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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending April 24, 2005

Released 4:00 P.M.

April 25, 2005

FLORIDA  
 AGRICULTURE



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Storm fronts passing over mainly the northern and central parts of the State brought rain to most parts of the Panhandle and Big Bend areas, and to some spots of the central and southern Peninsula. Rainfall ranged from none in Miami to two inches in Carrabelle. Most of the western and central Panhandle and some Big Bend areas received at least one to two inches of rain for the week. Most southern Peninsula parts recorded none to only traces of rain for the week. Rains lessened the danger of wild fire over most of the State. Temperatures in the major cities averaged two to four degrees below normal. Daytime highs averaged in the 70s and 80s while most nighttime lows averaged in the 40s, 50s and 60s. Some northern localities recorded at least one low in the 30s with light frost reported for a few areas.

**FIELD CROPS:** Clearer conditions in several areas allowed field work to resume back to normal. Most growers in Washington County expect to be finished with corn planting by next week after being delayed by prior excessive rainfall. Spring planting was active in Gadsden County. Peanut and cotton producers prepared fields for planting which is about to get underway in Santa Rosa County. Some crop planting was delayed in Madison County due to cold, wet conditions. Some tobacco growers are nearly finished with transplanting. Continuous cooler temperatures in Wakulla County slowed the growth of row crops. Drying conditions in most areas depleted soil moisture with supplies rated short to mostly adequate. Soil moisture is mostly adequate to surplus in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula with a few areas recording short supplies. Washington County reported very short to adequate moisture supplies. Central and southern Peninsula localities moisture supplies were mostly short to adequate. Broward County reported very short to short soil moisture supplies.

| Moisture Rating | Topsoil        |           |           | Subsoil   |           |           |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                 | This week      | Last week | Last year | This week | Last week | Last Year |
|                 | <i>Percent</i> |           |           |           |           |           |
| Very short      | 2              | 1         | 22        | 2         | 1         | 14        |
| Short           | 32             | 19        | 45        | 25        | 13        | 40        |
| Adequate        | 62             | 50        | 33        | 64        | 60        | 46        |
| Surplus         | 4              | 30        | 0         | 9         | 26        | 0         |

**VEGETABLES:** Cool temperatures slowed maturation and development of some crops, especially in northern areas. Mostly dry weather over the southern Peninsula kept harvesting on schedule. Okra harvesting got underway in Dade County with a very light amount marketed. Watermelon picking increased slowly with a very light volume available. Other vegetables and non citrus fruit harvested included snap beans, blueberries, cabbage, celery, cucumbers, peppers, potatoes, radishes, squash, sweet corn and tomatoes. Lighter amounts of eggplant, endive, escarole and lettuce also were marketed.

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** In the Panhandle, the condition of pasture is very poor to excellent with most in excellent condition. Permanent pastures are showing good spring regrowth. Clover is in full bloom. In some pastures prescribed, controlled burning continued. Pasture in low lying areas continued to improve. In the north, grass growth was slow due to cool nighttime temperatures. In the south, range condition is fair to good. Statewide, cattle condition is poor to excellent with most in fair condition.

| Condition | Range          |           | Cattle    |           |
|-----------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|           | This week      | Last week | This week | Last week |
|           | <i>Percent</i> |           |           |           |
| Very poor | 0              | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| Poor      | 10             | 5         | 5         | 10        |
| Fair      | 35             | 25        | 15        | 30        |
| Good      | 35             | 65        | 65        | 60        |
| Excellent | 20             | 5         | 15        | 0         |

**CITRUS:** Warm and moderately windy weather held for most of the week in citrus producing areas with a cold front moving in on Sunday evening that brought temperatures to the high 40s in Ona and to the low 50s in all other citrus areas. Small amounts of rain were recorded throughout the State with the most being recorded in the northern area at less than one and a half inches. Bloom and petal drop are relatively complete throughout the State with small green fruit on most varieties. Cultural practices are continuing including fertilizing, herbiciding and applications of insecticides. Some growers are also irrigating where there has been lack of rain. Harvest of late oranges (Valencias) is in full motion with the majority of fruit going to processing. Growers continue to harvest white and colored grapefruit for both fresh and processing. Temple harvesting is almost complete and Honey tangerine harvest, although slow, remains active, primarily for the fresh market.

### ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED WEEK ENDED

| Crop                                      | Apr 10 | Apr 17 | Apr 24 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|
| <i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i> |        |        |        |
| Early & Mid oranges                       | 3      | 1      | 1      |
| Late oranges                              | 5,636  | 5,958  | 6,481  |
| Grapefruit                                | 343    | 334    | 256    |
| Honey tangerines                          | 99     | 76     | 71     |
| Temples                                   | 4      | 1      | 0      |

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