

## DRY CONDITIONS INCREASED WILD FIRE DANGER

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**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Dry weather persisted over most of the State during the week of April 10 through 16. Significant rains fell only on the extreme southern tip of the Peninsula at the beginning of the week. Elsewhere, only traces fell on a few central and southeastern coastal localities. Homestead recorded about two inches of rain for the week; West Palm Beach, about an inch and a quarter; Ft. Lauderdale, around three-quarters inch; Tampa, around a one-third inch; and Orlando, about a quarter inch. The potential for wildfires is high for the entire State with the Division of Forestry fighting a significant fire near Panama City during the week. Temperatures for the week averaged within a degree or two of normal in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s with Orlando and Tallahassee reporting at least one high in the 90s. Nighttime lows were in the 50s and 60s with several localities reporting at least one low in the 40s.

**FIELD CROPS:** Dry, hard soils are preventing most producers from preparing fields and planting peanuts and cotton. In Washington County, some growers returned corn seed due to the dry soils and are considering planting other rotation crops. Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies were rated mostly very short to short statewide. Adequate soil moisture was reported by a few Panhandle and central and southern Peninsula counties. Dade County reported a few spots of surplus moisture with the early week rainfall causing standing water in a few fields. However, the surplus moisture reports were less than one half of one percent statewide.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	50	60	1	45	42	1
Short	20	36	18	45	49	11
Adequate	30	4	51	10	9	63
Surplus	0	0	30	0	0	25

**VEGETABLES:** Harvesting slowed slightly as producers observed the spring holiday weekend. Tomato transplanting wound down in the Quincy area with growers virtually finished. Watermelon picking in southern areas gained momentum as more acreage reached maturity. The dry weather is lowering the incidence of disease, especially in some northern and Panhandle fields. Other vegetables and non citrus fruits marketed during the week included snap beans, blueberries, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, peppers, radishes, squash, strawberries, and tomatoes.

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**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** In the Panhandle, late season grazing of winter forages and clovers has been severely reduced because of the lack of rainfall. Permanent pastures are not growing either. Supplemental hay is being fed. In the North, there are burn restrictions due to dry conditions. Cattle and pasture conditions are mostly poor. In the central areas, pasture and cattle conditions are mostly fair. In the southwest, pasture condition is very poor to fair with most in poor condition due to drought. Statewide, cattle condition ranges 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	0	5	10	20
Poor	15	5	55	39
Fair	70	75	34	40
Good	15	15	1	1
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** Temperatures in all citrus producing counties were moderately cool at night for the week, but reached the mid to high 80s during the day, peaking over the weekend. Another week was recorded with no significant rainfall in any citrus producing counties. Below average rainfall over the last several weeks has spawned dry conditions, causing growers to irrigate on a regular basis. Final applications of pesticides are being put down; limited hedging is taking place and some caretakers are discing, chopping and mowing cover crops. Bloom has ended in all areas with trees forming fruit for next season's crop. Valencia harvest is in full swing but maturity levels are still lagging behind last year. The majority of the remaining 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 Temple harvest is winding down for the season.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED - WEEK ENDED			
Crop	Apr 02	Apr 09	Apr 16
<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>			
Early & Mid oranges	62	11	2
Valencia	4,327	5,242	4,585
Grapefruit	1,027	800	582
Honey Tangerines	176	167	162
Tangelos	3	0	0
Temples	32	5	5

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