



WEATHER CROP

Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
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Week ending February 24, 2008

HEAVY RAINS IN PANHANDLE DELAYED FIELD WORK PROGRESS

WEATHER SUMMARY: Heavy rains delayed field work progress in the Panhandle area throughout the week of February 18 through 24. Jackson, Jefferson, and Gadsden counties reported over six inches of rain. Santa Rosa, Marion, Alachua, Hillsborough, Levy, Franklin, Suwannee, Baker, and Putnam counties reported over one inch of rain for the week. However, some areas in the southeast part of the Peninsula received very little measurable rain. The danger for wildfire remained for some of these areas. Temperatures in the major stations were three to six degrees above normal. The highest temperature reported was 89 degrees in Homestead. Daytime temperatures ranged from the low 70s to high 80s. Nighttime lows were mostly in the 30s, 40s, and 50s with some areas in Alachua and Santa Rosa counties experiencing lows of 32 degrees.

FIELD CROPS: The heavy rains in the western Panhandle left fields soaked which negatively affects the winter wheat crop. Sugarcane harvesting continued in the Everglades region. Both topsoil and subsoil moistures in the Panhandle were mostly adequate to surplus. Soil moisture supplies in the northern Peninsula were rated mostly short to adequate. Areas in the central and southern Peninsula had mostly short to adequate soil moisture supplies for the week.

| Moisture Rating | Topsoil | | | Subsoil | | |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | This week | Last week | Last year | This week | Last week | Last Year |
| | <i>Percent</i> | | | | | |
| Very short | 2 | 1 | 31 | 2 | 11 | 14 |
| Short | 19 | 29 | 32 | 34 | 31 | 31 |
| Adequate | 68 | 63 | 37 | 56 | 56 | 54 |
| Surplus | 11 | 7 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 1 |

VEGETABLES: The week's rains improved soil conditions in Suwannee County, where some producers started planting watermelons. Strawberry growers continued to prepare for the annual festival in Plant City which begins in late February. Strawberry yields were negatively impacted by the early January freeze. Cabbage harvesting was gaining momentum as the St. Patrick's Day holiday draws near. Producers marketed snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, eggplant, endive, escarole, peppers, potatoes, radishes, squash, strawberries, and tomatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition was mostly poor to fair. Winter forage for grazing is rapidly being depleted and hay is in very short supply. In Okaloosa County, warming weather allowed a slight improvement in the pasture conditions. In Santa Rosa County, most pasture remained overgrazed due to poor growing conditions in 2007. In Washington County, heavy rains increased water levels in the stock ponds. The condition of cattle was very poor to good with most in fair condition. In central areas, pasture condition was very poor to good with most in poor condition due the lingering effects of drought. Pasture condition was beginning to improve in Marion County as a result of regular rains and generally warm weather. Cattle condition was very poor to good with most in fair condition. In the southwestern areas, pasture was poor to good with most in poor condition. Statewide, cattle condition was mostly poor to fair.

| Condition | Cattle | | Pasture | |
|-----------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | This week | Last week | This week | Last week |
| | <i>Percent</i> | | | |
| Very poor | 5 | 5 | 5 | 10 |
| Poor | 15 | 10 | 45 | 35 |
| Fair | 50 | 50 | 35 | 40 |
| Good | 30 | 35 | 15 | 14 |
| Excellent | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

CITRUS: February rainfall amounts still remain below the 10-year historical average, with only light, scattered rainfall in citrus areas last week. Precipitation amounts associated with two fronts that moved over the State ranged from a trace in Immokalee to 1.2 inches recorded in interior areas. The rainfall was very beneficial as trees were preparing to flush out new growth and bloom. Temperatures ranged from the low 40s to the mid 80s in citrus areas during the week. New growth flush and bloom is still negligible but more noticeable in some groves. Early fertilizer applications continued along with irrigation to prepare for the upcoming bloom. Systemic pesticide applications continued to promote healthier trees for better crop set. Spraying, both ground and air also continued for Psyllid reduction as well as foliar application of nutritional materials to promote flowering. Hedging, topping, and clean up followed behind most harvesting efforts. Varieties harvested included early, midseason, Navel, Temple, and small amounts of Valencia oranges; grapefruit; Sunburst and Honey tangerines; and tangelos.

| ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED - WEEK ENDED | | | |
|--|---|--------|--------|
| Crop | Feb 10 | Feb 17 | Feb 24 |
| | <i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i> | | |
| Early and Mid oranges | 5,347 | 4,769 | 5,550 |
| Navel oranges | 29 | 19 | 14 |
| Temples | 27 | 24 | 33 |
| Valencia oranges | 0 | 1 | 41 |
| Grapefruit | 977 | 954 | 1,362 |
| Sunburst tangerines | 8 | 1 | 3 |
| Honey tangerines | 133 | 93 | 112 |
| Tangelos | 91 | 44 | 57 |

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