WEATHER & CROP NEWS
Week ending March 20, 2005
Released 4:00 P.M. March 21, 2005

WEATHER SUMMARY: Rainy days slowed some field activities during the week of March 14 through 20. Rainfall ranged from about a quarter of an inch at Hastings to over four inches at Bradenton. Most localities received an inch or more for the week with some north central Peninsula areas only getting a half inch to an inch. Some flooding occurred in Taylor County. Temperatures in the major cities averaged normal to four degrees below with cloud cover impeding warming by the sun. Daytime highs were in the 60s, 70s and 80s while nighttime lows were in the 40s, 50s and 60s. Several localities recorded at least one daily low in the 30s.

FIELD CROPS: Corn planting was active in Washington County. Producers prepared land for cotton and peanut planting in several Panhandle and northern Peninsula counties. Continuous rainfall hindered planting in some localities throughout the week. However, the rains continued to replenish soil moisture across the Panhandle and Peninsula. Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are rated mostly adequate to surplus. Soil moisture supplies in the Panhandle areas are mostly adequate. Northern Peninsula soil moisture is rated adequate to surplus in several localities. Central and southern Peninsula areas report short to mostly adequate soil moisture with a few spots reporting surplus. Very short to adequate soil moisture supplies were reported for Dade County. In Hernando County, soil moisture supplies ranged from short to surplus.

VEGETABLES: Muddy fields kept some growers from planting and picking. Producers are currently assessing the damage to quality caused by the recent rains. Plastic in Washington County is already laid and cool season forage are doing well. Winter grazing is looking rough. Feeding and cool season forage are doing well. Winter grazing is looking rough.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, recent rains filled stock ponds. Some pastures have standing water in low spots. Clover is in full bloom. Permanent pastures not being grazed are greening up well. In the northern areas, warm season pastures are starting to green up, and cool season forage are doing well. Winter grazing is looking rough. Feeding

CITRUS: Abundant rainfall was recorded in all citrus producing counties again this past week. Temperatures reached the low to mid 80s during the day, but dropped to the mid to low 40s in most areas at night, and to the mid 30s in the northern counties. Cooler nighttime temperatures halted the bloom to later stages compared to this time the past three years. Scattered stages of blooms are being reported from small bloom buds to blossoms showing, primarily in the southern area and on weaker trees. New growth is abundant on most varieties with generous flush coming on strong in many areas. Cultural practices in anticipation of bloom include fertilizations, copper sprays and herbiciding. Early and mid orange harvesting is winding down, with increasing amounts of late oranges (Valencias) being picked mostly for processing. White and colored grapefruit are being picked for both fresh and processing. Tangelo and Temple harvesting is decreasing, with Honey tangerine harvesting remaining steady, primarily for the fresh market.

To receive this report via e-mail, log onto http://www.usda.gov/nass/sso-rpts.htm Then click on “Subscribe” (upper right part of screen), then select “Florida Crop-Weather”, enter your name and your e-mail address, then click on “Subscribe”. The report will be sent automatically to your e-mail address each week.