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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending October 28, 2001

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October 29, 2001

FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE



WEATHER SUMMARY: Scattered storms brought significant amounts of rain to some localities during the week of October 21 through 27. Rainfall ranged from traces in many locations to about seven and two-thirds inches at Miami. Most heavier amounts fell over southern Peninsula areas. Temperatures at the major stations averaged normal to two degrees above. Daytime highs were mostly in the 70s and 80s with several southern Peninsula localities recording at least one high in the 90s. Nighttime lows were mostly in the 50s, 60s and 70s with several locations reporting at least one low in the 40s. Tallahassee recorded at least one low in the 30s.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil moisture supplies are short to adequate with mainly southern areas reporting surplus supplies and a few northern Peninsula areas reporting very short supplies. Subsoil moisture is mostly adequate to surplus with some northern Peninsula and western Panhandle areas reporting short to very short supplies. Peanut digging is 95 percent finished. Last year growers had dug 93 percent of peanuts by this date. The five-year average for peanuts harvested is 94 percent done by this date. Some northern Peninsula and western Panhandle areas are too dry for the planting of small grains. Haying is slowing seasonally. Cotton picking is gaining momentum. Sugarcane is in good condition.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	7	2	6	6
Short	35	27	27	19
Adequate	58	50	64	50
Surplus	0	21	3	25

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern counties, small grains for winter forage are being planted. The grass growth and winter forage planting are hampered by dry soil conditions in some areas. Pasture in the west-central area is in good condition although grass growth is slow due to cooler temperatures. In the southwest, pasture is in generally good condition with some locations having surplus moisture. Statewide, the condition of the cattle is fair to good.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	5	0	0	0
Poor	5	5	0	0
Fair	25	30	25	20
Good	60	65	75	80
Excellent	5	0	0	0

CITRUS: There were several scattered showers and thunderstorms this week with the east coast and southern areas getting the best of the rains. The upper interior generally received the fewest showers. New growth has slowed in all areas. Virtually all of the early and midseason fruit has started turning color with some of the early tangerines showing a bright orange to red color. Also, some young tree Navels have excellent on-tree coloring. Fresh fruit packing houses are very actively testing all types of early fruit for immediate shipments. There are a few more processors open taking packing house eliminations. Several more processors are opening the week of October 29 when a few crops of field-run early oranges will be harvested.

Caretakers have been busy mowing, chopping and discing cover crops that have made advanced growth with help of the late summer and September rains. Some grasses have grown up into the citrus trees harboring some of the chewing and sucking insects. Vines are still covering the tops of many trees shading the foliage and fruit. Dead and dying trees are being pushed and burned in all areas. A few resets are still being planted.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Oct 14	Oct 21	Oct 28
Navel oranges	85,000	165,000	169,000
Early & Mid oranges including Ambersweet	88,000	125,000	258,000
All grapefruit	323,000	544,000	550,000
Tangerines	133,000	167,000	140,000
K-Early Citrus Fruit	0	7,000	9,000

VEGETABLES: Cool temperatures and recent heavy rainfall are delaying the maturation of tomatoes and other crops for about a week to ten days in the West Central area. The recent rains delayed potato planting in Dade County with growers discing fields again. Producers disced some Dade County okra acreage due to low prices. Crops available include tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, pickles, eggplant, squash, sweet corn, okra and watermelons.

SNAP BEANS: Dade--Plants are in very good condition. Recent abundant rains caused some mold problems in older fruit. Planting is active. Southwest--Crop condition is rated good. Planting continues at a steady pace. East Coast--The crop is in mostly good condition. Plants continue to bloom and form pin beans with oldest fruit gaining size.

SWEET CORN: Zellwood--Harvesting of a light volume is decreasing seasonally. Everglades--Picking is expected to start in late November. East Coast--Oldest plants are making a good stand. Land preparation is active as fields dry out. Southwest--The crop is in good condition.

CABBAGE: Dade--Crop condition is good. Planting continues. Hastings--Planting is active.

CUCUMBERS, fresh market: Palmetto-Ruskin, Plant City--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting is increasing. Quality and sizes are fair to good. Southwest--Condition is rated fair to good. Planting remains steady. East Coast--Fruit is gaining size on oldest plants. Recent seedings are germinating well. Planting is active.

CUCUMBERS, pickles: West Central--The crop is in fair condition. Picking is starting with fair quality available. Zellwood--Picking is active. Dade--Harvesting is active. Quality is good. Southwest--Condition is fair. Planting remains active.

EGGPLANT: East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. Harvesting of regular and Italian types is active. Quality and color are good. Volume is light. Plant City--Harvesting of a small volume continues. Southwest--Condition is good. Planting continues. Dade--Condition is good. Recent rains helped plant growth with workers staking as needed. Oldest plants are blooming and starting to show small fruit.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE: Everglades--Planting continues.

LETTUCE: Everglades--Planting remains active.

OKRA: Dade--Crop condition is good. Cutting continues with good quality available. Growers disced some acreage due to low prices.

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

BELL PEPPERS: East Coast--Fruit sizes are increasing on oldest plants with cooler temperatures aiding development. Transplanting continues. Harvesting is increasing seasonally with good quality available. Other field work includes land leveling, laying of plastic, staking and tying. Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting continues at a steady pace. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition.

OTHER SWEET PEPPERS: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting remains steady. Harvesting is also steady with good quality available. East Coast--Harvesting of cubanelles began with good quality available.

HOT PEPPERS: Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting and harvesting are steady. Quality is good. East Coast--Picking of jalapeno and long hots started. Quality is good.

POTATOES: Southwest--Planting is steady. Dade--Planting was delayed by the heavy rains with growers discing fields again. West Central--Producers are preparing ground for winter crop planting.

SQUASH: Southwest--Crop condition is good. Planting continues. Harvesting is mostly steady depending on market prices. Quality is good. Plant City--Picking of a light volume continues. East Coast--Young plants are off to a good start. Harvesting continues with mostly good color and quality available. Dade--The crop is in good condition. Oldest plants are blooming. Planting is active.

STRAWBERRIES: Plant City, Dover, Floral City, Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is rated good. Some growers finished planting.

TOMATOES: Quincy--Cool nighttime temperatures are slowing some maturation. Picking remains active with mostly good quality

available. Southwest--Crop condition is mostly good. Fruit set and sizing are good. Transplanting remains steady. Picking of a very light volume is getting underway. Workers are spraying, staking, pruning and tying as needed. West Central--Condition is rated fair to good. Crop progress is about a week to ten days behind usual due to cool weather and recent heavy rainfall. Harvesting is very slow as the season gets underway. Fruit quality is mostly fair to good. Sizes picked are 5x6 and 6x6. Tying is active. East Coast--Cooler temperatures are helping fruit to gain size. Transplanting is active. Harvesting started with mostly good quality and sizes available. Volume is light. Workers are cleaning drainage ditches, discing and leveling land, laying plastic, spraying, staking, pruning and tying. Dade--Condition is good with recent rains aiding plant growth. Planting continues. Workers are spraying for the control of insects and disease. Other field activities include staking of oldest plants, making plant beds and laying plastic.

CHERRY TOMATOES: West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting continues to gain momentum. Quality and color are fair to good. Sizes are normal. Southwest--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Planting remains steady.

GRAPE TOMATOES: Palmetto-Ruskin--Picking remains active.

PLUM TOMATOES: West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is getting underway with fair to good quality available. Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting continues.

WATERMELONS: West Central--Condition is fair to good. Cutting continues at a steady pace. Quality and color are fair to good with medium sizes available. Southwest--Crop condition is fair. Harvesting is winding down. Quality is fair to good.

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