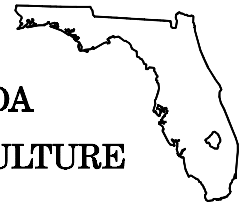




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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending December 19, 2004

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December 20, 2004

WEATHER SUMMARY: Warm weather at the beginning of the week gave way to cold temperatures as Canadian clippers passed over the State during the week of December 13 through 19. The Panhandle and some northern Peninsula localities recorded lows in the 20s at the end of the week while most northern and central Peninsula areas reported lows in the 30s. Hard freezes and frosts occurred in colder areas. Southern Peninsula temperatures fell into the 40s while Miami's low was in the 50s at the end of the period. Temperatures for the week in the major cities averaged four to nine degrees above normal due to the warm weather at the beginning of the period. Daytime highs for the week averaged in the 70s and 80s, while nighttime lows averaged in the 50s and 60s. Some Panhandle and northern Peninsula localities reported from traces to over three inches of rain falling during the week. Most central and southern Peninsula stations recorded no measurable rain for the period.

FIELD CROPS: Drying conditions during most of the week lowered topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies, especially over most of the Big Bend area to the southern Peninsula localities. Moisture supplies are mostly adequate over the Panhandle with short to adequate supplies over the northern Peninsula. Most central and southern Peninsula soil is drying due to a lack of rain and moisture supplies remain short to mostly adequate. Scattered pockets of very short moisture supplies were reported for some southeastern coastal areas. Surplus soil moisture exists in a few spots of Holmes and Hernando counties. Cotton harvesting is virtually complete in Santa Rosa. Sugarcane harvesting continues in the Everglades region.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	13	7	4	11	7	2
Short	30	22	18	22	10	18
Adequate	55	68	75	60	75	79
Surplus	2	3	3	7	8	1

VEGETABLES: Producers stepped up harvesting to meet the holiday demand and to avoid damage from predicted cold temperatures. Some strawberry growers ran overhead irrigation to protect plants from cold temperatures mid-week. Cabbage harvesting is underway in central and southern Peninsula localities. Okra harvesting is finished for the season in Dade County. Other vegetables available include snap beans, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, peppers, radishes, squash and tomatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern areas, very cold nighttime temperatures are slowing growth of cool season forages. Supplemental hay feeding is active in the north and central areas. Permanent pasture is dormant until spring. In the central and southwest, drought is slowing grass growth. Statewide, cattle condition is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	25	25	10	10
Fair	65	35	65	45
Good	9	40	20	40
Excellent	1	0	5	5

CITRUS: Dry conditions are still prevalent across much of the citrus producing areas, with rainfall being reported this week in five of the seven monitored stations. The east coast station reported the most rain at almost one inch, while the northern and southern stations reported no rainfall. Temperatures were slightly above normal levels for the week, with highs in the 70s and a cold front on Tuesday night through Wednesday morning bringing temperatures down to the mid 30s. Removal of dead or damaged trees is still continuing in hurricane affected areas. Growers continue to irrigate in areas where the rainfall was sparse, and apply herbicide where needed. Color break is showing on late oranges in many areas. Most of the early and mid oranges are going to processing plants, while fresh fruit packing houses are still running early oranges (Navels and Hamlins), white and colored grapefruit, Sunburst tangerines and tangelos.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED WEEK ENDED

Crop	Dec 05	Dec 12	Dec 19
<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>			
Early & Mid oranges	4,573	4,260	5,610
Navel oranges	290	310	187
Grapefruit	351	404	471
Tangerines	236	237	222
Tangelos	120	122	77

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