WEATHER & CROP NEWS
Week ending March 6, 2005
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WEATHER SUMMARY: Cooler, wetter conditions helped ease the danger of wild fires during the week of February 28 through March 6. However, some northern Peninsula counties, especially in the Big Bend area and the extreme southeastern Peninsula, remain susceptible to outbreaks of wild fires. Temperatures in the major cities averaged three to eight degrees below normal. Daytime highs were in the 60s and 70s with Ft. Lauderdale, Homestead, Miami and West Palm Beach recording at least one high in the 80s. Nighttime lows averaged in the 30s, 40s and 50s with Miami lows averaging in the 60s. Live Oak recorded at least one low in the 20s during the week. Rainfall ranged from less than a tenth inch at Hastings, Marianna, MacClenny and Quincy, to over two inches in Tallahassee.

FIELD CROPS: In the Everglades, sugarcane harvesting was active with recent rains causing few delays. Panhandle, central and northern Peninsula producers continued land preparations for planting. This week’s precipitation replenished soil moisture in most central, northern and southern Peninsula localities. Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are short to mostly adequate with nearly all areas reporting some short supplies. A few areas across the Peninsula that received rainfall reported some surplus soil moisture. Scattered spots of Dade County reported very short supplies. Soil moisture supplies in Hernando County ranged from short to surplus.

VEGETABLES: Rains at mid-week delayed some field work, especially in the Immokalee area. Growers in the Quincy area continued to transplant tomatoes with activity expected through the end of March. In Jefferson County, some plum, apple, fig and other deciduous fruit completed flowering and leaf development due to recent warmer temperatures; there could be a loss of fruit if a late freeze hits. Producers in Jefferson County also prepared land for watermelon transplant tomatoes with activity expected through the end of March. In the Immokalee area, cold nights limited small grain forage and grass growth. Hay feeding was active with supplies adequate at this time. In northern areas, pastures began to recover from winter frost and freeze damage. In the central areas, Bahia and Bermuda grass pastures started growing. The combination of rain and warmer temperatures initiated pasture growth. In the southwestern areas, longer days and warmer temperatures helped grass growth. Statewide, the condition of cattle is mostly fair to good.

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