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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending February 6, 2000

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**FLORIDA**  
**AGRICULTURE**



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Warmer and partly rainy conditions during the first part of the week of January 31 through February 5, gave way to drier, colder weather. Temperatures averaged normal to six degrees below for the week at the major stations. Daytime highs were mostly in the 60s and 70s with Pensacola recording an average high of 56 degrees for the week. Lows averaged in the 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s with warmer conditions reported by the more southerly localities. Lows in the upper 20s on at least one day occurred in several localities including Jacksonville, Tallahassee, Pierson, and Alachua. The Palmetto-Ruskin region reported frost on the morning of January 30. Rain totaled from traces in Immokalee and Homestead to almost an inch at Lake Alfred. Rainfall totals since December 1 at the major stations range from about an inch below at Miami and Orlando to almost six inches below at Tallahassee with the threat of wildfires increasing.

**FIELD CROPS:** There was no major damage to field crops from freezing temperatures this past week. Topsoil moisture throughout the State is mostly short to adequate with scattered areas of very short or surplus moisture. Tobacco farmers are caring for tobacco beds. Pine tree planting is active. Sugarcane grinding and planting are active. The wild fire hazard rating continues to increase due to freezing temperatures and dry conditions.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very short	2	1	1	5
Short	45	50	51	49
Adequate	48	42	48	46
Surplus	5	7	0	0

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** Pasture in the north and central areas were 'burned' by recent freezing temperatures. Ranchers are feeding supplemental hay in all but the southern counties of the State. Recent rains are improving the condition of winter forage grains. In the west central area, the permanent pasture condition is poor, but small grain forage condition is good. Statewide, cattle condition is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very poor	0	0	5	0
Poor	5	35	25	0
Fair	80	65	65	85
Good	15	0	5	15
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** Most of this week was cloudy, overcast with a few showers. Many areas had frost without freezing temperatures, on the 6<sup>th</sup>. There was no significant damage due to temperatures in the 30s. More rain is needed as growers in all areas are irrigating to maintain good tree condition and to prevent stress prior to the upcoming bloom period. New growth and tiny pin head bloom buds are starting to show on many well cared for citrus trees. Virtually all types of fruit have very good on-tree coloring. Harvesting crews are moving large quantities of early

and midseason oranges to the processors. There are some grove-run grapefruit going to juice plants. Fresh fruit packing houses are active with shipments of oranges, grapefruit, Temples, tangelos and tangerines.

Caretakers have been busy cutting cover crops prior to harvesting and following the hedgers and toppers. Some fertilizers are being applied in the southern areas.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Jan 23	Jan 30	Feb 6
Navel oranges	125,000	137,000	112,000
Early & Mid oranges	7,949,000	8,163,000	8,004,000
Valencia oranges	4,000	17,000	10,000
All grapefruit	1,082,000	1,437,000	1,925,000
Early tangerines	64,000	30,000	91,000
Honey tangerines	98,000	103,000	108,000
K-Early Citrus Fruit	6,000	3,000	2,000
Tangelos	166,000	158,000	115,000
Temples	64,000	62,000	71,000

**VEGETABLES:** Milder temperatures during most of the week helped plants to recover from the recent wind and cold. Major vegetables harvested during the week include tomatoes, peppers, endive, escarole, cabbage, celery, cucumbers, lettuce, radishes, snap beans, squash, strawberries, sweet corn, and eggplant.

**SNAP BEANS:** Dade--The crop is rated in very good condition. Young fields are up to good stands. Planting is active. Harvesting continues with good quality available. Volume is expected to be good for the rest of the season. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting and picking continue at a steady pace. Quality is good. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Young plants are recovering well from recent leaf burn. Plants are blooming with pin beans forming. West Central--Land preparation continues.

**CABBAGE:** West Central--Crop is in good condition. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is steady. Fruit quality is fair to good. Size is variable and color is good. Hastings, North Central--Transplanting is active. Growth and development are normal. The crop is in good condition. Heads are smaller than normal in some areas. Harvest is gaining momentum. There was no major damage from the freezing weather. Dade--Cabbage looks good with cool nights helping heads.

**CELERY:** Everglades--Harvesting is active.

**SWEET CORN:** Dade--Young fields are in good condition. Harvesting continues with good quality available. Yield is good. A good volume is expected for the rest of the season. East Coast--Recent cool temperatures slowed plant growth and ear formation. Oldest plants show silks drying up with harvesting to begin soon. Everglades--Planting remains active. Southwest--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Planting is gaining momentum.

**CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market:** Southwest--Crop condition is fair. Planting remains steady. Harvesting of fair to good quality continues. East Coast--Plant growth and fruit development are slow. Planting continues. Germination is mostly good. Workers

In cooperation with the Florida Cooperative Extension Service whose county directors participate in supplying field information.

removed freeze covers with thinning of some young fields active. Dade--Harvesting of a small volume remains active. Quality and yield are good. West Central--Spring crop planting is expected to start over the next two weeks.

**PICKLES:** Dade--Planting continues at a slow pace.

**EGGPLANT:** East Coast--Young plants are in good condition. Plant growth is slow due to cool temperatures. Planting continues at a slow pace. Harvesting of regular and specialty types is active. Quality is good. Color is very good. Volume is lighter. Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting is nearing the end. Harvesting remains steady. Quality is good. Dade--Crop condition is good. Young fields are in very good condition. Cutting is active with good quality available. Yield is good with good volume available through March. West Central--Spring crop planting is underway. Condition is fair.

**ENDIVE/ESCAROLE:** Everglades--Harvesting is active.

**LETTUCE:** Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvesting continues.

**OKRA:** Dade--The season is finished.

**PEPPERS:** Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting continues at a steady pace. Harvesting is active with fair to good quality available. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Plant growth and development are slow. Planting is active. Harvesting of green Bells continues with first picks yielding very good quality and sizes. Yield is increasing. Picking of red and yellow Bells, cubanelle, jalapeno, Hungarian wax, and other hot varieties is yielding a light volume. Dade--Harvesting of a small volume remains active. Quality and yield are good. West Central--Planting is gaining momentum.

**POTATOES:** Dade--Potatoes continue to look very good. Harvest should start the last of February. Irrigation is needed in some fields. Spraying is active and fields are free of disease. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Growth and development are normal. Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Growth and development are normal. Growers are starting to harvest. Size and quality are good. Hastings--Planting is active. The crop is in good condition. There was no major damage to the potato crop from the freezing temperatures this past week as growers were able to cover plants.

**RADISHES:** Everglades, Lake Placid--Digging remains active. Quality is mostly good.

**SQUASH:** Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting

remains steady. Picking of good quality remains active. Dade--The crop is in good condition. Planting continues with recent plantings making good stands. Picking continues. Yield is good. Quality is mostly good. East Coast--Crop condition is good with plants recovering well from the recent cold. Cutting of yellow types and zucchini is producing good quality and color. Volume is light. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is gaining momentum.

**STRAWBERRIES:** Plant City, Dover, Lithia--Picking is active. Quality is mostly good. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking remains steady. Quality and color are fair to good. Sizes are good. Dade--U-Pic harvesting is active with a good volume available. Yield and quality are good.

**TOMATOES:** Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition with some plants recovering from wind burn. Some fruit shows scars from recent strong winds blowing sand onto the plants and fruit. Planting is winding down with some growers finished. Cold temperatures continue to slow plant growth and fruit development. Picking remains steady. Quality and yield are good. First picks are producing mostly 5x5, 5x6 and 6x6 sizes. Packout is good. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Cool temperatures are slowing plant growth and fruit development with some fruit maturing seven to fourteen days later than normal. Harvesting is active. Volume decreased due to the low market. First picks are providing very good quality and sizes. Laying of plastic and transplanting are active. Dade--The crop is in very good condition. Picking remains slow due to the low price. Growers are harvesting a significant volume of pinks and vine ripens prior to picking greens. Quality and yield are good. Sizes are running 5x5 to 5x6 to 6x6 with most 6x7 sizes left on the vine. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair condition. Cooler temperatures are slowing plant growth. Planting continues with some activity slowed by rainfall.

**CHERRY TOMATOES:** Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting continues at a steady pace. Harvesting remains active with good quality available. Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is fair to good. Plant growth and fruit development are normal. Transplanting is virtually completed.

**PLUM TOMATOES:** Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting and harvesting are steady. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Transplanting is steady.

**WATERMELONS:** West Central, Southwest--Condition is rated fair to good. Planting is gaining momentum.

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