



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service
1222 Woodward Street
Orlando, Florida 32803
407 / 648-6013

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>

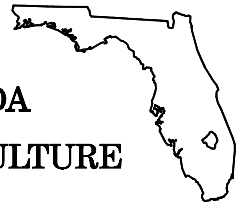
WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending May 15, 2005

Released 4:00 P.M.

May 17, 2005

**FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE**



WEATHER SUMMARY: Scattered showers dropped less than an inch of rain in some localities during the week of May 9 through 15. Rainfall for the week totaled from none in several areas to almost an inch at Putnam Hall. Temperatures averaged normal to three degrees below in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 80s. Nighttime lows were in the 50s, 60s and 70s.

FIELD CROPS: Drier and warmer conditions over most parts of the Panhandle and northern Peninsula allowed cotton and peanut producers to advance field preparations and planting. Peanuts are 30 percent planted compared with 37 percent last year and the five-year average progress of 43 percent planted. Hay fields in Leon County are almost ready for the first cutting with recent rains boosting growth and development. Most soil moisture supplies across the Panhandle and northern Peninsula are adequate; however, some localities reported short supplies while a few others reported spotty surplus soil moisture. Soil moisture supplies over the central and southern Peninsula are short to mostly adequate with localities along the southeastern coast reporting very short to short supplies.

| Percentage of Peanuts Planted to Date | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| This year | 30 |
| Last Year | 37 |
| Five year average | 43 |

| Moisture Rating | Topsoil | | | Subsoil | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | This week | Last week | Last year | This week | Last week | Last Year |
| <i>Percent</i> | | | | | | |
| Very short | 2 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Short | 28 | 21 | 39 | 19 | 33 | 38 |
| Adequate | 69 | 67 | 50 | 79 | 56 | 52 |
| Surplus | 1 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 5 |

VEGETABLES: Drier weather allowed harvesting to proceed on schedule as growers continued to meet the Memorial Day demand. Other vegetables and non citrus fruit available included snap beans, blueberries, cantaloupes, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, potatoes, radishes, squash, tomatoes and watermelons. Dade County growers continued to provide light amounts of okra. Cabbage cutting and the harvesting of endive, escarole and lettuce are virtually finished.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Warmer temperatures in most areas boosted the growth of pastures. Recent cooler weather in Marion County hindered some grass growth. Pasture condition is mostly good to excellent over the Panhandle and fair to good elsewhere. Statewide, cattle are in good condition with Panhandle producers reporting cattle in good to excellent condition. Elsewhere, cattle condition was rated fair to mostly good.

| Condition | Range | | Cattle | |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | This week | Last week | This week | Last week |
| <i>Percent</i> | | | | |
| Very poor | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Poor | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Fair | 35 | 15 | 25 | 15 |
| Good | 55 | 70 | 70 | 80 |
| Excellent | 5 | 10 | 5 | 5 |

CITRUS: Small amounts of rain fell in the citrus growing counties. Sebring had the most at over a half of an inch while Ft. Pierce recorded no rainfall. Temperatures were about average all week with all counties recording highs in the mid to high 80s except Ft. Pierce which only reached 82. Lows were in the high 50s to low 60s in all areas. Growers are irrigating in counties where conditions are dry. Growers are still hedging, topping and applying post bloom and nutritional sprays. Harvest of Valencia oranges slowed but continues to be in the five to six million boxes a week range. Grapefruit harvest for fresh and processing shipments decreased significantly in the past couple of weeks, but continues to filter in. Colored grapefruit continues to go primarily to fresh, while whites continue to go to processing. Honey tangerine harvest slowed dramatically and should be done in the next few weeks.

| ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED WEEK ENDED | | | |
|---|-------|-------|--------|
| Crop | May 1 | May 8 | May 15 |
| <i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i> | | | |
| Late oranges | 5,754 | 5,102 | 5,987 |
| Grapefruit | 111 | 102 | 73 |
| Honey tangerines | 40 | 19 | 17 |

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