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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending October 8, 2000

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**FLORIDA
 AGRICULTURE**



WEATHER SUMMARY: The beginnings of a sub-tropical depression in the Florida Straits brought abundant moisture to many southern and some central Peninsula areas as the storm passed over southern localities and off the east coast during the week of October 1 through 7. Miami recorded almost seventeen and a half inches of rain for the week while the Homestead area reported from twelve to fourteen inches falling. Ft. Pierce recorded over six inches while the Immokalee area reported from three to twelve inches. The Everglades area received about three to four inches from the storm. The Palmetto-Ruskin region escaped most rain with only traces reported for the week. Orlando and Dover recorded around an inch. Temperatures at the major stations averaged mostly one degree above normal. Daytime highs were mostly in the 80s while most lows were in the 60s and 70s. Tallahassee, Pensacola and Jacksonville each recorded at least one low in the 50s for the week. A cold front brought cold temperatures to many northern and some central Peninsula localities as it passed over at the end of the week and on Sunday and Monday, October 8 and 9. Lows in the north dipped mostly into the 40s on Tuesday morning, October 10 with Perry and Tallahassee each recording a low at 39 degrees. The low in Quincy was 45 degrees while central areas recorded lows in the 50s.

FIELD CROPS: Southern Peninsula topsoil moisture is adequate to surplus. The topsoil moisture throughout the rest of the State is mostly adequate with scattered areas of very short to short moisture. Cool weather is slowing maturity of cotton and peanuts. Cotton harvest is active. The tobacco markets will close this week. The sugarcane crop is in good condition. Farmers are getting ready to start harvesting soybeans. Corn for grain harvest is complete. Haying is active weather permitting. Armyworms are a problem in some hay fields. Sixty 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	2	0	2
Short	8	13	22	24
Adequate	82	73	73	64
Surplus	10	12	5	10

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Statewide, pasture is in fair to good condition and cattle are mostly in good condition. In the North and Panhandle counties cooler weather has slowed grass growth in permanent pasture. Land preparation is underway for cool season forages. Some pastures received rain but most locations reported pastures need rain. In the north counties, permanent pasture condition is fair. Hay and grazing are very poor due to dry weather. In the southwest, range and pasture is in good condition, with cattle in fair to good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	0	5	0	0
Fair	30	30	25	20
Good	70	65	75	80
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: The sub-tropical depression, deposited several inches of rain on both lower coasts and the southern interior citrus producing counties on Monday and Tuesday. Rainfall amounts ranged from around 10 inches in some of the southern counties to less than 3 inches in a few northern coastal grove lands. Virtually all citrus groves got a lot more moisture than they needed during the two day period. However, most of the excessive run-off water collected in reservoirs, lakes and ponds for future use. There continues to be an abundance of new growth on trees of all ages due to the rains the last of September and the first of October. New crop fruit is making good progress. Many early maturing blocks are showing good color break for the first of October. Fresh fruit packing houses have shipped Navels, Hamlins and ambersweet oranges, both white and colored grapefruit and early tangerines so far this early part of the 2000-01 season.

Caretakers have been very active mowing, chopping and discing cover crops that have grown tall and out of control with the help of the recent rains. Many growers stayed busy the last of the week grading roads that were washed out by the heavy rains during the first of the week. Fresh fruit growers are spraying due to the recent moisture. Dead tree removal and burning of grove trash continues in all areas.

VEGETABLES: The Quincy tomato crop received no significant damage from the recent cool temperatures. The storm flooded young snap bean fields in Dade County with about 30 percent of plantings lost. The storm also flooded some young lettuce acreage in the Everglades with light loss reported. Watermelon harvesting started in the Palmetto-Ruskin region. The picking of squash began in the East Coast area. Okra harvesting remains active in Dade County.

SNAP BEANS: Dade--The storm flooded young snap bean fields in Dade County with about 30 percent of plantings lost. Growers expect to replant most of the lost acreage. Planting stopped due to wet fields with activity to resume this week. Spraying for the control of disease and insects is active. Workers are cultivating to help dry out the ground. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is slowing seasonally. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is steady. The storm slightly eroded some beds with growers re-bedding as needed. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Oldest plants are blooming.

CABBAGE: Hastings--Growers are actively planting cabbage. Crop in good condition. Growth and development are normal. Central--The crop is making good growth.

SWEET CORN: Everglades--Condition is mostly good. The oldest acreage is silking. Planting is active. Harvesting is expected to begin in November. Zellwood--The crop is in very good condition. Harvesting is getting underway. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. East Coast--The oldest planting is in fair to good condition. Rain slowed some field activities.

CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market: West Central--Planting is winding down. Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal. East Coast--Oldest plantings are forming runners. Thinning is active for the young crop. Germination is good for recent seeding. Seeding is underway for the late fall crop. Southwest--Planting is active. Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal. Hard rains broke some leaves on the tender crop but they will recover.

PICKLES: West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal. Central--Harvest is starting. The crop is making good progress. Growth and development are normal.

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

EGGPLANT: East Coast--Crop condition is good. Workers continue to stake and tie as needed. West Central--Condition is fair to good. Planting is done. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is steady. Dade--The crop is in good condition with no significant damage from the storm. Oldest acreage is starting to bloom. Workers are staking as needed.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE: Everglades--Planting is active.

LETTUCE: Everglades--Planting is active. The storm flooded some young acreage with light loss reported.

OKRA: Dade--Condition remains good. Although the storm flooded fields, the crop suffered no significant damage. Harvesting resumed mid-week as fields dried with good quality available.

BELL PEPPERS: Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting remains steady. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is slowing seasonally. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. Strong winds and rain battered some blooms. Fruit sizing is good with picking expected to begin in about seven to ten days. Wet ground slowed the laying of plastic and transplanting with activities resuming mid-week. Workers are staking, tying and spraying as needed.

HOT PEPPERS: Southwest--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Planting remains steady. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good.

POTATOES: West Central--Crop condition is good. Planting of table stock is getting underway. Dade--Flooding delayed some land preparations. Planting is expected to start in late October.

RADISHES: Everglades--Planting is increasing seasonally. Lake Placid--Planting is starting.

SQUASH: Southwest--Condition is fair to good. The recent hard rains damaged some leaves with plants expected to

recover. Planting is steady. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. Heavy rainfall broke some stems and damaged some leaves with plants expected to recover. Harvesting of a light amount of zucchini and yellow types started. Fancy grades have mostly good quality.

STRAWBERRIES: Plant City--Transplanting is active. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is good. Transplanting began.

TOMATOES: Quincy--Picking is slowly increasing. East Coast--Crop condition is rated fair to mostly good. Oldest plants reached the top of stakes. Strong winds and heavy rains increased bloom drop and caused some beds to wash out. Wet ground delayed field activity with land leveling, the laying of plastic, and transplanting resuming about mid-week. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair to good. Picking is expected to begin in about two weeks. Workers are spraying and tying as needed. Staking is finished. Southwest--Condition is rated fair to good. Planting is steady. Fruit set is good. Dade--The crop is in fair condition. Most acreage escaped significant damage from the recent heavy rains. The storm flooded a very small acreage with most to be replanted. Growers repaired plastic that bubbled due to the storm. Spraying for the control of disease and insects is active.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair to good. Picking is getting underway. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is steady.

PLUM TOMATOES: Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is expected to start in the next two to three weeks. Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting is steady.

WATERMELONS: Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking started with fair to good quality available. Sizes are small and medium. Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting is done.

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