

January 1, 2017

**GEORGIA:** According to the U.S Drought Monitor, more than 80% of the State remained in a moderate to severe drought throughout December with the most severe areas in the northern half of the State. Total precipitation for the month ranged from 1.8 inches of rain in Polk County to 13.5 inches in Dougherty County. December rains provided limited drought relief and allowed some producers to plant late-season winter forages and small grains, but many others were unsuccessful because dry weather persisted throughout the planting window. Forages and small grains began to emerge, but were expected to yield very little due to late planting. Some sightings of aphids were reported in the southern portion of the State. The fall drought not only limited traditional winter grazing, but also harmed permanent grazing. Many livestock producers were quickly depleting local hay supplies and paying a premium for forage from increased shipping distances. Fears of hay shortages continued. Cattle producers fed mixed rations to supplement lower quality hay. Emergency feed assistance was activated for several counties. Cattle, sheep, and goats were in good condition, despite the drought. Cooler temperatures helped fruit crops accumulate much needed chill hours. Camarosa strawberries were growing well. Vegetable growers began laying plastic for the upcoming season. Majority of onions were planted and doing well. Cotton harvest was nearly complete.