

Weather Crop Report

Week ending December 18, 2005

DRY WEATHER ACCELERATES VEGETABLE HARVEST

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Significant rains of one to four inches fell over the Panhandle and most northern Peninsula localities during the week of December 12 through 19 with some Big Bend and northern areas receiving up to seven inches. Alachua reported almost seventeen inches for the week with most falling after mid-week. Most central Peninsula areas received about a quarter to one inch while most southern Peninsula localities recorded only traces of rain, if any, falling during the week. Cloud cover kept temperatures down with the major stations reporting weekly averages of two to five degrees below normal. Miami recorded a normal average temperature for the week. Daytime highs averaged in the 60s and 70s with a few extreme southern localities reporting at least one high in the 80s. Nighttime low temperatures averaged in the 30s, 40s and 50s with Miami's average in the 60s. Frost occurred in colder spots of the Panhandle and northern Peninsula.

FIELD CROPS: Sugarcane harvesting continued in the Everglades area. Cotton ginning neared completion in the Panhandle. The frequent showers over many of the Panhandle areas replenished soil moisture with supplies rated adequate to surplus and with a few pockets of short supplies. Topsoil and subsoil moisture over the northern Peninsula improved slightly with moisture supplies rated short to mostly adequate. Soil moisture supplies were rated mostly adequate across the central and southern Peninsula with a few spots of short and surplus supplies.



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Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	0	0	12	1	0	10
Short	13	10	29	12	17	20
Adequate	81	65	57	86	58	62
Surplus	6	25	2	1	25	7

VEGETABLES: Mostly dry conditions allowed planting and harvesting to proceed at a rapid pace in the Immokalee, Palmetto-Ruskin, Dade County and most central Peninsula areas. Significant rains in the Hastings area at the end of the week slowed some cabbage cutting. Recent adverse weather significantly slowed the celery crop around Lake Okeechobee with no significant amount available until late December. Other vegetables and other non-citrus fruit marketed included snap beans, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, radishes, squash, strawberries and tomatoes with very light amounts of sweet corn, endive and escarole also sold.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, cool season forage improved with ample soil moisture. Hay feeding of livestock was active. Permanent pasture grass is finished for the season. Small grains are recovering from drought in November. In the northern areas, recent rains helped established and newly planted cool season forages of ryegrass and rye. Beef cattle producers are feeding hay to supplement what is left of perennial warm-season grass pastures. Moisture is short in some Big Bend counties with cattle and pasture in fair condition. In the central areas, most of the cattle are in good condition. In the southwest, most of the range and cattle are in excellent condition. Statewide, cattle condition is mostly good.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
<i>Percent</i>				
Very poor	5	5	0	0
Poor	15	35	0	0
Fair	30	45	25	35
Good	30	15	55	60
Excellent	20	0	20	5

CITRUS: Rainfall was nominal this past week in most citrus producing counties. The exception was in Apopka where two inches were recorded. Cooler than average temperatures across the State, along with good horticultural practices will bring some cold hardiness to the trees. Growers put out limited fertilizer, cleaned ditches, sprayed, and repaired irrigation equipment. Fruit growth and maturity is still behind normal and color is reported good on all varieties. Harvesting of early and midseason oranges picked up significantly with four to five million boxes per week being picked for the past two weeks. A larger percentage of grapefruit is being picked for processing this season compared to last season. Other varieties being picked include Sunburst tangerines and Tangelos. The majority of the packinghouses and twelve processing plants are open with ten plants running mostly oranges and two processing plants focusing exclusively on grapefruit.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED - WEEK ENDED			
Crop	Dec 4	Dec 11	Dec 18
<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>			
Navel oranges	324	367	320
Early and Mid oranges	2,611	4,052	4,448
Grapefruit	519	488	563
EarlyTangerines	255	265	296
Tangelos	85	112	73

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