



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

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

WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending July 9, 2000

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FLORIDA
 AGRICULTURE



WEATHER SUMMARY: Scattered showers dropped varying amounts of rain during the week of July 2 through 8. Rainfall ranged from none at Pensacola to almost four inches around Immokalee. Avalon, Apopka, and Lake Alfred received less than a tenth inch while Ft. Pierce and Daytona Beach recorded almost two inches. Dry conditions continued across the northern Peninsula and western Panhandle with the threat of wild fire still very high. Temperatures averaged near normal at most of the major stations. Daytime highs were in the 80s and 90s while nighttime lows were in the 60s and 70s. Pensacola and Tallahassee both recorded at least one high temperature of 100 or more.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are mostly short to adequate across the State with scattered areas of very short and surplus supplies. Although recent scattered showers improved moisture supplies in many Peninsula areas, counties in the northern Peninsula and western Panhandle remain very dry. Some producers are making the first cutting of hay. Growers continue to harvest tobacco with markets set to open on August 1. Most cotton is in fair to good condition. Soybeans and sugarcane are in mostly good condition. Peanut condition is rated 6% poor, 85% fair and 9% good. Producers report that 46 percent of peanuts are pegged.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	24	1	53	14
Short	39	66	19	55
Adequate	37	28	28	25
Surplus	0	5	0	6

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Pastures in the north and central counties are stressed from drought while range in the southwest is fair to good. In the Panhandle, pasture condition

improved and grass is short but growing. Pasture is showing drought stress again. In the central counties, pasture greened up following good rains, but water holes are dry and rain is needed to bring up the water table. In the southwest, range is fair to good. Statewide, cattle condition is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	5	0	5	5
Poor	40	10	30	10
Fair	45	80	50	65
Good	10	10	15	20
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: Most of this week was dry, however, there were two or three days with significant rains and thunderstorms in most citrus growing counties. There is an abundance of new growth in all areas. There is also some late or shock bloom on those trees that had a poor February through April bloom. Most bearing trees produced regular bloom fruit and are making very good progress with help of the summer rains which started during the last half of June. Most oranges are now golf ball size while grapefruit are nearly baseball size. Temples, tangerines and tangelos are varying in sizes due to timing of their bloom, size of last year's crop and general grove care. Valencia harvest is down to the last of the few large crops.

Caretakers are active cutting cover crops and herbiciding before the weeds grow up and into the trees. Summer sprays and fertilizations are being applied in all areas. Hedging and topping are active in most counties.

VEGETABLES: Tomato harvesting around Quincy is virtually finished. Okra harvesting in Dade County continues. Picking of watermelons is nearly done.

RANGE, PASTURE AND CATTLE CONDITION, JULY 1999 - JUNE 2000

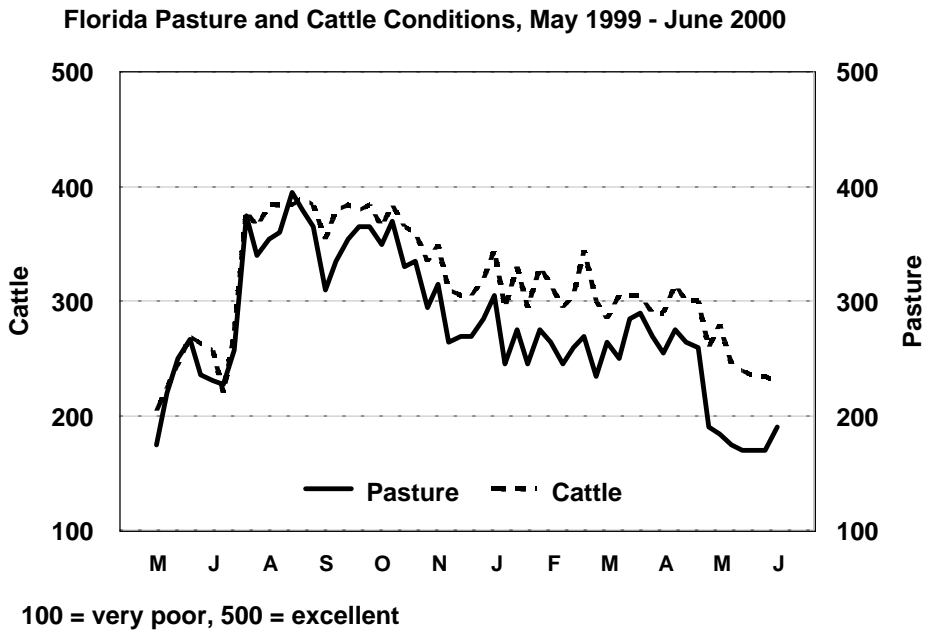
In **July 1999**, pasture and cattle were in mostly good condition following daily rains. Pasture improved through the month. In **August**, a general dry spell began that continued almost unabated until June 2000. In August, excessive rain, extreme heat and high humidity lowered the livestock condition. Pasture and cattle were mostly in good condition. Army worms were reported in the central counties. Pasture condition decreased due to flooding in the central counties. At month's end, armyworms were active in the central area and some locations in the southeast had standing water from heavy rains. In **September**, pasture in the Panhandle and central area was in poor condition due to drought, while some pasture in the south was flooded. Armyworms were active. In **October**, small grain

pasture planting was delayed due to drought. Hurricane Irene flooded some of southern pasture in mid-month, but rain helped pasture in the north. In **November**, stock ponds were low in the Panhandle, and small grain forage planting was delayed due to dry soil condition. A frost in the north slowed grass growth. There was less than the usual armyworm damage. Cooler temperatures slowed grass growth in the north. In **December**, pasture was stressed by poor moisture levels. A freeze stopped permanent pasture growth in the north. Most cattlemen fed supplemental hay. Mole crickets damaged central pasture, and die-back started on pasture in the southwest. At year's end, rain helped pasture, though cattlemen in the north and Panhandle fed hay.

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

In **January 2000**, cool season forages grew little due to drought and hay supplies were rapidly being reduced. The cattle condition was mostly fair. At month's end, rains helped pasture in some areas. Cattle and pasture fared better in the southern counties. The fire hazzard increased due to dry conditions. Significant rain fell in the Panhandle in early **February**, but pasture elsewhere was hurt by drought and frost. In **March** pasture condition was mostly poor. Supplemental hay feeding was active. Ranchers in the southwest burned old growth in pastures. Cattle were mostly in fair to good condition. In **April**, supplemental hay feeding continued. Limited rain helped some pasture but drought continued in most counties. Stock ponds

were drying up and some wells were dry. Frost damaged some hayfields and pasture at mid-month. Cattle were in fair condition. In **May**, pasture continued to suffer from continued drought. Ranchers fed hay and water. Water holes were dried up. The condition of the cattle was mostly fair with some calves being sold under normal market weight. Some ranchers culled herds to reduce feed needs. In **June**, pasture condition was very poor to poor. Hay supplies were short and some cattle producers had to buy hay. Brush fires were active in the central and southwest, and most stock ponds were dry. Following mid-month rains, pasture grass started growing. Stock ponds were still very low or dry. Cattle were in poor to fair condition.



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