



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 December 14, 2008

WARM TEMPERATURES PRECEDED COLD FRONT, SOME GROWERS WELCOMED RAIN

WEATHER SUMMARY: Growers in the Panhandle and southern Peninsula welcomed rains of up to 8 inches. Santa Rosa and Jefferson counties received showers of 4.16 and 7.86 inches, respectively. Many areas of the southern Peninsula received between 1 and 2 inches of rain along with Hillsborough and Lake counties of the central Peninsula. Major cities averaged high temperatures in the 70s and 80s with lows ranging in the 20s to 60s. Daytime temperatures reached highs in the 70s and 80s; lows from the 20s to 50s.

FIELD CROPS: A significant amount of cotton was recorded still in the field around Okaloosa and Walton counties. Recent rains were predicted to have damaged some of the crop. These same rains delayed the planting of winter wheat in the area. Potato growers began planting in Putnam County. Union County reported the lack of progress of small grains due to inadequate rains. Farm activities included the planting of pine trees in the Panhandle. Topsoil moisture was mostly adequate in all areas. Subsoil moisture was mostly adequate in the Panhandle, central Peninsula, and southern Peninsula but short in the Big Bend area.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	10	4	16	14	6	16
Short	20	28	43	15	27	47
Adequate	63	67	41	67	63	37
Surplus	7	1	0	4	4	0

VEGETABLES: Planting of cabbage continued in Flagler County but vegetables were stressed in Union County due to lack of moisture. Strawberries looked good in Bradford County but harvest was delayed a couple weeks in Hillsborough County due to the unseasonably cold weather. The vegetable crop in Collier and Lee counties lagged behind due to continued cool weather. Florida City harvested and packed avocados, beans, okra, squash, and zucchini, tomatoes, and eggplant. Fort Myers harvested greens, radishes, and tomatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: The pasture condition throughout the State was very poor to good. In the Panhandle area, most locations received considerable rain, but the condition of the pasture was very poor to fair due to previous drought. Late winter forage planting has been delayed as fields became too wet for field work. Some winter pastures grew enough to be grazed which improved the condition. Winter grazing small grains, ryegrass, and clovers were doing well but generally were not ready for grazing. Cattlemen were depending on "standing hay" (frosted, end-of-season pasture) and feeding of supplemental hay necessary until the first of January when winter forage is ready. Cool season forages and small grains suffered significant erosion and stand damage from huge amounts of water moving over fields from torrential rains and flooding was a significant problem in many fields. Any fertilizer applied in the past two weeks was lost. Cattle ponds, which were nearly dry from the past three years of drought, were significantly recharged. Cattle condition ranged from poor to excellent. In the northern area, some additional planting of cool season forages was noted prior to the rain. Existing cool season forage was making slow progress due to dry conditions prior to this rain event. Additional acreage of cool season forage and grains will be planted this week. Pasture forage in the Big Bend counties was limited by drought and small grains were not coming up because it was too dry. Cattle condition was fair to good. In the central area, winter pasture began to grow, but subsoil moisture was still very dry from fall drought conditions and frost set pasture grass back. Cattle condition was mostly fair. In the southwest area, frost has browned off pastures in some places. Statewide, cattle condition ranged from very poor to excellent with most fair to good.

Condition	Cattle		Pasture	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	1	1	10	5
Poor	5	4	20	25
Fair	44	45	45	50
Good	45	45	25	19
Excellent	5	5	0	1

CITRUS: The week began with sunny days and temperatures reaching the low to mid-80s in the complete citrus producing area. Towards the end of the week, a strong cold front came through bringing rain, wind, and much cooler temperatures. Although rainfall was not as much as expected, all areas received at least half an inch, with coastal areas in the west receiving just over an inch. Both coasts were reporting moderately dry conditions and welcomed the much needed rain. Early-midseason orange harvesting was nearing the maximum level it is expected to reach for the season. Over five million boxes were processed for the week, not including Navels. Many of the plants were receiving smaller size fruit than average. Maturity test revealed much higher ratios than last season on all orange varieties, but lower ratios on grapefruit. Most fresh fruit packinghouses were open and packing for fund raising groups. Demand has picked up steadily since Thanksgiving and has probably peaked for the season on oranges and early tangerines. Other than harvesting, grove activity included cleaning up groves in preparation for harvesting, some fertilizing, and a small amount of hedging.

Estimated Boxes Harvested - Week Ended			
Crop	Nov 30	Dec 07	Dec 14
	<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>		
Early and mid oranges (including Ambersweet)	1,906	4,741	5,337
Navel oranges	202	329	344
Grapefruit	395	573	644
Fallglo tangerines	0	1	0
Sunburst tangerines	142	228	263
Tangelos	42	99	108

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