



WEATHER CROP



Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
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Week ending February 22, 2009

SOME RAIN, COOL, AND WINDY

WEATHER SUMMARY: Over half an inch of rain came to several locations in the Panhandle and central Peninsula. Baker, Gadsden, Jefferson, and Jackson counties recorded over an inch of precipitation. The rain improved conditions, but most areas need additional precipitation. Wildfires were reported in the central Peninsula. High temperatures reached the 70s and 80s throughout the State, while temperatures were in the 20s, 30s, and 40s at night. Last week major cities averaged highs in the 60s and 70s, with lows mostly in the 40s. Overall, temperatures were 1 to 4 degrees below normal.

FIELD CROPS: Potatoes have been planted in Putnam, St. Johns, and Flagler counties. Growers harvested potatoes in the southern Peninsula. In Glades and Hendry counties sugarcane growers worked to harvest and process freeze-damaged crops. Washington County reported that the wheat crop was in good condition. Growers in the Panhandle were beginning to prepare fields for soybeans, cotton, and peanuts. Soil moisture levels were adequate in the Panhandle, but ranged from very short to adequate in the Big Bend and central and southern Peninsulas.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	13	10	2	17	17	5
Short	42	39	22	39	32	33
Adequate	44	51	66	42	48	56
Surplus	1	0	10	2	3	6

VEGETABLES: Due to freezing temperatures earlier this year, some vegetables were replanted in the southern Peninsula. Most planting for the spring crop in southern counties was finished. Mature crops that survived the freeze have been harvested. Young vegetables currently in the ground struggled with recent cool temperatures. In the central Peninsula growers laid plastic for spring vegetables. Cold weather slightly delayed field work. Strawberry harvesting was at its peak in Hillsborough County, with minimal damage from recent freezes. In northern Florida, a significant amount of strawberries were lost in Washington County, but plants are blooming again. Putnam and St. Johns counties harvested greens, cabbage, and broccoli. Other vegetables marketed were snap beans, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive/escarole, peppers, radishes, squash, and tomatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle area, pasture condition was poor to good with most poor. The low temperatures limited grass growth, though drought was also a factor. Forage from both winter small grains and woodland pasture were limited. Cool season pastures were recovering from the hard freezes earlier this month. The cattle condition was poor to excellent. In the northern areas, near freezing temperatures slowed cool forage growth. Supplemental hay feeding was active. In the central areas, pasture condition was very poor to good with most poor. Pastures were not affected last week by the cool temperatures. Cattle condition was poor to good. Ranchers were feeding hay. In the southwestern areas, pasture was very poor to good. Warm days helped pastures green up a bit. Pastures were very short because of freezes and severe frost in January and February. Hay was beginning to run short. Also, due to the high cost of fertilizer, many ranchers planted less winter annual forage and now have to rely on hay. The cattle condition in the southwest was very poor to excellent. Statewide, the 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	5	20	25
Poor	20	15	35	35
Fair	45	35	35	35
Good	25	40	9	5
Excellent	5	5	1	0

CITRUS: Mild, typical seasonal weather was prevalent across the citrus region for the week. Lows were in the 30s and 40s, highs reached the upper 70s. All citrus areas were abnormally dry and in desperate need of rain. This past week only the northern areas had significant rainfall at just over one quarter of an inch. Field personnel reported seeing hedging, topping, irrigating, fertilizing, aerial spraying, and mowing. Harvesting of early and midseason oranges has slowed some due to availability. Early-mid processing will be winding down in a couple weeks with several plants planning on closing in early March. Some growers in the southern areas were picking Valencia oranges earlier than expected, presumably to get them off the trees before heavier than normal drop occurs due to the freeze last month. Honey tangerines will most likely be finishing early in March due to the short crop, early start, and cold snap. Some packinghouses have finished taking tangelos and Temples for the season.

Estimated Boxes Harvested - Week Ended			
Crop	Feb 08	Feb 15	Feb 22
	<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>		
Early and mid oranges	6,089	5,651	4,580
Temples	24	21	31
Valencia oranges	4	34	60
Navel oranges	13	8	2
Grapefruit	1,014	1,081	1,009
Tangelos	79	42	22
Sunburst tangerines	2	1	0
Honey tangerines	136	80	75

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