

LATE WEEK RAINS WELCOMED

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Rains late in the week of December 18 through 24 replenished soil moisture in most areas. Rainfall for the week ranged from traces in Immokalee and Ft. Lauderdale to almost three inches in Marianna. Temperatures averaged from seven to twelve degrees above normal in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s while nighttime lows were in the 50s, 60s, and 70s with some central and most northern Peninsula, and all Panhandle localities recording at least one low in the 40s. On December 25, strong winds and tornadoes spawned by the storms caused significant property damage in Webster, DeLand, San Antonio, Leesburg, Daytona Beach, and Jacksonville Beach.

FIELD CROPS: The rains helped the growth and development of small grains in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula. Sugarcane harvesting stayed mostly on schedule around Lake Okeechobee. The rain replenished soil moisture in all areas but to a greater extent in the Panhandle. Soil moisture supplies in the Panhandle were rated short to adequate. The southern Peninsula reported soil moisture also short to adequate due to earlier rainfall. Elsewhere, soil moisture was rated very short to short.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	19	44	1	25	27	1
Short	32	27	18	27	41	18
Adequate	49	29	79	48	32	78
Surplus	0	0	2	0	0	3

VEGETABLES: Drier weather over the southern Peninsula kept most planting and harvesting on schedule. Warm temperatures aided the growth and development of most crops but reduced the quality of strawberries around Plant City and Dover. Vegetables marketed during the week included snap beans, cabbage, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, peppers, radishes, squash, strawberries, and tomatoes. Very light amounts of celery, okra, and parsley were also shipped.

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LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Statewide, pasture is in very poor to good condition. In the Panhandle and northern areas, due to nice soaking rain, the cool season forage is popping up. Nevertheless, ranchers are feeding hay and hay supplies are dwindling. Due to earlier dry, cold weather, the pasture has been stressed. Over-grazing hurt some pastures. Cattle condition is very poor to good with most in fair condition. In the central and southwest areas, pasture is very poor to good with drought holding back grass growth. Cattle are in very poor to good condition with most in fair condition. 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	10	5	25	10
Poor	20	10	20	20
Fair	30	30	25	35
Good	40	55	30	35
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: A front pushed across the central and northern citrus producing regions beginning on Friday, bringing waves of rainfall and a few thunderstorms. By week's end, six of seven monitored stations had recorded at least some rainfall. Sebring had the most at over two inches followed by Lake Alfred at over one and a half inches. Daytime temperatures were in the high 70s to low 80s during the day, with morning temperatures ranging from the high 50s to low 60s. More cool weather is needed this time of the year which would be beneficial to the trees to adjust them for the colder winter months. Gift fruit shipping has been busy with Sunburst tangerines peaking during mid-December and beginning to taper off now after the holiday. Fresh shipments of both Navels and grapefruit have reached between two and three-hundred thousand boxes each week for the past couple weeks. It is anticipated that the later variety Honey tangerines will begin harvest within a week. Most processing plants closed on Friday or Saturday and plan to open on Tuesday the 26th, following the holiday. Processing plants are beginning to take Orlando Tangelos for field run. Early midseason oranges processing has picked up significantly and should stay around at least the five million boxes a week level for several more weeks. Grove maintenance includes irrigation, irrigation repair, as well as preparation needed for the continuation of harvest.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED - WEEK ENDED			
Crop	Dec 10	Dec 17	Dec 24
<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>			
Navel oranges	326	317	125
Early and Mid oranges	4,286	4,933	3,990
Grapefruit	430	535	367
Sunburst Tangerines	227	231	181
Tangelos	96	80	69

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