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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

**FLORIDA**  
**AGRICULTURE**



Week ending October 7, 2001

Released 4:00 P.M.

October 9, 2001

**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Mostly dry weather allowed field work to progress normally during the week of September 30 through October 6. Miami recorded about an inch and a half of rain, and Ft. Lauderdale and Tallahassee reported a little over a half inch for the week. Isolated showers also brought from a tenth inch to about a third inch to Ft. Pierce, Putnam Hall, West Palm Beach and Jacksonville. Elsewhere, no measurable rain fell. Temperatures at the major stations averaged normal to six degrees below. Highs were mostly in the 80s and 90s while lows were mostly in the 50s, 60s and 70s with several localities recording at least one low in the 40s.

**FIELD CROPS:** Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are mostly adequate to surplus with a few scattered localities reporting very short to short supplies. Peanut condition is rated thirty percent fair, thirty-one percent good, and thirty-nine percent excellent. Peanut digging is sixty-five percent done. Some peanut digging slowed because of dry, heavy soils making it too difficult to dig. Field corn harvest is almost over. Cotton harvesting is increasing. Sugarcane planting is active.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very short	0	3	0	1
Short	5	15	8	16
Adequate	57	65	56	70
Surplus	38	17	36	13

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** In the Panhandle, cattle and pastures are in good condition. Some pastures are in fair condition from drought and seasonally cooler temperatures. In the north, cool, dry weather decreased the growth of grass in warm season pastures. Cool season forage planting continues. Haying weather is excellent. Cattle are in fair to good condition. In the central counties, land preparation for winter forage started. There are still some pastures with standing water. The hay crop is very poor. In the southeast, pasture and cattle are in good condition. In the southwest, winter dieback of some grasses resulted in fair to good condition of range. 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	0	5	0	0
Fair	25	25	10	20
Good	75	70	90	75
Excellent	0	0	0	5

**CITRUS:** The first week of October was relatively dry compared to the past four months when virtually all areas reported normal or above average rainfall. Some citrus producing counties with lowlands and flatwoods, soils are still drying out from a very wet September. New growth is starting to slow down as the days grow shorter with fewer thunderstorms. There continues to be some minor splitting on a few of the early types of fruit as the moisture uptake exceeds the skin growth. New crop fruit is generally quite uniform and ahead of last year at this same time. Fresh fruit packing houses are packing and shipping Hamlin and Ambersweet oranges, Navels, white and colored

grapefruit, Fallglo and Robinson tangerines. One processing plant is open to receive packing house eliminations.

Caretakers are clean cutting cover crops and general grove vegetation during the first dry week in several months. Several groves have problems with vines covering the trees and shading the foliage and fruit. Fall sprays and fertilizations are winding down in all areas. Dead tree removal continues along with the burning of the limbs and stumps. A few resets are still being planted in the warmer areas.

**VEGETABLES:** Drier weather allowed field work to make good progress. Picking of hot peppers and squash, and the planting of potatoes started around Immokalee. Tomato harvesting is increasing in the Quincy area.

**SNAP BEANS:** Dade--Recent rains boosted growth and bean development with oldest plants showing blooms. Everglades--Drier conditions boosted crop development and allowed planting to proceed normally. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting remains steady. East Coast--Planting of a limited acreage is active. Germination is good.

**SWEET CORN:** Everglades--Picking is expected to begin in late November. Zellwood--Picking is getting underway. East Coast--Oldest fields show good germination. Workers are discing and cleaning ditches in preparation of planting. Southwest--Crop condition is rated good with planting winding down.

**CUCUMBERS, fresh market:** Zellwood--Harvesting is active. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is increasing. East Coast--Oldest plants germinated well. Plant growth is good. Planting is increasing.

**EGGPLANT:** Southwest--Crop condition is good. Planting is active. East Coast--Plant growth is good with oldest plants developing very well and showing blooms. Laying of plastic, staking and tying are active. Dade--The crop is in very good condition. Planting continues.

**ENDIVE/ESCAROLE:** Everglades--Planting is active.

**LETTUCE:** Everglades--Planting continues.

**OKRA:** Dade--Crop condition is good. Harvesting continues. Producers disced some acreage due to the low market.

**BELL PEPPERS:** Southwest--Condition is rated fair to good. Planting remains steady. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Transplanting remains active. Other field work includes discing, leveling, laying plastic, spraying, staking and tying.

**HOT PEPPERS:** Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is steady. Picking started with good quality available. East Coast--Planting is active.

**POTATOES:** Southwest--Planting is underway. Dade--Planting is expected to start in about two weeks.

**SQUASH:** Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Planting of a limited acreage is steady. Harvesting began with good quality available. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Planting of a limited acreage is active. Picking is expected to start in seven to ten days. Dade--Planting of a small acreage is getting underway with most growers to start planting in about two weeks.

**STRAWBERRIES:** Plant City, Dover, Floral City, Palmetto-Ruskin--Producers have laid about ninety percent of the plastic and planted about ten percent of the acreage.

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

**TOMATOES:** Quincy--Harvesting is slowly gaining momentum. Southwest--Crop condition remains fair to good. Planting is steady. Fruit set is fair on oldest plants with earlier heat stress and recent rain and wind lowering yield prospects. Workers are pruning, tying, staking and spraying as needed. West Central--Picking is expected to start after mid-month. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Oldest fruit is gaining size. Transplanting continues with workers drenching recent sets with water to ensure proper growth. Other field activities include staking, tying, pruning, cleaning ditches, discing, leveling land, laying plastic and spraying for the control of insects and

disease. Dade--The crop is in good condition. Planting is slow but is expected to increase around mid-month.

**CHERRY TOMATOES:** Southwest--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Planting is steady.

**PLUM TOMATOES:** Southwest--Condition remains fair to good. Planting continues at a steady pace.

**WATERMELONS:** Southwest--Crop condition remains fair to good.

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