

DRY WEATHER ALLOWS VEGETABLE HARVESTING TO ADVANCE

Released:

October 16, 2006
4:00 pmAccess our reports
Via the internet at
www.nass.usda.gov/fl

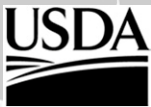
WEATHER SUMMARY: Cooler temperatures during the week of October 9 through 15 caused some evening temperatures to drop below normal in some major cities. Temperatures in the major stations averaged from one to four degrees below normal. Elsewhere, in other major stations, temperatures average from around normal to three degrees above normal. Enjoyable daytime temperatures were in the 80s and 90s. Evening temperatures were in the 40s and 50s with some areas recording at least one low in the 60s. Many localities across the State received no rainfall for the week. Over a half an inch of precipitation fell in Dover, Fort Lauderdale, Homestead and West Palm Beach.

FIELD CROPS: Another week of dry weather did not help with the harvesting of field crops. Peanut fields continue to suffer in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula areas. If growers do not receive beneficial rains soon, the late-planted peanut crop will not mature. The hardened soils have made it too difficult for growers to dig in fields with some peanuts losing pods in some Panhandle areas. Peanut digging was 42 percent done by October 15 versus 65 percent completed by this date last year and the five-year average of 76 percent. Peanut condition was rated 36 percent poor, 35 percent fair, 28 percent good, and 1 percent excellent. In Jefferson County, the pecan crop is light due to drought. Hay cutting has been very short this year in Madison County due to drought. Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies in the Panhandle were rated mostly very short to short. Across the Peninsula, soil moisture supplies were mostly short to adequate with a few pockets of very short supplies.

Percentage of peanuts harvested to date:		
This year	Last year	5-year average.
42	65	76

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	35	30	4	30	31	3
Short	45	35	33	60	49	22
Adequate	20	35	49	10	20	61
Surplus	0	0	14	0	0	14

VEGETABLES: Dry weather allowed harvesting to progress on schedule in most areas. Growers around Hillsborough County have started planting strawberries with growers planning to begin picking vegetables around the end of the month or early November. Tomato picking continued in the Quincy area and has started in some southern Peninsula areas. Growers expect to begin harvesting eggplant by the end of this week. Vegetable growers laid plastic in Hardee County. Okra harvesting continued in Dade County. Producers marketed light amounts of sweet corn, cucumbers, squash and tomatoes.

United States
Department
Of AgricultureNational
Agricultural
Statistics
ServiceFlorida
Field
OfficeBenjamin F. Klugh, Jr.
Director
407/648-6013Florida Department
of Agriculture and
Consumer Services,
Division of Marketing
and Development

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition is mostly very poor to poor due to drought and nighttime temperatures in the 40s. Some farmers have sold off big percentages of their cattle herds due to lack of feed. However, grass is greening up in some locations that received showers. Most cattle are in fair condition. Cattlemen are feeding supplemental hay. In the central areas, pasture condition is poor to excellent with most in fair condition. Most of the cattle are in good condition. In the southwest, pasture is in very poor to good condition with most in fair condition. Statewide, cattle condition ranges from poor to good with most in good condition.

Condition	Cattle		Pasture	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
<i>Percent</i>				
Very poor	0	0	10	10
Poor	10	5	25	25
Fair	35	40	50	35
Good	55	50	15	30
Excellent	0	5	0	0

CITRUS: On average, temperatures were slightly cooler than normal in citrus producing counties. Highs were in the mid to upper 80s. Nighttime lows were in the 60s most nights, with a low in the extreme northern citrus area at 52 degrees. Rainfall was nominal in all areas. Growers are irrigating regularly due to lack of rainfall. The new crop fruit set is variable, with much lower than average fruit per tree on all orange varieties and average fruit per tree on grapefruit. Maturity levels on all orange varieties are running slightly above normal while ratios are running just a little behind normal due to higher acid levels. Sizes are normal on all early and midseason oranges and slightly below on Valencia. Early oranges are showing slight color break in the southern region. Grapefruit are showing good color break, especially on inside fruit. Grove maintenance includes pre-harvest mowing, herbiciding, and late supplemental sulfur spraying. Scouting for canker and greening by growers and caretakers continues. A dozen packing houses and three processing plants are open. Varieties being packed include Fallglo tangerines, Ambersweet and Navel oranges and grapefruit.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED - WEEK ENDED			
Crop	Oct 02	Oct 09	Oct 16
<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>			
Navel oranges	19	50	114
Ambersweet	21	26	22
Early and Mid oranges	0	2	13
Grapefruit	9	77	208
Fallglo tangerines	23	87	112

We are encouraging all subscribers of this report to consider receiving it by email. To do so, log onto: <http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics by State/Florida/Subscribe to FL Reports/index.asp> Select Florida Crop-Weather. Enter your first and last name. Enter your Email address. Click on Subscribe. The report will be sent automatically each week. Or you may call us at 800/344-6277 and we will enter your subscription for you.

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