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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending October 15, 2000

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## FLORIDA AGRICULTURE



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Cool and mostly dry weather prevailed at the major stations during the week of October 8 through 14. Temperatures averaged from one degree to fifteen degrees below normal. Nighttime lows varied considerably with western Panhandle and northern localities reporting 30s, 40s and 50s. Some patchy frost occurred in northern spots. Elsewhere, lows were mostly in the 60s and 70s. Most daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s. Most inland areas of the Peninsula reported no measurable rain for the week. Coastal localities reported from traces to about a half inch falling.

**FIELD CROPS:** South Peninsula topsoil moisture is adequate to surplus. The topsoil moisture throughout the rest of the State is short to adequate with scattered areas of very short or surplus moisture. Cool weather is slowing the maturity of cotton and peanuts. Cotton harvest is active. The tobacco markets are closed. The sugarcane and soybean harvest are starting. Haying is active weather permitting. Armyworms are a problem in some hay fields. Seventy eight percent of the peanuts for nuts are reported harvested.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very short	2	2	2	5
Short	13	43	24	25
Adequate	73	51	64	60
Surplus	12	4	10	10

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** Statewide, the condition of range and pasture is fair to good. Pastures are dry in the northern two-thirds of the State, but the southwest counties have standing water. In the Panhandle, permanent pasture conditions are declining seasonally with cooler weather. Winter forage planting was delayed by dry soils conditions. In the north counties, haying is active. Cool season forages are being planted. In the central area, ponds and streams are very low. Grass growth is slowing due to cooler weather and dry soil. Armyworms and loopers have caused some damage to the hay crop. In the southwest, the condition of cattle and calves is fair to good. Pastures are in good condition but have water runoff over the whole area. There are some pastures with standing water. Statewide, cattle and calves are in fair to good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	5	5	0	0
Fair	30	35	20	30
Good	65	60	80	70
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** Temperatures this week were the coolest of the new citrus season. However, there was very little if any rain in virtually all citrus producing counties. Surface soil moisture is getting short in most areas, therefore growers are irrigating to prevent wilt and also to help increase fruit sizes. New growth is slowing due to the cooler nighttime temperatures and the decrease in weekly rainfall. New crop fruit continues to make good progress with most early fruit showing excellent on-tree color break. There is some fruit splitting as a result

of the late September and early October rains. Fresh fruit harvesting crews are actively moving Navels, Hamlins and Ambersweet oranges, white and colored grapefruit and early tangerines to the packing houses. There are a few juice plants open and receiving packing house eliminations.

Caretakers are cutting cover crops that have made advanced growth with the help of the late September rains. Several growers are applying their last sprays prior to the winter season. Hedging, topping and burning of grove debris continues in some of the southern groves.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Oct 1	Oct 8	Oct 15
Navel oranges	5,000	36,000	60,000
Early & Mid oranges including Ambersweet	13,000	48,000	91,000
All grapefruit	20,000	140,000	260,000
Tangerines	44,000	86,000	124,000
K-Early Citrus Fruit	0	0	2,000

**VEGETABLES:** The cool temperatures did no significant damage to tomatoes in the Quincy region. Field activity resumed in Dade County as the ground dried out from recent heavy rainfall. Bell pepper picking started in the East Coast region. Cucumber and pickle harvesting began in the West Central area. Other vegetables available include watermelons, squash and okra.

**SNAP BEANS:** Dade--Crop condition improved as fields dried out. Harvesting is expected to begin by mid-November. West Central--The crop is in good condition. Planting is finished. Southwest--Condition is rated fair to good. Planting remains steady. East Coast--Crop condition is fair to good. Pin beans are forming on oldest plants. Recent winds and rain caused some bloom drop. Recent seedings germinated well. Picking is expected to start in about ten to fourteen days.

**CABBAGE:** Dade--Planting is starting. Weather is right for a good stand. West Central--Planting is starting. Crop condition is good. Growth and development are normal. Hastings--Growers are planting. The crop is in good condition. Growth and development are normal. Central--The crop is making good growth.

**SWEET CORN:** Zellwood--Picking is beginning. Everglades--Crop condition remains mostly good. Picking is expected to begin in November. Southwest--The crop remains in fair to good condition. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly fair to good. Field activities resumed as fields dried out.

**CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market:** West Central--Planting is complete. Crop condition is good. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is starting. Fruit quality is fair to good. Fruit size is medium to large. Color is good. East Coast--Oldest plantings are forming runners and beginning to show blooms. Thinning is active in the young crop. Germination is mostly good for recent seeding. Planting continues for the fall crop. Southwest--Planting is active. Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal.

**PICKLES:** West Central--Crop condition is good. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is starting. Fruit quality is fair to good. Fruit size is normal. Central--Harvest is active. 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--The crop is in mostly good condition. Recent transplants are making a good start. Oldest plants are blooming and setting fruit. West Central--Crop condition remains fair to good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting of a small acreage remains steady. Dade--Crop condition is good. Blooming is increasing. Staking remains active.

**ENDIVE/ESCAROLE:** Everglades--Planting continues.

**LETTUCE:** Everglades--Planting remains active.

**OKRA:** Dade--The crop is in very good condition. Growers are starting to harvest fall acreage. Quality and yield are good.

**BELL PEPPERS:** Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is steady. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is virtually finished. East Coast--Plant growth and fruit development are fair to good. Recent winds and rain increased bloom and fruit drop which reduced yield prospects. Picking is underway with a very light volume available. Workers leveled ground and laid plastic as scheduled. Spraying for the control of disease and insects is active.

**HOT PEPPERS:** East Coast--Harvesting of a light volume started. Quality is mostly good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is steady.

**POTATOES:** West Central--Crop condition is good. Dade--Wet ground delayed field preparations for planting.

**RADISHES:** Everglades, Lake Placid--Planting is active.

**SQUASH:** East Coast--Recent heavy rain reduced yield prospects. Harvesting continues with a light volume available. Quality is mostly good for fancy grades. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting remains steady. West Central--Condition is fair to good.

**STRAWBERRIES:** Plant City--Transplanting continues. Harvesting is expected to begin in late November. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop remains in good condition. Transplanting is steady. Picking is expected to start about early November.

**TOMATOES:** Quincy--Cool temperatures slowed fruit development. Picking is active. East Coast--The crop is in fair to mostly good condition. Fruit maturation is increasing. Picking is expected to begin over the next two to three weeks. Transplanting remains active. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Fruit set and sizing are fair. Picking is expected to start over the next five to ten days. Spraying for the control of disease and insects remains active. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Fruit sizing is good. Planting is on schedule. Recent strong winds and heavy rains increased bloom loss and fruit drop. Spraying for the control of insects and disease is active. Dade--Crop condition is fair. Transplanting is increasing slowly. Some plants in low spots recently flooded were reset. Workers are making ties on oldest plants. Spraying for the prevention of disease is active.

**CHERRY TOMATOES:** Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop remains in fair to good condition. Harvesting is getting underway. Southwest--Condition is rated fair to good. Transplanting remains steady.

**PLUM TOMATOES:** Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is fair to good. Harvesting is expected to begin within the next ten to fourteen days. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting remains steady.

**WATERMELONS:** Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair to good. Harvesting is gaining momentum. Quality is fair to good. Sizes are small to medium. Color is good. Yield is fair to good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting of the fall crop is finished.

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