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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending June 4, 2000

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## FLORIDA AGRICULTURE



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Abundant rain fell over the southeastern coast, Dade County, and some southwestern localities during the week of May 28 through June 3. A few central Peninsula localities also received welcomed rains. However, hot and mostly dry conditions continued elsewhere. Homestead reported over three and a half inches for the week. Tavares recorded about two and a third inches. West Palm Beach and Miami reported an inch to two inches. Alachua recorded a little over an inch. Elsewhere, most stations reported no rain while others reported only traces. Temperatures for the week averaged one to four degrees above normal at the major stations. Daytime highs were mostly in the 80s and 90s with Tallahassee reporting at least one high at 100. Nighttime lows were mostly in the 60s and 70s with Alachua, Pierson, and Jacksonville recording at least one low in the 50s. For the month of May, temperatures at the major stations averaged one to three degrees above normal. Most highs were in the 80s and 90s while most lows were in the 60s and 70s. There was no measurable rainfall at St. Petersburg and only traces at Tampa, while almost four inches fell at Ft. Lauderdale with monthly totals an inch and a third to almost six inches below normal.

**FIELD CROPS:** Topsoil moisture throughout the State is very short to short with scattered areas of adequate moisture. Farmers are delaying cotton and peanut planting due to dry soil. Some fields of cotton and peanuts need to be replanted. Irrigated tobacco is in good condition. The sugarcane crop is being irrigated and is in good condition. The corn crop is burning up at a rapid pace. A large percentage of the dry land corn crop is lost already and the balance will be lost if no rain comes in the next week. Many of the irrigation systems are not able to keep up with the demand of the crop being irrigated. Small grain harvest is virtually complete. Thrips are a problem in both cotton and peanuts. Very little haying is being done due to the lack of forage growth. There have been a number of wild fires on the Peninsula due to the lack of rainfall. Growers reported 83 percent of the peanuts are planted.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	64	84	50	71
Short	35	15	36	29
Adequate	1	1	14	0
Surplus	0	0	0	0

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** Ranchers in the north and central counties are feeding supplemental hay. In the Panhandle, hay supplies are short. In the northern counties, some cattle are being moved to market because of grazing/hay shortage. In the central area, most water holes are dry and some wells are going dry. Pasture grass is extremely short. In the west central area, the cattle condition continues to fall off. Brush fires are active. In the southwest, pasture is in fair conditions.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	45	45	10	10
Poor	35	40	40	45
Fair	20	15	45	40
Good	0	0	5	5
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** Most of this week was very dry and hot. There were a few scattered showers in isolated areas that were insufficient to break the current drought. Sunday, June 4, most areas got rains of varying amounts that were very helpful. More rain is needed in all areas. Surprisingly, new crop fruit is making good progress in spite of the arid conditions of the past several months. Growers and caretakers have been irrigating around the clock for seven days a week where water is available. Harvest of Valencia oranges is starting to slow down as some areas are getting picked out. Grapefruit harvest is limited mostly to the lower east coast as few crops remain. There are also limited supplies of Honey tangerines.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops wherever they are growing. Herbiciding, fertilizing and spraying continue. Hedging and topping of harvested groves have been reported in all areas.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	May 21	May 28	Jun 4
Valencia oranges	6,584,000	6,848,000	5,154,000
All grapefruit	1,158,000	1,145,000	576,000
Honey tangerines	44,000	60,000	23,000

**VEGETABLES:** The hot, dry conditions are causing poor development of dryland watermelons with some acreage to be abandoned. Major vegetables available include sweet corn, peppers, watermelons, okra, potatoes and tomatoes.

**SNAP BEANS:** West Central--U-Pic harvesting is slowing seasonally. Southwest, Dade, East Coast--Harvesting is finished.

**BLUEBERRIES:** North, West Central--Harvesting is nearing completion.

**SWEET CORN:** North--Picking is active. Quality is good. Zellwood--Picking is slowing seasonally with harvesting to remain active through mid-June. Quality is mostly good. Everglades--Harvesting is virtually finished. East Coast--The season is completed.

**CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market:** Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal. Harvesting is winding down. Fruit quality is fair to good. Dade--Harvest is complete. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good.

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

Growth and development are normal. Harvest is winding down. Harvest is mostly U-Pics. North Central--Harvest is winding down. East Coast--Crop remains in fair condition. Fruit is setting and sizing. Harvest fruit quality and color are mostly good. New blocks provide good quality and size. Harvest volume is moderate as older fields are picked over and cleaned up.

**PICKLES:** Dade--Harvest is complete. West Central--Crop is in fair to good condition. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is winding down. Fruit is in fair to good quality. Size is normal. North Central--Harvest is winding down. The crop is in good condition. Yield and quality are good.

**EGGPLANT:** North--Harvesting is active. Quality is mostly good. Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Cutting is nearing the end. Quality is fair to good. East Coast--Harvesting continues. Quality is mostly good. West Central--U-Pic harvesting is slowing seasonally. Dade--Harvesting is finished.

**OKRA:** Dade--Rainfall is boosting growth and development. Harvesting continues. Volume is good. Quality is good. Ample supplies are available for the next two months.

**PEPPERS:** Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Harvesting is nearing the end. Quality is fair to good. East Coast--Harvesting is slowing seasonally. Quality is mostly good. West Central--U-Pic harvesting is slowing seasonally. Quality and color are fair. Sizes are variable.

**POTATOES:** Other North--Harvesting continues. Quality is good. Hastings--Harvesting is virtually finished.

**SQUASH:** Southwest--Harvesting is nearly done. Quality is fair to good. North--Harvesting of a small volume continues. West Central--U-Pic harvesting is slowing seasonally. East Coast--Harvesting is virtually done. Dade--Harvesting is finished.

**TOMATOES:** Quincy--Harvesting of a limited volume is active. Quality is mostly good. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair condition. Harvesting is nearing the end. Quality is fair to good. Sizes are variable. Color is fair with lots of pinks and reds showing in fields left to harvest. East Coast--Harvesting is active. Quality is mostly good. Dade--The season is finished. Producers are removing stakes and plastic and planting cover crops. Rain enabled cover crops to make good stands. Southwest--Harvesting is finished.

**CHERRY TOMATOES:** Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair condition. Harvesting is nearing the end. Quality is fair. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Harvesting is slow as the season nears the end. Quality is fair to good.

**PLUM TOMATOES:** Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting is nearly done. Quality is fair to good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is fair. Picking is slow as the season nears the end. Quality and color are fair to good.

**WATERMELONS:** North--The drought severely affected dryland acreage with some acreage to be abandoned. Picking is active with a good volume available. Sizes are mostly small and medium with a shortage of large sizes available. Quality is mostly good. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is nearing the end with U-Pic harvesting active. Quality is fair to good. Sizes are small to medium. Color is good. Southwest--The crop is in fair condition. Picking is nearing the end. Quality is fair to good.

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