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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending February 13, 2000

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February 14, 2000

**FLORIDA**  
**AGRICULTURE**



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Cool and mostly dry conditions continued during most of the week of February 6 through 12. Temperatures at the major stations averaged one to five degrees below normal except for Tallahassee and Pensacola where temperatures averaged one to three degrees above. Daytime highs were mostly in the 60s and 70s while nighttime lows were mostly in the 30s, 40s, and 50s. Temperatures dipped into the 30s at Homestead on Thursday, February 10 which caused some scattered light frost. Scattered showers, occurring about mid-week, crossed over some southeastern and southern Peninsula localities. Ft. Pierce and Miami recorded over three fourths inch of rain falling for the week; West Palm Beach, almost a half inch; and Dover, almost a quarter inch. Many areas recorded no rain for the week with the threat of wildfires remaining high due to dry conditions. However, thunderstorms over some Panhandle and Big Bend localities on Sunday, February 13 helped ease extremely dry soil moisture conditions.

**FIELD CROPS:** Topsoil moisture throughout the State is mostly short with scattered areas of very short or adequate moisture. Growers are making preparations to plant spring crops. Tobacco farmers are caring for tobacco beds. There is some disease in the tobacco beds. Pine tree planting is active. Sugarcane grinding and planting are active. Wild fire hazard rating is high due to dry conditions.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	1	4	5	3
Short	50	62	49	71
Adequate	42	34	46	26
Surplus	7	7	0	0

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** Statewide, pastures are in poor to fair condition due to dry, cool conditions. In the Panhandle, cool, dry, and windy conditions is repressing winter forage growth. Some pastures also show damage from nematodes. In the north counties, winter forage has slow growth due to drought. In the west central counties, pastures are brown with growth stopped. Rye grass forage is in good condition. In the southwest, recent rainfall improved low lying pastures. Statewide, the cattle condition is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	5	0	0
Poor	35	50	0	10
Fair	65	40	85	85
Good	0	5	15	5
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** This was a mild week with cool nighttime temperatures. There was very little if any rain in most areas except the lower East Coast which had rain the first of the week. Growers on the high sand hills and the well-drained flatwoods soils are irrigating to maintain good tree condition prior to the upcoming bloom period. There are a lot of trees presently showing

feathery new growth with very small pin head bloom buds. Harvest of early and midseason oranges continues at peak levels in most areas. There are some Valencia oranges being picked at this time. Movement of grove-run grapefruit to the processors is increasing. Honey tangerines and Temples are moving to the fresh fruit packing houses. Most processing plants are running around the clock. There are only a few processors not up to capacity.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops. Spring herbicides are being applied in most areas. Hedging and topping continue in all areas. Few burn permits are being issued due to the current dry conditions.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Jan 30	Feb 6	Feb 13
Navel oranges	137,000	112,000	94,000
Early & Mid oranges	8,163,000	8,004,000	9,019,000
Valencia oranges	17,000	10,000	29,000
All grapefruit	1,437,000	1,925,000	1,920,000
Early tangerines	30,000	91,000	23,000
Honey tangerines	103,000	108,000	119,000
K-Early Citrus Fruit	3,000	2,000	5,000
Tangelos	158,000	115,000	79,000
Temples	62,000	71,000	74,000

**VEGETABLES:** Cool temperatures are slowing some plant growth but are causing no major damage. 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 in good condition. Planting remains active with young plants making good stands. Picking is active with good quality available. Volume is good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting continues at a steady pace. Harvesting is active with fair to good quality available. West Central--Crop condition is good as planting gets underway. East Coast--Plant growth continues to improve. Germination of recent seedings is mostly good. Planting of a limited acreage is active. Everglades--The crop is in good condition. Plant growth is good with oldest plants forming pin beans. Harvesting is expected to begin by early March.

**CABBAGE:** West Central--The crop is in fair to 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. Dade--Harvest is active with more quality and yield. The crop looks good with cool weather helping heads.

**CELERY:** Everglades--Plant growth is good. Harvesting continues. Yield is good. Quality is very good.

**SWEET CORN:** Dade--Picking continues with a good volume available for the next six to eight weeks. Quality and yield are good. Everglades--Plant growth is mostly good with some plants showing light frost damage. Harvesting is active with good quality available. Volume is light. Planting remains active and is

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

expected to continue through mid-March. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Pulling is active with some progress delayed by the slow development of ears. Quality and sizes are good. Volume is light but is expected to increase over the next seven to ten days. Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Planting is steady. Zellwood--Planting is active as the season gets underway.

**CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market:** Southwest--Crop condition is fair. Planting and harvesting are steady. Quality is fair. Dade--Picking continues. Volume is very light. Quality is good. West Central--Crop condition is fair as spring crop planting gets underway. East Coast--Condition is mostly good. Plant growth and fruit development are slow due to the cooler temperatures. Oldest plants are forming runners and blooming. Growers are planting on plastic used for fall tomatoes and peppers. Recent plantings are germinating well. Workers are irrigating as needed.

**PICKLES:** Dade--Planting of a very small acreage is active. West Central--Crop condition is rated good as planting gets underway.

**EGGPLANT:** East Coast--Young plants remain in good condition. Cutting of a light volume continues with mostly good quality available. Color is good. Supply is light. Planting of a limited acreage is active. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is slowing seasonally. Picking remains steady with fair to good quality available. Dade--The crop is in very good condition. Harvesting continues with good quality available. Yield is good. West Central--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Planting is gaining momentum.

**ENDIVE/ESCAROLE:** Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvesting continues. Quality is good.

**LETTUCE:** Everglades--Plants are recovering well from recent damage caused by cold winds. Harvesting is active. Quality and yield are good.

**PEPPERS:** Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is steady. Picking of Bells and hot varieties is steady with fair to good quality available. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. Cool temperatures continue to slow some plant development. Fruit sizing is excellent. Picking of green Bells remains active with first picks providing very good quality and large sizes. Yield is improving. Volume is increasing slightly. Harvesting of red and yellow Bells and specialty types is yielding a lighter volume. Workers are laying plastic, planting, and clearing fall crop acreage. Dade--Picking is active. Volume is light. Quality and yield are good. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is increasing seasonally.

**POTATOES:** Dade--Potatoes continue to look very good. The first acreage was killed and digging will start the last week 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 fair to good condition. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is gaining momentum. Fruit size and quality are good. Hastings--Planting is active. The crop is in good condition.

**RADISHES:** Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvesting continues. Quality is mostly good. Supplies are good.

**SQUASH:** Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Both planting and harvesting continue at a steady pace. Quality is fair to good. Dade--Crop condition is rated very good. Young fields are growing well with planting still active. Harvesting is active with good quality available. Yield is good. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Harvesting of yellow types and zucchini is providing a light supply of good quality. Sizes and color are good. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is increasing seasonally.

**STRAWBERRIES:** Plant City, Dover, Lithia--Harvesting continues at a steady pace. Quality is mostly good. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting is steady. Quality, color, and sizes are good. Dade--Recent cool temperatures aided plant growth. U-Pic harvesting continues. Quality and yield are good.

**TOMATOES:** Southwest--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Cool temperatures are slowing plant growth and fruit sizing. Transplanting is nearing the end. Harvesting remains active. Quality is mostly good. Sizes are good. East Coast--Crop condition is good. Blooming is increasing on younger plants. Recent cool temperatures slowed maturation of some acreage by about two weeks. Laying of plastic and transplanting continue. Picking of a limited volume continues with harvesting on weekends stopped. Dade--Crop condition remains very good. The frost caused no significant damage. Harvesting is slow with growers picking only large sizes due to market conditions. Quality is good. Volume is low. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair to good. Oldest plants are starting to show blooms with harvesting expected to start in late March or early April. Transplanting is active.

**CHERRY TOMATOES:** Southwest--Crop condition remains fair to good. Planting is winding down. Picking is steady with fair to good quality available. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Planting is nearly done.

**PLUM TOMATOES:** Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting is slowing seasonally. Picking is steady with fair to good quality available. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in good condition. Planting is steady.

**WATERMELONS:** West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is increasing seasonally. Southwest--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Planting is steady.

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