control summer cover crop growth. The majority of trees in sand hill locations are in good condition because of all the summer rainfall. Trees are recovering from storms in other areas. Natural color break is showing on some early tangerine and grapefruit crops. More fresh fruit packing houses are open with most planning to be open by the middle of October. Varieties being packed include early oranges (Navels, Ambersweet, and Hamlins), white and colored grapefruit, and Fallglo tangerines.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED WEEK ENDED

Crop	Sep 26	Oct 3	Oct 10
Early oranges	1,000	0	12,000
Grapefruit	2,000	9,000	40,000
Tangerines	8,000	19,000	49,000

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