



WEATHER CROP

Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
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Week ending May 20, 2007

WILD FIRES CONTINUE ACROSS THE PENINSULA, RAIN NEEDED

WEATHER SUMMARY: Most areas across the State received minimal rain during the week of May 14 through 21 with ample rains needed. The lack of precipitation coupled with prolonged drought conditions sparked more wild fires across the Peninsula. The smoke from these fires closed roads due to poor visibility and lowered air quality over most of the State. As of Sunday evening, active fires totaled 185 and covered 189,794 acres according to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Division of Forestry. Arcadia, Kenansville, Marianna, and West Palm Beach reported over an inch of precipitation. Fort Lauderdale received the most rainfall with nearly three inches of rain for the week. All other areas received minimal traces of rain for the week. Temperatures at the major stations hovered around normal to two degrees below normal in Jacksonville. Daytime highs were in 80s with several stations reporting at least one high in the 90s. Pleasant evening lows were in the 50s, 60s, and 70s.

FIELD CROPS: Very dry soils continue to delay plantings of field crops in the Panhandle as well as the northern Peninsula areas. Planting of cotton and peanuts has been slowed by dry weather conditions in Santa Rosa County with some cotton up. Peanut planting is 45 percent completed compared to last year's 29 percent by this date and the five-year average planting of 50 percent. Wheat harvest has begun with good yields reported in Santa Rosa County. Corn fields in the northwestern Panhandle showed stress from the lack of moisture with rains desperately needed. In Jackson County, corn is beginning to wilt. Several cotton fields have not been planted as growers are waiting until they receive adequate rain. The hay shortage is becoming critical in several areas across the State. Topsoil moisture supplies are rated mostly very short to short with a few pockets of adequate supplies in the Panhandle and the northern Peninsula. Soil moisture supplies throughout areas in the central and southern Peninsula recorded mostly very short to short supplies. Dade County reported short to adequate soil moisture supplies.

Percentage of peanuts planted to date:		
This year	Last year	5-year average.
45	29	50

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	50	70	50	49	60	44
Short	48	28	31	32	25	30
Adequate	2	2	18	19	15	26
Surplus	0	0	1	0	0	0

VEGETABLES: Warm and mostly clear weather permitted harvesting to continue on schedule with producers supplying the Memorial Day demand. Tomato picking is slowing seasonally over the southern Peninsula. Tomato harvest around Quincy expected to begin by early June with harvesting a little behind schedule due to delayed plantings from the drought. In Washington County, dry land vegetable growth is suffering with vegetable harvest about two to three weeks behind schedule. Growers marketed snap beans, blueberries, cantaloupes, celery, sweet corn, eggplant, okra, peppers, radishes, strawberries, and watermelons.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition is mostly very poor. Most cattlemen are feeding supplemental hay and grain. The hay shortage is becoming critical. Some pastures have nothing to graze. The dry weather continues to cause pasture overgrazing. Rotated pasture normally cut for hay this time of year is also overgrazed and spring hay production is down. Many producers are beginning to wean early or sell off some animals to decrease their stocking rate. Hay farmers are experiencing high fertilizer costs with little chance to recover input costs. In the central areas, pasture condition is mostly fair. Rainfall last week in parts of Osceola and Polk counties greened up some pasture. In the southwest areas, pasture condition is mostly very poor. 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	15	20	45	45
Poor	30	30	20	35
Fair	45	40	25	19
Good	10	9	10	1
Excellent	0	1	0	0

CITRUS: Temperatures in citrus producing areas have been in the mid to high 80s most days, with cool nights in the low 60s. A slow moving front during the week produced scattered showers in most citrus-producing localities. Regularly monitored stations recorded between one tenth and one half of an inch. Other isolated local recordings in the center of the State and in the southwest were at about an inch and a half. Rainfall received this time of year is very beneficial to the trees to help them hold next year's crop. Water restrictions are in place in southwest areas and some areas along the east coast are under a "burn ban". Valencia harvest continues to be strong with weekly amounts between four and five million boxes. Three processors have finished running oranges for the season; five more are planning on finishing by mid-May and three are planning to run until the middle to the end of June. Grapefruit harvest is almost complete for both fresh and processing. Most packinghouses will finish packing grapefruit by the end of May with only a few packing oranges into June or later with storage fruit. Because of the drought, citrus growers across the State have increased irrigation amounts to keep their groves watered. Some of the field practices being observed are mowing, removing of dead trees, and hedging and topping.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED - WEEK ENDED			
Crop	May 06	May 13	May 20
	<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>		
Navel oranges	2	3	2
Early and Mid oranges	11	11	9
Valencia	4,581	4,676	4,480
Grapefruit	479	298	259
Honey Tangerines	46	24	3
Temples	1	3	6

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