



WEATHER CROP

Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
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Week ending January 18, 2009

RECORD LOW TEMPERATURES, PANHANDLE

WEATHER SUMMARY: The Sunshine State recorded below average temperatures last week, with many areas covered in frost. Growers received rain showers of less than an inch across the State; the most precipitation was reported in Suwannee County. Major cities averaged high temperatures in the 60s, 70s, and 80s with lows ranging from the 20s to 60s. Daytime temperatures reached highs in the 60s, 70s, and 80s; lows ranged from the 20s to 50s.

FIELD CROPS: Cool season grains made slow progress due to dry conditions in northern areas of the State and some growers made preparations for spring crops. Winter forage growth slowed due to cold and frost, however, Columbia County reported sufficient growth to begin grazing. Pine tree planting remained active in Taylor County. Topsoil moisture was mostly short for the central Peninsula but adequate for the remaining areas of the State. Subsoil moisture was mostly short in the Big Bend and central Peninsula but adequate in the Panhandle and southern Peninsula.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	5	15	18	7	16	22
Short	27	39	31	26	32	32
Adequate	67	45	50	63	48	45
Surplus	1	1	1	4	4	1

VEGETABLES: Due to the cool temperatures, some leaf burn was found on the cabbage crop in Flagler County. Growers protected blueberries by irrigation in Sumter, Hernando, and Citrus counties. Harvesting of leafy greens was heavy in Columbia County early in the week due to the predicted midweek freeze. Farmers prepared land for spring melons in Charlotte County and should plant in the upcoming week. Late blight was a concern among the potato and tomato crops in Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties. Vegetables marketed were beans, broccoli, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, peppers, radishes, squash, strawberries, and tomatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: The pasture condition throughout the State was very poor to good as some pastures were hurt by cold and drought. In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition was very poor to good with most in poor condition. Winter forage (small grains) was in fair condition, set back by cold weather. Permanent pasture grass (Bahia) greened up during the past couple of weeks. In the northern areas, about a third of the cool season forage pastures were just at sufficient growth to start grazing. The cattle condition was poor to excellent with most fair to good. In the central areas, pasture condition was mostly fair. Ryegrass pasture was in poor condition because of drought. Cattle were being fed supplemental hay. Cold weather slowed forage growth. In the southwestern areas, pasture was very poor to excellent with most in good condition. Hay and supplement were being fed. Pasture in some locations was still suffering from flooding from Tropical Storm Fay. Statewide, cattle condition was 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	5	10	10	15
Poor	5	10	20	20
Fair	40	35	40	45
Good	45	40	30	20
Excellent	5	5	0	0

CITRUS: Midweek, a series of northern cold fronts pushed southward to the upper part of the citrus-producing region, dropping temperatures by several degrees. The coldest temperatures were on Saturday morning when lows dropped to the mid-30s in Apopka and Lake Alfred. Ahead of the cooler weather, quick moving rain showers brought between two-tenths and one-half inch of rainfall to many northern localities. The eastern coastal areas did not receive any rainfall from the frontal system. With weekly rain totals still below average, abnormally dry drought conditions continue to cover most of the citrus region. Citrus growers were irrigating heavily, fertilizing, and mowing for picking crews. Hedging and topping of grapefruit was observed on the East Coast after harvest. Early and midseason harvesting passed the halfway mark. Processing plants continued to run early-midseason oranges at full capacity with Valencia oranges still a couple weeks away from being ready. Sunburst tangerine harvest slowed, with less than 50,000 boxes utilized this past week. Grapefruit were being picked at a rate of over 700,000 boxes per week with the majority of the fresh fruit being picked for the export market. Honey tangerine harvest was just getting underway.

Estimated Boxes Harvested - Week Ended			
Crop	Jan 04	Jan 11	Jan 19 ^{1/}
	<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>		
Early and mid oranges (including Ambersweet)	5,615	5,934	7,137
Navel oranges	53	72	83
Grapefruit	615	710	832
Sunburst tangerines	101	70	46
Honey tangerines	17	70	122
Tangelos	79	77	98
Temples	0	5	29

^{1/}Includes Monday. Eight day week for comparison purposes.

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