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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending April 15, 2001

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## FLORIDA AGRICULTURE



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Warm, dry conditions returned during the week of April 8 through 14. Temperatures at the major stations averaged three to nine degrees above normal. Daytime highs were mostly in the 80s with several localities recording at least one high in the 90s. Nighttime lows were mostly in the 60s and 70s with many stations recording at least one low in the 50s. Most stations recorded no measurable rain for the week. Tallahassee reported about two thirds inch of rain and a few other localities, from Pensacola to Homestead, recorded a tenth inch or less.

**FIELD CROPS:** Topsoil moisture in the Panhandle is mostly adequate with scattered areas of short moisture. Moisture throughout the rest of the State is very short to short with scattered areas of adequate moisture. Planting of cotton and peanuts is starting. Growers are actively planting corn and tobacco. Sugarcane is in good condition.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very short	3	51	8	55
Short	68	31	66	31
Adequate	28	18	26	14
Surplus	1	0	0	0

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** In the Panhandle, pastures and cattle are mostly in good condition. Stock ponds are starting to fill from recent rains. In the rest of the State, cattle and pastures are mostly in fair condition with scattered areas in good or poor condition. Stock ponds are low. Pastures are greening in areas that have received rain.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	45	20	15	20
Fair	40	65	65	70
Good	15	15	20	10
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** This was the warmest week of the year with virtually no rain throughout the citrus belt. Growers and caretakers are running their irrigation equipment around the clock to keep trees in good condition during the current fruit setting period. Some poorly cared for trees are in stress and beginning to shed some of next season's little green fruit. Most well-cared-for groves are in good condition and are dropping their normal amount of unwanted new fruit. Valencia harvest is rapidly increasing as picking crews are taking advantage of available labor. Most processors are taking field run grapefruit and Valencias along with most packing house eliminations. Fresh packers are shipping grapefruit, Valencias, Honey tangerines, and Temples.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops for fire protection and prior to harvesting. Hedging, topping and limited burning of grove debris continues in all areas. Most post bloom nutritional sprays have been completed. A few fresh fruit growers have started their second sprays.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Apr 1	Apr 8	Apr 15
Navel oranges	6,000	0	1,000
Early & Mid oranges	59,000	16,000	2,000
Valencia oranges	4,923,000	6,008,000	6,758,000
All grapefruit	2,822,000	2,626,000	2,042,000
Honey Tangerines	142,000	96,000	89,000
Tangelos	20,000	7,000	0
Temples	48,000	26,000	5,000

**VEGETABLES:** Planting of vegetables is very active in northern localities. Potato digging is getting underway around Hastings. Tomato harvesting is beginning in the Palmetto-Ruskin region. Picking of watermelons is starting in the Immokalee area. Okra harvesting is getting underway in Dade County. Vegetables available include tomatoes, potatoes, sweet corn, peppers, cabbage, snap beans, squash, cucumbers, eggplant, lettuce, radishes, escarole, endive, parsley, Chinese cabbage, okra, blueberries and watermelons.

**SNAP BEANS:** Dade--The crop is in very good condition. Picking continues with a good volume available for the next three to four weeks. Quality is good. Workers are irrigating as needed. Southwest--Crop condition is rated good. Harvesting continues. Quality is good. East Coast--Young plant growth is good. Picking by hand continues with good quality available. Color is good. Volume is light. Everglades--Picking continues. Quality is mostly good. West Central--Crop condition remains poor to fair.

**BLUEBERRIES:** Central--Harvesting is increasing slowly with a light volume available. Quality is mostly good.

**CABBAGE:** Dade--Harvest is winding down. One more week and volume will be low as the season ends. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Growth and development are normal. Harvest is winding down. Quality is good. Sizes and color are good. Southwest--Harvest is complete. Hastings--Harvest is winding down. The crop is in excellent condition. Growth and development are normal. Zellwood--Harvest of green cabbage is complete. A light supply of red and other kinds is available.

**SWEET CORN:** Everglades--Picking is very active. Volume is near the peak. Quality is excellent. Dade--Picking is nearing the end. Quality is good. Zellwood--The crop is in good condition. Picking is expected to begin about May 1. Southwest, East Coast--Harvesting is finished.

**CUCUMBERS, Fresh Market:** West Central--Growth and development are slow but normal. The crop is in fair condition. Harvest is starting with fruit of fair quality, color, and size. East Coast--Condition of young plantings is improving. Germination is good for recent plantings. Mid-growth plants are forming runners, blooming and setting fruit. New fields are providing mostly good quality and color. Growers are harvesting super selects, and selects. Harvest is moderate to meet demands. Older fields are being mowed and cleaned up. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is complete. Growth and development are good. Harvest is steady. Quality of fruit is good.

**PICKLES:** West Central--Planting is complete. The crop is in fair to good condition. Growth and development are slow but normal. Harvesting is starting. Fruit quality and size are fair. Dade--Picking is active with good quality and yield. All fields look good but need lots of irrigation. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition.

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

Growth and development are good. Harvest is steady. Fruit quality is good. Zellwood--Crop progress is generally good. First harvest is expected to start next week if the weather stays warm.

**EGGPLANT:** Southwest--Crop condition is rated good. Cutting continues with good quality available. East Coast--Condition is mostly good. Cutting remains active with both regular and Italian types available. Quality is good. Supplies are mostly steady. Dade--Harvesting continues. Volume is decreasing seasonally with supplies available over the next two to three weeks. Quality is good.

**ENDIVE/ESCAROLE:** Everglades--Harvesting is starting to wind down with light supplies available through early May.

**LETTUCE:** Everglades--Harvesting continues with good quality available. Volume is starting to decrease seasonally with supplies available until mid-May.

**OKRA:** Dade--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting is getting underway. Quality is good. Workers continue to irrigate as needed.

**BELL PEPPERS:** Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Harvesting continues with fair to good quality available. The sun is blistering some fruit not shaded by foliage. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Green Bell harvesting is active with first picks producing large sizes and good quality. Picking of limb fruit is yielding variable sizes. Workers continue to remove strings and stakes from acreage completely harvested. West Central--The crop is in fair condition.

**HOT PEPPERS:** Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting continues with good quality available.

**POTATOES:** Hastings--Harvesting is starting. Quality is mostly good. Southwest--Digging continues with good quality available. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting continues to increase with fair to good quality available. Sizes are fair.

**RADISHES:** Everglades, Lake Placid--Digging remains active. Quality is good to excellent. Volume is good with supplies available through mid-May.

**SQUASH:** Dade--Harvesting remains active. Quality and volume are good. Good supplies are available for the next three to four weeks. Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting remains steady with good quality available. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Harvesting remains active with a light volume of zucchini and yellow varieties picked. Quality and color are good. Workers continue to remove plants completely harvested.

**STRAWBERRIES:** Dade--Some U-Pic fields remain open as the season nears the end. Quality is fair. Plant City, Floral City--Harvesting is virtually done. Palmetto-Ruskin--Picking is virtually complete.

**TOMATOES:** Southwest--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Picking continues with a good volume available. First picks are producing mostly 5x6 and 6x6 sizes. Quality is mostly good with steady supplies available. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair condition. Picking is getting underway with a very light volume harvested. Quality and sizes are fair with very light supplies available. East Coast--Crop condition is rated good. Growers are making first and second picks with some third picks not made due to the low market. Crown picks are yielding improved quality. Dade--Picking is starting to wind down. Quality is good. Packout is good. Good supplies are available over the next five to ten days. Quincy--Picking is expected to begin in late May or early June.

**CHERRY TOMATOES:** Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting continues with steady supplies available. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is fair to good. Picking is active with supplies increasing seasonally. Quality is fair to good.

**PLUM TOMATOES:** Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Harvesting remains steady with fair to good quality available. Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is rated fair to good. Picking is getting underway with fair quality available. Sizes are normal. Color is fair to good.

**WATERMELONS:** Southwest--Crop condition is good. Harvesting is starting. Quality is fair to good. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition.

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