



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

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

WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending February 11, 2001

Released 4:00 P.M.

February 12, 2001

**FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE**



WEATHER SUMMARY: Warm weather during the week of February 4 through 10 in the southern Peninsula regions continued to aid the recovery of crops from the earlier freeze, especially around Lake Okeechobee. Temperatures at the major stations averaged one to four degrees above normal. Daytime highs were mostly in the 60s and 70s. Nighttime lows were mostly in the 40s, 50s, and 60s with Tallahassee recording lows in the 20s and 30s. On Tuesday, February 6, Hastings reported a low in the 20s while Bradenton, Dover, and Immokalee recorded 30s. Rain totaled from traces to less than half an inch at the major stations with several other localities receiving no measurable rain. Ft. Pierce recorded over three quarters of an inch falling during late in the week.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture throughout the State is very short to short with scattered areas of adequate moisture. The recent rains have helped moisture conditions temporarily in some areas. The State's winter pastures are under drought stress. Some ranchers have a problem getting hay due to short supply. Rains have reduced the wild fire hazard in some areas of the State. Field preparation is underway for spring crops. Sugarcane harvest is making good progress.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very short	37	48	44	50
Short	47	47	48	50
Adequate	16	5	12	0
Surplus	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and north areas, the small grain forage condition improved slightly due to warmer temperatures and recent rain fall. Hay feeding is active but hay supplies are decreasing. In the west central and southwest counties, the pasture condition is bad due to drought. The condition of the cattle is lower due to the poor condition of pasture. Ranchers are feeding hay. Statewide, the condition of the cattle is poor to fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very poor	35	30	10	0
Poor	50	60	30	30
Fair	15	10	55	65
Good	0	0	5	5
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: This was a very dry week in virtually all areas of Florida's citrus belt. Growers and caretakers are irrigating to keep trees in good condition for the upcoming bloom period. Most trees are producing feathery new growth with varying sizes of new bloom buds. Most of the new buds are pin head to pencil eraser sizes. There is very little open bloom at this time. All of this new growth is very vulnerable to frost or freezing temperatures should either arrive before spring. Harvesting crews are rapidly completing their early and midseason orange harvest. Nearly all of the Valencia oranges being picked at this time are from freeze damaged groves which will minimize their loss. Grapefruit are now moving to both the fresh fruit packing houses and

the processing plants which are receiving field run fruit. Temple harvest is increasing in all areas. Honey tangerines are being picked for both fresh and processed utilization.

Caretakers are cutting cover crops for fire protection in preparation for harvesting. Hedging and topping are very active in all areas. Growers are burning dead trees and grove trash when they can get the proper permits.

Estimated boxes harvested week ended

Crop	Jan 28	Feb 4	Feb 11
Navel oranges	118,000	79,000	38,000
Early & Mid oranges			
Including Ambersweet	8,504,000	8,160,000	8,040,000
All grapefruit	1,093,000	1,443,000	1,621,000
Early Tangerines	10,000	5,000	4,000
Honey Tangerines	121,000	115,000	96,000
Tangelos	117,000	90,000	69,000
Temples	67,000	57,000	77,000

VEGETABLES: Cool night temperatures continue to slow crop maturation in some parts of the central and southern Peninsula. Vegetables available include tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, strawberries, sweet corn, potatoes, squash, snap beans, radishes, lettuce, cucumbers, escarole, endive, eggplant, Chinese cabbage, and parsley.

SNAP BEANS: Dade--Most acreage is in very good condition. Planting continues. Harvesting is active with fair quality available. Workers are irrigating as needed. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Southwest--Young plants are in good condition while older plants are in fair condition. Planting remains steady. Harvesting is spotty with fair quality available. Volume is very light. Everglades--Planting is becoming more active. West Central--Planting is expected to start within the next seven to ten days.

CABBAGE: Dade--Cabbage harvest is active with weekly plantings harvested on schedule. Quality is good and yield is average. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is starting. Quality and color are good. Sizes are small. Hastings, Zellwood--The crop is in good condition. Growth and development are normal. Growers are actively harvesting cabbage. Head size is below normal.

SWEET CORN: Dade--Young plants, planted on potato ground ruined earlier by heavy rains, are in good condition and making good stands. Harvesting continues with some being shipped to Belle Glade prior to marketing. Quality is good. A good volume is expected for the rest of the season. Growers continue to irrigate as needed. Everglades--Planting is active and is expected to continue through early to mid-March. Harvest is expected to begin in April. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Harvesting is expected to start in one to two weeks. Zellwood--Planting started. Southwest--Crop condition is fair. Planting is finished.

CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market: West Central--Harvest is complete for the fall season. East Coast--The crop is mostly in good condition and improving each week. Warmer temperatures are helpful for new plant growth. Recent plantings have good germination. Light planting continues. Southwest--The crop is in fair condition. Planting is steady. Harvest is light. Fruit quality is fair.

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

PICKLES: West Central, Zellwood--Harvest is complete for the season. Dade--Cukes planted last week are up to good stands. Cukes that survived the cold are being picked with low yield and fair quality. Southwest--Crop is in poor to fair condition, planting is steady. Growth and development are slow. Harvest is light and quality is fair.

EGGPLANT: Dade--Cutting continues with good quality available. A good volume is expected for the rest of the season. Southwest--Condition is rated fair. Harvesting of a light volume is active. Quality is fair to good. East Coast--Crop condition is good. Harvesting of a very light volume is active. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in good condition as planting gets underway.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE: Everglades--Harvest is very active. The crop recovered from the freeze.

LETTUCE: Everglades--Harvesting of Romaine types is increasing with good quality available. Harvesting of head types is active with the crop well recovered from the earlier cold. Harvesting of leaf types is active.

OKRA: Dade--Planting will get underway in late February if weather stays warm.

BELL PEPPERS: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is nearing the end. Picking remains steady. Quality is rated fair to good. East Coast--Crop condition is rated good. Planting is active. Workers are drenching new transplants with water to ensure adequate moisture supplies. Picking of green Bells is steady with very good quality and sizes available. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting continues to increase seasonally.

HOT PEPPERS: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting continues to slow. Picking is steady with fair to good quality available. East Coast--Picking continues. Volume is very light.

POTATOES: Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Harvesting is gaining momentum. Quality is good. West Central--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Hastings--Planting continues with recent rain aiding crop growth. Harvesting is expected to begin in mid to late April.

RADISHES: Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvest is very active.

SQUASH: Dade--Condition is mostly very good. Planting is active. Picking continues with quality improving. A good volume is expected

for the remainder of the season. Producers continue to irrigate as needed. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting remains steady. Picking of a light supply continues with fair to good quality available. East Coast--The crop is in good condition. Older plants are blooming and setting fruit. West Central--Condition is fair to good. Planting is increasing.

STRAWBERRIES: Plant City, Floral City--Harvesting is active. Quality is fair to mostly good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is good. Harvesting is steady. Quality, sizes and color are good. Yield is increasing. Dade--U-Pic harvesting is active. Quality is good.

TOMATOES: Dade--Crop condition is rated very good. Fruit is setting and sizing very well. Harvesting is active with good quality available. Yield is improving with mostly 6x6 sizes and larger available. Packout is good with only a very small amount of fruit that shows a few cracks on the stem end not meeting grade standards. Southwest--The winter crop is in fair condition. The spring crop is in fair to good condition. Acreage planted after the earlier freeze is in good condition. Fruit set is fair to good while sizing is slow due to cool weather. Harvesting is spotty. Quality is fair to good. Yield and packout are below normal. Volume is light. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Some plants show uneven fruit setting due to the earlier freeze. Warmer temperatures are aiding fruit maturation. Planting is active. Picking continues with good quality available. Sizes are variable. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is good. The cold weather during the last half of the week initially caused no significant damage with assessments of damage continuing. Planting is active with some growers still laying plastic. Tying started. Quincy--Producers continue to make beds and lay plastic for the spring crop.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Southwest--Condition is fair good. Planting is slow. Picking is steady. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is fair to good. Planting is starting to slow seasonally.

PLUM TOMATOES: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is slow. Picking is steady. Quality is fair to good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is mostly steady but starting to slow seasonally.

WATERMELONS: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is steady. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is rated in good condition. Planting is gaining momentum. Washington County--Growers are preparing for spring crop planting with transplants being ordered.

To receive this report via e-mail, send an e-mail message to listserv@newsbox.usda.gov with the following message: **add usda-fl-crop-weather your-email-address your.name (optional)** An example: **add usda-fl-crop-weather jsmith@qtm.com john smith**. The report will be e-mailed automatically to your e-mail address each week.