

WILD FIRES CAUSED BY DRY CONDITIONS

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Light rains by the end of the week came too late to prevent several wild fires throughout the week of April 3 through 10. More rains are needed to decrease the persisting dry conditions across the State. Minimal rains improved soil moisture supplies in some localities. Areas across the Peninsula are still at high risk for more potential wild fires. Rainfall amounts varied. Immokalee reported no rainfall; four inches were recorded at Avalon. Other areas receiving over an inch of precipitation included Alachua, Citra, Monticello, Pierson and Putnam Hall. Dover recorded two inches of rainfall for the week. Elsewhere, all other localities received under an inch of rain. Daytime highs were in the 80s with a few cities reaching the 90s at least one day. Pleasant evening lows were in the 50s and 60s with some localities recording at least one nighttime low in the 40s.

FIELD CROPS: Substantial rains are needed across the Panhandle and Peninsula areas to help elevate soil moisture supplies. Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are rated mostly very short across the State. Growers in Washington County have stopped fieldwork due to dry, hard soils. Dry conditions have prevented summer perennials from actively growing in Washington County. Pecans are budding out in Jefferson County. Growers are unable to begin planting cotton due to extremely dry soils in Jackson County.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	60	30	1	42	27	0
Short	36	55	8	49	30	2
Adequate	4	15	59	9	43	74
Surplus	0	0	32	0	0	24

VEGETABLES: Harvesting in the central and southern Peninsula remains active as growers supply the spring holiday demand. Dry conditions have led to insect and disease problems in Dade County. Producers in the central Peninsula are picking blueberries with light supplies available. Strawberry harvesting is nearly finished in the Plant City area. Growers marketed snap beans, cabbage, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, potatoes, peppers, radishes, squash, sweet corn and tomatoes.

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LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, most small grain for grazing is poor due to drought and permanent pasture growth is slow due to late frost and drought. Hay supplies are low. Most stock ponds are receding. In the central areas, many cattlemen are about to feed the last of their hay. In the southwest, pasture condition is very poor to fair with most fair due to drought. Statewide, cattle condition ranged from very poor to good with most in fair condition.

Condition	Cattle		Pasture	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
<i>Percent</i>				
Very poor	5	5	20	0
Poor	5	5	39	50
Fair	75	50	40	45
Good	15	40	1	5
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: After what began as another dry week, thunderstorms passed across the State on Saturday evening and into Sunday morning bringing varied amounts of rainfall to most of the citrus producing counties. The heaviest recorded rainfall was in the northern citrus areas at almost an inch, the least in the center of the State at less than one tenth of an inch. Immokalee recorded no rainfall. Daytime temperatures across the citrus belt were in the mid to high 80s most of the week, reaching over 90 at least one day in Lake Alfred. Frequent irrigation has become common practice in all areas. Growers are putting out final applications of pesticide, still continuing to hedge behind harvesting of grapefruit and some caretakers are discing, chopping and mowing cover crops prior to and following harvesting. Varieties of oranges and grapefruit are beginning petal drop and forming pea-sized fruit. Field workers reported that new fruit on grapefruit is progressing well on the east coast. Valencia weekly harvest has picked up as the main effort, but maturity levels are still lagging behind last year. The majority of grapefruit continues to go to processing. Honey tangerine utilization is running about one hundred fifty thousand boxes a week, being picked primarily for the fresh market, while almost all of the Temples being picked are going to processing.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED - WEEK ENDED			
Crop	Mar 26	Apr 02	Apr 09
<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>			
Early and Mid oranges	365	62	11
Valencia	3,169	4,327	5,242
Grapefruit	1,060	1,027	800
Honey Tangerines	122	176	167
Tangelos	1	3	0
Temples	100	32	5

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