



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

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

WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending April 2, 2000

Released 4:00 P.M.

April 3, 2000

FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE



WEATHER SUMMARY: Warm temperatures and spotty storms continued during the week of March 26 through April 1. Temperatures averaged three to six degrees above normal for the week. Most highs were in the 70s and 80s while most lows were in the 50s and 60s. Miami and Orlando recorded at least one high at 91 for the week. Several Panhandle, northern, and north central localities recorded at least one low in the 40s. The storms brought varying amounts of rain with Pierson, Daytona Beach, and the East Coast area reporting from five to over seven inches falling during the week. However, most rain totals ranged from traces to three inches with West Palm Beach reporting no rain for the week.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula is short to adequate. Topsoil moisture in central and southern Peninsula is very short to short with scattered areas of adequate moisture. Growers are making preparations to plant spring crops. Field corn planting is active. Farmers are starting to plant cotton and peanuts. Tobacco farmers are actively transplanting tobacco. Sugarcane grinding is virtually complete. The wild fire index has decreased in some areas with increased rain fall.

| Moisture Rating | Topsoil | | Subsoil | |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Last week | This week | Last week | This week |
| | Percent | | | |
| Very short | 9 | 8 | 12 | 10 |
| Short | 68 | 73 | 68 | 70 |
| Adequate | 23 | 19 | 20 | 20 |
| Surplus | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Statewide, range and pastures are mostly in poor to fair condition, unchanged from last week. Rains during the week helped the pastures in some areas of the State. Supplemental feeding of hay is active. More rains are needed. In the south, cattle and pastures are mostly in fair condition. The fire hazard conditions have decreased in some areas because of rains.

| Condition | Range | | Cattle | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Last week | This week | Last week | This week |
| | Percent | | | |
| Very poor | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Poor | 20 | 15 | 10 | 5 |
| Fair | 75 | 80 | 75 | 85 |
| Good | 5 | 5 | 15 | 10 |
| Excellent | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

CITRUS: There were several isolated showers throughout the citrus belt this week. However, more rain is needed in all areas. Lakes, ponds and streams, from which growers and caretakers withdraw water for their agriculture use, are all very low and some are too low for use until the summer rains arrive. Irrigation continues to help maintain good tree condition during the current bloom period. Some trees have had petal drop while others are still in full open bloom. Virtually all groves have had some quantity of bloom. Navels and Valencia trees were by far the most prolific during this bloom period. Early and midseason

orange harvest is down to the last few thousand boxes. Movement of Valencias to processors is increasing. Grapefruit harvest is also very active with most of the fruit coming from the lower east coast. Honey tangerines are going to the fresh markets, while most Temples are being processed.

Caretakers are mowing, disking and chopping cover crops and herbiciding. Post bloom-nutritional sprays are being applied in all areas. Hedging and topping continue. Pushing out of old unthrifty trees is active in many of the larger groves. Burn permits continue to be limited due to the current dry conditions.

| Crop | Estimated boxes harvested week ended | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Mar 19 | Mar 26 | Apr 2 |
| Navel oranges | 5,000 | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| Early & Mid oranges | 2,321,000 | 916,000 | 296,000 |
| Valencia oranges | 1,891,000 | 3,744,000 | 5,133,000 |
| All grapefruit | 2,510,000 | 2,951,000 | 3,027,000 |
| Early tangerines | 1,000 | 22,000 | 21,000 |
| Honey tangerines | 144,000 | 177,000 | 132,000 |
| Tangelos | 5,000 | 8,000 | 0 |
| Temples | 149,000 | 147,000 | 148,000 |

VEGETABLES: Potato digging is underway in the West Central region. Tomato harvesting is starting to slow in Dade County and the Southwest. Major vegetables available include potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, endive, escarole, cabbage, celery, cucumbers, lettuce, radishes, snap beans, squash, strawberries, sweet corn, and eggplant.

SNAP BEANS: Dade--Crop condition is rated very good. Young fields are growing well. Harvesting is active with a good volume available throughout April. Quality and yield are good. Everglades--Picking continues. Quality is mostly good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is slowing seasonally. Harvesting remains steady. Quality is fair to good. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Picking of a light volume continues. Quality and color are good. West Central--Recent heavy rain lowered condition with the crop rated in poor to fair condition.

CABBAGE: West Central--Crop is in fair to good condition. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is steady. Hastings, North Central--Growth and development are normal. The crop is in good condition. Head size and quality are good. Harvest is active. Dade--Cabbage season is about over with a light volume available for two more weeks. Quality is good.

CELERY: Everglades--Harvesting is active.

SWEET CORN: Everglades--Picking is increasing seasonally. Quality is mostly good. Dade--Harvesting remains active with a good supply available through mid-month. Quality and yield are good. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting continues to slow seasonally. Workers are cleaning acreage completely picked. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Harvesting is gaining momentum. Quality is good.

CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market: Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is complete. Growth and development are normal. Harvesting is steady. Fruit quality is fair to good.

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

Dade--Some cukes are being picked with good quality and yield. Small supply is available. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal. East Coast--Condition of the crop is good. In youngest fields plants are growing well, forming runners, blooming and setting fruit. New fields are providing fruit of good quality, size, and color. In recently seeded fields germination is good with frequent rains helpful. Growers are cleaning up some fields, mowing and pulling up plastic.

PICKLES: Dade--Pickles are being picked with good yield and quality. Larger supplies are available. West Central--Crop is in fair to good condition. Growth and development are normal. North Central--Planting of the spring crop is underway. The crop is in good condition.

EGGPLANT: East Coast--Crop condition is good. Young plants are growing well and blooming. Cutting of a light volume is active. Quality, sizes, and color are good. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Picking remains steady. Quality is fair to good. Dade--Plants and fruit show damage from recent strong winds. Condition is fair. Cutting continues with fair quality available. Yield is fair. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE: Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvesting is active.

LETTUCE: Everglades--Harvesting continues.

OKRA: Dade--The crop is in good condition. Growers are irrigating as needed. Harvesting of a very light volume is active.

PEPPERS: Southwest--The crop is rated in fair to good condition. Harvesting is steady. Quality is fair to good. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting of green Bells continues with first picks producing good quality and large sizes. Second and later picks are yielding variable quality and sizes. Picking of a light volume of red and yellow Bells, and specialty varieties remains active. Workers are removing stakes and strings, and mowing acreage completely picked. West Central--Condition is fair to good. Picking is expected to begin soon.

POTATOES: Dade--The crop is in very good condition. Digging continues. Quality and yield are good with supplies available through late April. The lower market is slowing movement. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Harvesting is steady. Quality is fair to good. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Digging started. Quality is fair to good. Supplies are light. Hastings--Crop condition remains mostly good.

RADISHES: Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvesting remains steady. Quality is mostly good.

SQUASH: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting is steady. Quality is fair to good. Dade--The crop is in good condition. Workers are irrigating young fields as needed. Picking is active with good quality available. Supplies are increasing. East Coast--Plant growth and fruit development are good. Harvesting of zucchini and yellow types remains active. Volume is light. Quality and color are good. West Central--Crop condition is good. Picking is gaining momentum. Quality and color are good with small to medium sizes available. Sumter County--Harvesting started.

STRAWBERRIES: Plant City, Dover, Lithia--Picking continues to slow as growers finished harvests. Quality is mostly good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair. U-Pic harvesting is active. Quality is fair to good with variable sizes available. Dade--U-Pic harvesting continues. Quality and yield are good.

TOMATOES: Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Cool nighttime temperatures are slowing plant growth and fruit sizing. Fruit setting is good. Picking remains steady but supplies are decreasing seasonally as growers begin to finish for the season. Quality and sizes are good. Gradeout is normal. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Warmer temperatures are aiding fruit development. Harvesting continues with first picks providing good quality and variable sizes. Dade--Condition is fair to good. Hot temperatures are hindering some plant growth. Fruit sizing is good. Picking continues with a good volume available through mid-month. Quality and yield are good. Workers are irrigating as needed. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in good condition. Fruit sizing is improving. Picking is expected to start about mid-to-late month. Quincy--Transplanting is virtually finished.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Harvesting is steady. Quality is fair to good. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is expected to begin soon.

PLUM TOMATOES: Southwest--Condition is rated fair to good. Harvesting is steady. Quality is fair to good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair to good. Picking is expected to start soon.

WATERMELONS: Southwest, West Central--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Sumter County--The crop is in excellent condition. Alachua County--Recent rains are helping growth. Union County--Planting on plastic is active.

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.