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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending September 24, 2000

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**FLORIDA
 AGRICULTURE**



WEATHER SUMMARY: The passage of Hurricane Gordon over northern localities early in the week of September 17 through 23, and the passage of Tropical Storm Helene off the west coast and over the Big Bend area at the end of the week, brought significant rainfall to some northern areas. Tallahassee recorded almost nine inches of rain for the week. Tampa reported about four and a third inches. Quincy reported about four inches from Helene with very little wind. Rainfall from other major stations ranged from an inch at Pensacola to about two and three fourths inches at West Palm Beach. Temperatures at the major stations averaged mostly one to two degrees above normal. Daytime highs were in the 80s and 90s while nighttime lows were in the 60s and 70s.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture throughout the State is mostly adequate to surplus with scattered areas of very short or short moisture. Heavy rains from Tropical Storm Helene delayed cotton and peanut harvest. Tobacco marketing is active. The sugarcane crop is in good condition. Soybeans are mostly in good condition. Corn for grain harvest is winding down. Haying is active weather permitting. Peanut condition is reported at 58% fair, 42% good. Thirty-five percent of the peanuts for nuts are reported harvested.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very short	0	1	14	1
Short	16	10	22	29
Adequate	81	79	64	68
Surplus	3	10	0	2

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Statewide, range and pasture are in fair to good condition. In the north counties, stock ponds are still very low despite heavy rains from recent storms and hurricanes. In the central counties, pasture grass is improved following rain. Cattle are in good condition. In the west central area, pastures are getting rain, but haying slowed. The calving season is on. In the southwest, some pastures had standing water after Hurricane Gordon.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	0	0	0	0
Fair	40	30	35	25
Good	60	70	65	75
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: The eastern outer bands from Tropical Storm Helene deposited heavy rains and thunderstorms on the west coastal counties of Florida Thursday and Friday, September 21 and 22. The east coast and the lower interior also got plenty of rain this week. Most grove lands have adequate moisture levels at this time, however more rain is still needed to finish refilling the lakes, ponds and water reservoirs that were depleted during last winter and spring's drought. There continues to be an abundance of new growth on trees of all ages. New crop fruit is in

excellent condition and generally making very good progress. Most areas have good fruit sizes and well shaped fruit. Some Navels, Ambersweet oranges, other early oranges, grapefruit and early tangerines are showing very good on-tree color break. Harvesting crews are moving most types of the early bloom fruit to the fresh fruit packing houses for immediate shipments.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops and removing vines that have made aggressive growth with the help of the recent rains and thunderstorms. Dead tree removal is very active in all areas along with the burning of the stumps and limbs. Fall fertilizations and sprays are tapering off in most areas. Some resets are being planted with the cooler temperatures.

VEGETABLES: Rainfall from Tropical Storm Helene damaged some tomatoes in the Quincy area with most acreage escaping significant injury. The Immokalee, Dade, Palmetto-Ruskin, and East Coast regions reported no significant damage from Tropical Storm Helene. Hurricane Gordon damaged some fields near the Gulf of Mexico coast with most inland acreage avoiding damage. Okra harvesting remains active in Dade County.

SNAP BEANS: West Central--Planting started. The crop is rated in good condition. Southwest--Planting began with condition rated fair to good. Dade--A limited acreage planted recently is up to a good stand. Most planting will start in early October.

SWEET CORN: Zellwood--Recent rains aided plant growth. Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting is underway. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. Germination of recent plantings is good with plants spiking through the ground.

CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market: West Central--Planting is active. Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal. East Coast--Planting getting underway. Oldest plantings are showing mostly good germination.

PICKLES: West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is winding down. Growth and development are normal. Central--Crop is making good progress.

CABBAGE: Hastings--Growers are starting to plant cabbage.

EGGPLANT: East Coast--Oldest plants are in good condition. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting continues to increase. Dade--Planting is increasing. Scattered showers and cloudy conditions are aiding plant growth with condition rated good.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE: Everglades--Planting is active.

LETTUCE: Everglades--Planting continues.

OKRA: Dade--Young acreage is in good condition with recent rainfall aiding development. Harvesting remains active with good quality available. Yield is good.

BELL PEPPERS: Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting continues to increase seasonally. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is slowing seasonally. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. High temperatures and gusty winds are increasing the need for irrigation. Laying of plastic and transplanting are active. Workers are staking and tying oldest plants.

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

HOT PEPPERS: Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting is increasing seasonally.

POTATOES: East Central--Planting is active. Dade--Growers will start planting in October.

SQUASH: West Central--Crop condition is good. Planting is slowly increasing. Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting is increasing seasonally. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Oldest plants are setting fruit. Recent plantings germinated well.

STRAWBERRIES: Palmetto-Ruskin--Land preparations remain active with transplanting to start over the next seven to ten days.

TOMATOES: Quincy--Rains from Tropical Storm Helene damaged some plants with most acreage escaping significant injury. Picking is expected to begin within the next seven to ten days. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Hot temperatures and gusty winds are increasing the need for irrigation, especially for young plants. Transplanting continues. Workers are laying plastic and spraying as needed for the prevention and control of disease and insects. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair to good. Fruit sizes are reaching golf ball diameters on the oldest plants. Transplanting is

finished. Staking and tying are active with third ties to start over the next five to seven days. Workers continue to spray for the prevention and control of disease and insects. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Oldest plants are setting fruit. Most acreage escaped significant damage from the recent storms. Transplanting is steady. Workers are spraying for the prevention and control of disease and insects, leveling ground, laying plastic, staking, and tying. Dade--Transplanting of a very small acreage is active. Most planting is scheduled to start in October.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is fair to good. Harvesting is scheduled to begin in early October. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Transplanting is gaining momentum.

PLUM TOMATOES: Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is finished. More plants are setting fruit. Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting continues to increase seasonally.

WATERMELONS: Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Fruit set is increasing on younger vines. Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting is slowing seasonally.

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