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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending July 2, 2000

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**FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE**



WEATHER SUMMARY: Warm, wet weather prevailed over much of the Peninsula during the week of June 25 through July 1. Highs were in the 80s and 90s while lows were mostly in the 70s. The rain greatly reduced the threat of wild fires in central areas. Amounts at the major stations ranged from about one inch to almost four and a half inches.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture throughout the State is very short to adequate. Rainfall has been scattered. Some of the peanuts planted earlier came up following the recent rains. Some farmers are replanting peanuts after the recent rains. Irrigated tobacco is in good condition. Tobacco harvest is active. Cotton stands range from fair to good. Weeds are a problem in some areas following the rains. The irrigated sugarcane crop is in good condition. Sand land sugarcane is stressed by drought. Haying is delayed due to the lack of plant growth. Growers report peanut condition at 7% poor, 82% fair, and 11% good. Growers reported 29 percent peanuts pegged.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	38	24	52	53
Short	42	39	41	19
Adequate	20	37	7	28
Surplus	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Pasture and cattle in the Panhandle and northern counties are in poor to fair condition. Pastures are improving, but ponds are extremely low. A few wells are dry and most ponds and lakes are dry. Ranchers are fertilizing pastures now that rain has fallen. In the central area, pastures are in poor to good condition and cattle are in fair to good condition. In the west central and southwest, hayfields and pastures are improving rapidly following the rain. State-wide, cattle and calves are mostly in poor to fair condition.

VEGETABLES--1999-2000 SEASON

Although frequent afternoon and evening showers occurred during the month of July 1999, rainfall over most of the State was well below normal. Monthly precipitation ranged from about five inches below normal at West Palm Beach to about a half inch below at Daytona Beach. Ft. Pierce recorded only six tenths inch of rain falling during July. Pensacola rainfall totaled about eight inches for the month, about one third inch above normal. Cross City recorded over eleven inches during July. Temperatures during July averaged normal to one degree above with several stations recording at least one high of 100 degrees or more. Dry soils delayed the laying of plastic for fall crop planting in the southern half of the Peninsula during late July into early August with some growers in the East Coast region irrigating prior to laying plastic. For the month of August, rainfall totaled from an inch at Avalon to almost eighteen inches at Bradenton. Precipitation ranged from over four inches below normal at Inverness to almost seven inches above at Miami. Most temperatures averaged one to two degrees above normal. Highs were mostly in the 90s with Gainesville and Pierson reporting at least one daily high of 101. Most low temperatures were in the 60s and 70s.

The threat of bad weather from Hurricane Dennis, Hurri-

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	5	5	5	5
Poor	65	40	25	30
Fair	30	45	65	50
Good	0	10	5	15
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: There were daily rains in nearly all of Florida's citrus belt this week. Some areas received from three to 5 inches of the welcomed showers and thunderstorms. Some groves this week were even showing puddles which have not been seen since last October when Hurricane Irene visited this State. New growth and some late bloom have been generated by the recent rains. New crop fruit is making good progress in most well-cared-for groves. Many trees in non-irrigated groves are now shock blooming due to the new moisture. Harvest of Valencia oranges continues to slow as very few crops remain to be picked. There are still a few grapefruit and Honey tangerines to be harvested.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops. Summer fertilizations, sprays and herbicides are all being applied in most areas. Hedging and topping continue along with burning of grove debris.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Jun 18	Jun 25	Jul 3
Valencia oranges	4,897,000	2,534,000	NA
All grapefruit	283,000	107,000	NA
Honey tangerines	10,000	4,000	NA

VEGETABLES: Tomato and watermelon harvesting is nearing the end in northern areas. Dade County growers are harvesting okra with good supplies available over the next two months.

cane Floyd, and Tropical Storm Harvey delayed the start of fall crop planting throughout September. Dry conditions turned wet during early September as daily rains arrived over most of the Peninsula. Rain from Floyd during mid-month helped ease drought conditions in many localities. Dade County and southwestern localities felt the brunt of rain from Harvey after mid-month with some drainage canals overflowing in the Southwest. Rain from tropical waves passing over the State near the end of September flooded some low lying areas in some southeastern coastal areas. Cloud cover from the tropical systems kept most temperatures below normal during the last half of September. For September, temperatures averaged two degrees below to a degree above normal while rain totaled from about a tenth inch at the Cross City airport to over eighteen inches in Melbourne. Scattered showers brought varying amounts of rain during early October. Temperatures during early October were normal to four degrees above. Strong winds and abundant rain buffeted crops and blew some blooms and mature fruit off trees, plants, and vines in some parts of the Southwest and East Coast regions, and in Dade County, as Hurricane Irene passed in mid-October. Fall crop yields in the affected areas were significantly reduced due to this damage. Rain from the storm ranged from three inches along the East

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

Coast to over twelve inches in Dade and Broward counties. Cooler weather arrived during the last half of the month with a few Panhandle and extreme northern Peninsula localities reporting frost during the last week. For the month of October, rainfall ranged from about a half inch at Madison to over twenty inches at Ft. Lauderdale. Temperatures averaged normal to two degrees above for the whole month of October. Drier and mostly warmer weather during November and December aided the recovery of crops from the hurricane damage. Cool temperatures persisted into early November but warmed back to normal or above before mid-month. Temperatures dipped into the 30s across some northern Peninsula and Panhandle areas after mid-November with only very light frost reported. November rain ranged from none at the Moore Haven lock to about five and a third inches at Madison. Temperatures during November averaged from one degree below normal to three degrees above. As December arrived, temperatures dropped into the 30s in many central Peninsula areas but caused no significant damage to crops. During December temperatures averaged from three degrees below normal to two degrees above. In late December cold weather again dipped in many central Peninsula localities causing light frosts with no significant harm to crops reported. Most December rain totals ranged from a half inch to almost three inches with about six inches recorded in Niceville and Crestview. Blountstown reported no measurable rain for December.

The mostly dry and mostly warm conditions during January, February, and March provided nearly ideal conditions for vegetable growth and development but increased the need for irrigation. Mostly dry, warm weather during early January boosted plant growth and fruit development. Cold temperatures arrived after mid month with Palmetto-Ruskin reporting a frost which caused no significant damage. The cold persisted into late January with Dade County and the Palmetto-Ruskin area receiving frosts that did not harm any crops significantly. However, some sweet corn in the Everglades region was lost to these cold temperatures and re-planted. Most January temperatures averaged normal to two degrees above with Apalachicola, Pensacola, and Fernandina Beach recording temperatures five, four, and three degrees above normal, respectively. January rainfall totaled from about a tenth inch at Miami Beach to over three and a half inches at Jacksonville Beach. The January rains ranged from a third inch below normal at Fernandina Beach to almost three inches below at Inverness. Mostly dry conditions continued

into February with precipitation ranging from about a half inch below normal at Tavernier to four and a third inches below at Pensacola. Rain for the month totaled from about two tenths inch at Moore Haven to about four inches at Jasper with most stations reporting from a half inch to an inch and a half. Warm temperatures over the vegetable producing areas during February advanced plant growth and fruit development. Most temperatures for February averaged from two degrees below normal to two degrees above with temperatures at De Funiak Springs and Pensacola averaging four degrees above normal for the month.

Warm weather continued into March with monthly temperatures averaging from one degree above normal at Madison, Fort Myers and Tavernier, to five degrees above at Kissimmee and St. Petersburg. Rainfall was limited to mostly traces during early March. After mid-month, storms dropped significant amounts of rain over the vegetable regions. Rain for the month totaled from traces at Cross City to over eight inches at Daytona Beach and ranged from almost five inches below normal at Tallahassee to almost six inches above at Daytona Beach. However, most central Peninsula localities recorded less than an inch of rain for March. Cooler temperatures during April slowed maturation of some crops. Most temperatures during April averaged from one to three degrees below normal. Although April showers brought significant rain to some western Panhandle areas and some localities in the East Coast area and around Lake Okeechobee, most rainfall ranged from a third to almost four inches below normal. April rain totaled from traces at Apalachicola to almost eight inches at Loxahatchee and West Palm Beach. The heavy rainfall damaged some sweet corn in the Everglades region and affected the growth and development of tomatoes in the East Coast region. Temperatures remained below normal during early May but climbed to record highs by the end of the month. Temperatures at the major stations averaged one to three degrees above normal during May with dry weather persisting for most of the month. The continued drought caused poor development of dryland watermelon acreage with a significant amount abandoned. Rain at the end of May brought relief to some southwestern and central Peninsula localities and Dade County. Scattered showers during June helped ease low soil moisture supplies but left some localities dry. Most temperatures remained above normal during June. Truck shortages and low markets brought most vegetable harvesting to an end by mid-to-late June.

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