



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service
 1222 Woodward Street
 Orlando, Florida 32803
 407 / 648-6013

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>

WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending February 27, 2000

Released 4:00 P.M.

February 28, 2000

FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE



WEATHER SUMMARY: Mostly mild conditions continued during the week of February 20 through 26. Temperatures at the major stations averaged normal to four degrees above. Daytime highs were mostly in the 60s and 70s with several localities reporting at least one high in the 80s. Nighttime lows were mostly in the 40s, 50s, and 60s with some western Panhandle and northern Peninsula localities recording at least one low in the 30s. Most rainfall totals ranged from none to about a quarter of an inch with Ft. Pierce recording a little over a half inch of rain for the week. The threat of wildfire continues with the State of Florida, Division of Forestry and local fire departments responding to brush fires statewide, including two significant fires in Alachua and Lafayette counties.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture throughout the State is mostly short to adequate with scattered areas of very short 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 is winding down with mills starting to close. Wildfire conditions are high in most areas of the State.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very short	4	6	0	8
Short	69	76	85	69
Adequate	27	18	15	23
Surplus	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Statewide, pastures are mostly in fair condition. In the Panhandle, pasture condition improved following recent rains. In the northern Peninsula counties, small grain forages are growing some following warmer days. In central counties, cool temperatures are keeping permanent pasture grass from growing. In the west central area, cattle condition is decreasing due to lack of grass, and the pasture condition is poor due to lack of rain. In the southwest, pastures are being burned off in some locations and new grass is showing up. Statewide, the condition of cattle and calves is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very poor	0	10	0	5
Poor	45	15	5	10
Fair	50	70	85	70
Good	5	5	10	15
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: There were a few spotty showers scattered over the State at mid-week and a quick cold front Sunday the 27th that brought up to 0.25 inches to some areas. Growers are irrigating to maintain good tree condition as most trees are starting to put on new growth with pin head bloom buds. Some trees in the well-cared-for Navel and Valencia groves are already showing a limited quantity of open bloom flowers. Harvest of early and

midseason oranges is slowing as supplies are running out in some areas. Movement of Valencias is increasing as fresh fruit packers are shipping some of the young tree late oranges. Grapefruit, Temples and Honey tangerines are being picked in all areas for both fresh and process use.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops. Hedging and topping are very active in all areas. Most growers are stacking their dead limbs and pushing up trees for future burning.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Feb 13	Feb 20	Feb 27
Navel oranges	99,000	84,000	67,000
Early & Mid oranges	8,801,000	7,182,000	8,451,000
Valencia oranges	31,000	188,000	227,000
All grapefruit	1,978,000	1,934,000	1,983,000
Early tangerines	23,000	19,000	84,000
Honey tangerines	127,000	119,000	125,000
Tangelos	103,000	42,000	66,000
Temples	170,000	158,000	126,000

VEGETABLES: Mostly dry conditions are increasing the need for irrigation. Plant City strawberry growers are preparing for the festival scheduled for March 2 through 12. Major vegetables harvested during the week include potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, endive, escarole, cabbage, celery, cucumbers, lettuce, radishes, snap beans, squash, strawberries, sweet corn, and eggplant.

SNAP BEANS: Dade--The crop is in very good condition. Planting remains active with progress starting to slow seasonally. Picking continues. Quality and yield are very good. Growers continue to irrigate as needed. Southwest--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Planting continues. Harvesting is steady with good quality available. West Central--Crop condition is good. Planting is mostly steady. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Warmer temperatures are boosting plant growth and aiding the formation of pin beans. Hand picks are yielding good quality. Color is good. Everglades--Harvesting is expected to begin by early March.

CABBAGE: West Central--Crop in fair to good condition. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is steady. Fruit quality is fair to good. Size is improving and color is good. Hastings, North Central--Transplanting is virtually complete. Growth and development are normal. The crop is in good condition. Head size and quality are good. Harvest is steady. Dade--Cabbage quality and yield are good. Quality heads are being cut. Planting is about complete.

CELERY: Everglades--Harvesting continues.

SWEET CORN: Dade--Picking continues with very good quality available. Volume is good with a good amount expected for the next four to five weeks. Yield is very good. Everglades--Crop condition is mostly good. Planting remains active and is expected to continue through mid-March. East Coast--Warmer weather is aiding plant growth and development with the crop condition rated good. Pulling is gaining momentum as more acreage reaches maturity. Ear quality is good. Yield is good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is steady.

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

CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market: Southwest--Crop is fair. Planting and harvesting is steady. Fruit quality is fair to good. Dade--Few cucumbers being picked with good quality and average yield. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is gaining momentum. Growth and development are normal. East Coast--Plant growth and fruit development are good. Warmer temperatures are aiding crop progress. Later crop forming runners, blooming, and setting fruit. The fruit is sizing well. Some light harvest could start next week. Planting continues, and germinating is good. Thinning of plants is active. Over head irrigation being used on recently seeded fields.

PICKLES: Dade--Planting of small acreage is active. West Central--Crop is in good condition. Planting is steady. Growth and development are normal.

EGGPLANT: East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Youngest acreage is blooming and setting fruit. Harvesting of a light volume of regulars and specialty types continues. First cuts of regulars are producing fancy sizes. Quality and color are good. Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting is slow as the season nears the end. Harvesting of good quality fruit is active. Dade--The crop is in good condition. Cutting continues. Yield and quality are good. West Central--The crop is in good condition.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE: Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvesting continues.

LETTUCE: Everglades--Harvesting is active.

PEPPERS: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is slow as the season nears the end. Picking is steady with good quality available. East Coast--Crop condition is good. Warmer temperatures are aiding plant growth and fruit development. Laying of plastic and transplanting are active. Picking of green Bells is producing a steady volume. Harvesting of red and yellow Bells, and specialty varieties is yielding a light volume. Crown picks of green Bells are providing large sizes of excellent quality. Dade--Picking continues. Volume is very light. Yield is good. Quality is fair. West Central--The crop is in good condition. Planting continues at a mostly steady pace.

POTATOES: Southwest--Crop condition is good. Harvesting is steady with good quality available. Dade--Young fields are in very good condition. Harvesting started with good quality available. Quality is good. Yield is very good. Sizes are small. Volume is low but is expected to increase over the next two weeks. Digging is expected to continue through mid-April. Hastings--Warm temperatures continue to boost growth and development. Earlier frosts had delayed development but recent milder weather allowed all to recover. Planting is active. Producers are spraying some acreage for the control of insects and disease. West Central--Crop condition is good.

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

SQUASH: Southwest--Condition is rated fair to good. Planting is slowing seasonally. Picking is steady with good quality available. Dade--Young fields are in very good condition. Planting is slowing seasonally. Harvesting is active with good quality available. Yield is good. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting is steady. Quality and color are mostly good. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition.

STRAWBERRIES: Plant City, Dover, Lithia--Harvesting is active. Quality is fair to mostly good. Growers are preparing for the festival scheduled for March 2 through 12. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Warm temperatures are hurting the development of some varieties. Harvesting is steady. Quality is fair to mostly good. Sizes are fair to good. Dade--U-Pic harvesting continues. Quality and yield are good.

TOMATOES: Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Fruit setting is good. Planting continues to slow. Harvesting is steady with good quality available. Volume is good with good supplies of all sizes available. East Coast--Crop condition is good. Warmer temperatures are boosting plant growth, bud formation, and blooming. Fruit is setting well. Transplanting is increasing in northern localities. First picks are producing good quality and excellent yields. Second picks are yielding good quality with some smaller sizes available. Volume is steady. Dade--Condition is good. Young acreage is setting good hands. Harvesting is active with 5x6, 6x6, 6x7, and 7x7 sizes available. Quality and yield are good. Packout is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is good. Planting is slowing but continues at a mostly steady pace. Oldest acreage shows small size fruit. Picking is expected to start in about five to six weeks. Quincy--Producers are laying plastic and fumigating acreage in preparation of planting.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is almost done. Picking is steady with good quality available. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Planting is winding down with some growers finished.

PLUM TOMATOES: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is slowing. Picking is steady. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is mostly steady with some producers finished.

WATERMELONS: West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is winding down. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is steady. Jackson County--Planting started.

To receive this report via e-mail, send an e-mail message to nass-state-releases@news.usda.gov with the following message:

subscribe fl-crop-weather. The report will be e-mailed automatically to your e-mail address each week.