



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

WEATHER CROP



Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
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Week ending March 16, 2008

DRY, WARMER WEATHER IN MOST AREAS

WEATHER SUMMARY: Warmer temperatures for most areas during the week of March 10 through March 16 resulted in mostly dry weather reports. Rain was recorded in the citrus growing counties of Hillsborough, Hardee, and Polk with 0.45, 0.41, and 0.36 inches of rain, respectively. However, most other areas of the Peninsula received very little measurable rain. The danger for wildfire remained for some areas. Temperatures in the major stations were one to four degrees below normal. The highest temperature reported was 93 degrees in Homestead. Daytime temperatures ranged from the upper 70s to lower 90s. Nighttime lows were mostly in the mid-30s to mid-50s. Some areas in Baker, Jackson, and Jefferson counties experienced lows in the 30s.

FIELD CROPS: In Gadsden County, hay was reported in very short supply. In St. Johns County, the potato crop was in good condition. Some growers in Jefferson County decided not to plant cotton or corn due to the high cost of fuel and fertilizer. In Santa Rosa County, recent wet weather had negatively impacted the winter wheat crop, especially some that was planted late. Some growers were considering planting soybeans after wheat, but there was a shortage of seed reported. Both topsoil and subsoil moisture in the Panhandle was mostly short to adequate. Soil moisture supplies in the northern Peninsula were rated mostly adequate to surplus. Areas in the central Peninsula reported soil moisture mostly short to adequate, while Clay and Marion counties reported adequate to surplus soil moisture. The 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	6	45	4	4	38
Short	15	7	34	21	26	39
Adequate	77	79	20	70	66	22
Surplus	6	8	1	5	4	1

VEGETABLES: In Sumter County, some freeze damage was reported for blueberries, watermelons, and squash. In Jefferson County, direct seeded watermelon planting was underway. Producers marketed snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, okra, peppers, radishes, squash, strawberries, and tomatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition was very poor to good with most in fair condition. Though permanent pasture was beginning to show growth, some greening up is from spring weeds. Warmer weather was needed to get grass growing. The small grain winter grazing was in rapid decline, while hay is in very short supply. Pastures remained barely adequate to meet grazing demands. The condition of the cattle was mostly fair. In the central areas, pasture condition was very poor to good with most in poor condition. Pastures have been greatly improved by recent rains. Cattle condition was fair to good. In the southwestern areas, pasture was very poor to excellent. Most pasture was in fair to good condition. Showers mid-week provided enough rainfall to cause ponding in pastures. Warm days helped maintain pasture quality. Statewide, cattle condition was fair to good.

Condition	Cattle		Pasture	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	5	5	10	15
Poor	15	15	29	20
Fair	35	45	25	40
Good	45	35	35	24
Excellent	0	0	1	1

CITRUS: Rainfall amounts ranged from traces to less than one quarter inch in lower interior east coast and in upper interior areas. All rainfall was associated with a moderate cold front that passed over the State. Temperatures after the front were in the low to mid-40s. High temperatures again ranged up to the mid-80s on several days. Growers, caretakers, and field personnel reported excellent new growth flush with full, open bloom on orange trees this past week. Grapefruit and tangerine varieties are slower to bloom and show expanding to opening buds in most areas. Early fertilizer applications continued with irrigation to support the new growth and bloom. Systemic pesticide applications continued to promote healthier trees for better crop set. Hedging and topping activities continued. Varieties being harvested included declining amounts of early, midseason, Navel, and Temple oranges, and increasing amounts of Valencia oranges. Harvest remained steady for grapefruit and Honey tangerines. Tangelo harvest was nearing completion.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED - WEEK ENDED			
Crop	Mar 02	Mar 09	Mar 16
	<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>		
Early and Mid oranges	4,163	2,739	1,256
Navel oranges	8	7	4
Temples	55	90	42
Valencia oranges	408	913	2,339
Grapefruit	1,513	1,481	1,347
Sunburst tangerines	2	6	1
Honey tangerines	154	151	172
Tangelos	26	16	9

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