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WEATHER & CROP NEWS



Week ending January 14, 2001

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Mostly cool weather continued during the week of January 7 through 13. Temperatures at the major stations averaged four to seven degrees below normal. Lows in northern areas averaged in the 30s while central Peninsula lows were mostly in the 40s. Southern Peninsula lows averaged in the 50s. Alachua recorded at least one low at 18 while Tallahassee reported at least one low at 19. Highs were mostly in the 50s, 60s and 70s with Miami and West Palm Beach each recording at least one high at 80. Rainfall ranged from none to almost an inch with nearly all localities recording measurable amounts.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture throughout the State is very short to short with scattered areas of adequate moisture. Very low temperatures caused severe damage to small grain, ryegrass, and clover for winter grazing. Cold temperatures continue to limit growth of all cool season forages. The Peninsula winter pastures are under drought stress. Freezing temperatures and drought are increasing wild fire hazards throughout the State. Sugarcane harvest is making good progress. Sugarcane is in poor condition.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	55	24	35	22
Short	33	68	55	75
Adequate	12	8	10	3
Surplus	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Statewide, pasture condition is low due to cold and drought. Ranchers are feeding hay throughout much of the State. In the Panhandle, severe cold is limiting growth on all cool season forage. Hay supplies are dwindling rapidly. Some areas have suffered severe damage to small grain winter forage from very low temperatures. In the north counties, production of small grain forage is hindered by dry weather. Pasture condition is poor due to drought and cold. In the central areas, pasture condition is very poor to fair due to drought and cold. In the southwest, the freeze has turned all the grass brown except for some low lying areas. Cattle condition is decreasing due to the lack of good forage. Ranchers are feeding hay. Statewide, cattle and calves are mostly in fair condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	35	30	0	0
Poor	55	55	15	15
Fair	5	15	75	75
Good	5	0	10	10
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: Florida's citrus belt continues to recover from freezing temperatures that covered the State the last of December through the first week of January. Temperatures in the low thirties continued through January 10, which was beneficial because harvesters were able to move a lot of the cold damaged fruit to the processors before it started to lose juice. Some foliage that was damaged has started to drop from the trees. There were a few light scattered showers in most citrus producing areas this week. However, much more rain is needed

in all areas. Growers are irrigating to maintain good tree and fruit condition. Picking crews are moving as much fruit as the processors will accept. Virtually all large juice plants are running around the clock. All fresh fruit packing houses are running fruit that has been carefully selected from groves that had very little if any damage from the cold weather. Next Monday, January 22, the results from a cutting survey on Valencia oranges and seedless grapefruit will be reported. All areas of the citrus belt will be surveyed.

Caretakers have been very busy cutting cover crops prior to harvesting and for fire protection. There have been a few clean up sprays on crops going to the fresh markets. Some hedging and topping continues in the larger groves on both coasts and in the southern part of the State. Burn permits are limited due to the current dry conditions.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Dec 31	Jan 7	Jan 15
Navel oranges	77,000	102,000	156,000
Early & Mid oranges			
Including Ambersweet	6,788,000	7,783,000	11,352,000
All grapefruit	754,000	801,000	1,072,000
Early Tangerines	114,000	96,000	78,000
Honey Tangerines	33,000	40,000	117,000
Tangelos	100,000	102,000	191,000
Temples	2,000	26,000	70,000

VEGETABLES: Crops are slowly recovering from the recent freeze with some unprotected acreage lost. Vegetables available include snap beans, tomatoes, squash, eggplant, sweet corn, peppers, endive, escarole, lettuce, and radishes.

SNAP BEANS: Dade--Acreage protected from the recent cold by irrigation is in good condition. Unprotected plants show freeze burn on top but are expected to recover. Plant growth is slow due to the cool temperatures. Planting continues. Picking is active. Supplies are mostly light with volume expected to improve over the next two weeks. Quality is good. Yield is fair. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Cool temperatures are slowing plant growth and bean development. Southwest--Youngest plants are in good condition. Older plants are in poor to fair condition. Growers are making salvage harvests from plants hurt by the recent freeze. Quality is fair.

CABBAGE: Dade--Cabbage harvest is underway with normal weekly plantings being harvested. Quality is good and yield is normal. Planting is complete. Supply should be steady for the rest of the season. West Central--Crop condition is good. Planting is complete. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is starting. Hastings--The crop is in good condition. Growth and development are normal. Growers are actively harvesting cabbage. Zellwood--Harvest is active. The crop is in good condition.

SWEET CORN: Dade--The crop is in mostly good condition. Some plants show leaf damage from the recent freeze. Picking continues with a fair volume available. Quality is good. East Coast--Cool temperatures continue to slow plant growth. Workers are cultivating and fertilizing as needed.

CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market: West Central--Harvest is complete for the fall season. East Coast--Crop conditions are good on acreage that was covered. Germination is slow from plantings in the past two weeks. Older fields are being cleaned up. Southwest--Crop condition

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

is fair. Plants that were covered are the only ones that made it through the freeze. Growth and development are slow. Harvest is winding down. Fruit quality is fair.

PICKLES: West Central--Harvest is complete. Zellwood--Harvest is complete. Dade--A few cukes show burnt leaves but they should recover.

EGGPLANT: Dade--Condition is good. Plants are recovering from the recent cold. Cutting is active with a light supply available. Quality is good. Southwest--The crop is in poor condition. Producers are conducting salvage harvests. Quality is fair. East Coast--Crop condition is fair to good. Older plants show leaf burn at the top but are recovering. Cutting is active. Supplies are very light.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE: Everglades--Salvage harvesting is active.

LETTUCE: Everglades--Salvage harvesting continues.

OKRA: Dade--Harvesting of a very low volume is active. Quality is poor.

BELL PEPPERS: Southwest--Acreage protected from the recent cold by freeze covers is in good condition. Uncovered acreage is in poor condition. Planting is active. Picking is steady. Quality is fair to good. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Plants not protected from the recent freeze show some foliage burn with recovery expected. Picking of a light volume continues. Workers are leveling land, laying plastic and transplanting.

HOT PEPPERS: Southwest--Acreage protected from the recent freeze is in good condition. Unprotected acreage is in poor condition. Planting is steady. Growers continue to make salvage harvests. Quality is fair. East Coast--Picking of a low volume is active.

POTATOES: Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is slowing seasonally. Although the tops of plants show cold damage the tubers show virtually no damage. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Digging is expected to begin in about three weeks. Some acreage was lost to the recent freeze.

RADISHES: Everglades, Lake Placid--Planting remains active. Harvesting continues with good quality available. Supplies are steady.

SQUASH: Dade--Irrigated acreage is in good condition. Other acreage shows foliage burns to the top leaves caused by the recent freeze. Most plants are expected to recover. Planting is active. Picking

continues. Quality is good. Supplies are fair. Southwest--Acreage protected from the recent cold with freeze covers is in fair condition. Unprotected plants are dead. Planting is steady with some producers replanting lost acreage. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good for plants in the mid-growth stage. Warmer temperatures are aiding fruit development. Older plants not protected from the recent freeze show some wind damage. Picking of a very light volume is active. Quality and color are good with fancy and medium grades available.

STRAWBERRIES: Plant City, Floral City--Picking is active. Supplies are slowly increasing. Quality is fair to mostly good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is rated fair to good. Harvesting is steady. Quality is good. Color is improving. Dade--U-Pic harvesting continues. Quality is good.

TOMATOES: Dade--Condition is good. A few plants show freeze burn on some leaves but most show very little damage. Cool temperatures are slowing plant growth and fruit maturation. Transplanting is slowing. Picking is slow. Quality is good. Sizes are running 6x6 and larger. Packout is good. Southwest--Young plants are in fair to good condition. Mature plants are mostly fair. Harvesting is steady with good supplies available. Quality is fair to good. Gradeout is high with cold damaged fruit being culled. Growers are salvaging fruit before the sun causes blisters, from plants missing half the leaves due to cold damage. Spot planting is active. East Coast--The crop is in fair to mostly good condition. Warmer daytime temperatures are boosting plant growth. Picking is active. Quality is mostly good. Sizes are variable. Crown picks are yielding good quality. Transplanting is active. Palmetto-Ruskin--Transplanting is slowly getting underway. Some growers sent transplants to other areas which is slowing planting. All growers are hesitant to plant due to the threat of another freeze in coming weeks. Crop condition is good.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Southwest--Young plants are in fair to good condition. Older plants are in poor to fair condition. Planting is steady. Most producers are making salvage harvest from plants damaged by the recent freeze. Quality is fair. Palmetto-Ruskin--Planting is slowly getting underway. Crop condition is good.

PLUM TOMATOES: Southwest--Older plants are in poor to fair condition. Young plants are in fair to good condition. Planting is steady. Picking is active with most growers making salvage harvests. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is good as planting slowly gets underway.

WATERMELONS: Palmetto-Ruskin--Workers continue to prepare land for spring crop planting.

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