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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending April 3, 2005

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April 4, 2005

**FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE**



WEATHER SUMMARY: Balmy temperatures prevailed during the week of March 28 through April 3 until a cold front, which swept across the Peninsula at the end of the week, plunged readings into the 40s in most localities except for the extreme southern Peninsula. Quincy and Jay recorded lows in the 30s on April 3. Temperatures for the week averaged one to three degrees above normal in the major cities except for temperatures at Pensacola averaging one degree below. Nighttime lows averaged from 52 in Tallahassee to 67 in Miami. Daytime highs averaged from 72 at Pensacola to 85 at Miami. Storm systems crossing the State brought copious amounts of rain to the western Panhandle with Pensacola recording nearly fourteen and a half inches for the week and Jay reporting about seven and a quarter inches. Several northern Peninsula areas reported two to four inches of rain for the week while most central Peninsula localities recorded a quarter to one inch falling. Most southern Peninsula areas got less than a half inch with Balm and Homestead recording no measurable rain for the week.

FIELD CROPS: The abundant rains over the western Panhandle caused some major flooding with land preparations for peanut and cotton halted in many areas until the ground dries. In Jackson County, continued rains slowed ground preparation for planting with most corn yet to be planted. In Jefferson County, wet fields delayed field operations with some corn planting delayed. In Madison County, some corn, already planted, washed out due to recent heavy rains with producers planning to replant. Flooding in Baker County made it hard to dig some field grown ornamentals. Sugarcane cutting is virtually completed in the Everglades region. Soil moisture supplies increased in the northern and central Peninsula and in the Panhandle with supplies rated mostly adequate to surplus. Moisture supplies for the southern Peninsula are also mostly adequate to surplus with short and very short supplies reported for the southeastern coast.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
<i>Percent</i>						
Very short	1	1	6	1	1	2
Short	3	4	44	4	4	39
Adequate	50	65	49	50	75	58
Surplus	46	30	1	45	20	1

VEGETABLES: In Jefferson County, wet fields delayed some watermelon planting. Lesser amounts of rain over the central and southern Peninsula kept most planting and harvesting on schedule. Strawberry picking continued to slow seasonally. Growers marketed significant amounts of snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, peppers, potatoes, radishes, squash and tomatoes during the week. Lighter amounts of blueberries, eggplant, endive, escarole and lettuce were also available.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, cattle are in good to excellent condition. Cool season forages are performing well while winter forages are grazed down but looking good. In the northern areas, pastures are greening up and cool season forages are at peak production, though wet conditions exist in some locations. In the central areas, rain plus moderate temperatures are promoting excellent growth in pasture grass. In the southwest, cattle condition is poor to good and range condition is fair to 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	5	0	5
Poor	5	10	10	10
Fair	35	40	40	35
Good	60	45	50	50
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: Citrus producing areas had spring-like weather throughout the majority of the week, reaching the mid to upper 80s during the day in all areas, and dropping down at night to the high 40s and low 50s early in the week. The only rainfall recorded was on Saturday morning, and was in all areas. Totals were between four tenths of an inch to just over an inch. Oranges are in full bloom in all counties with some pedal drop, with the eastern counties showing the least amount of bloom. Bloom progression on grapefruit is lagging with most trees still in the bloom bud stages. Growers continue to conduct post-harvest herbiciding, fertilizing, aerial spraying and grove maintenance clean-up. Early and mid orange harvesting is relatively complete 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 harvest remaining steady, primarily for the fresh market.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED WEEK ENDED			
Crop	Mar 20	Mar 27	Apr 03
In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes			
Early & Mid oranges	300	91	18
Late oranges	2,595	3,523	4,990
Grapefruit	554	418	406
Tangelos	13	5	0
Honey tangerines	131	118	104
Temples	11	8	6

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