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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending November 25, 2001

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FLORIDA AGRICULTURE



WEATHER SUMMARY: Some Panhandle and northern localities received much needed rain during the week of November 18 through 24 with Tallahassee receiving almost one and three fourths inches and Pensacola reporting a little over an inch. A few east central areas reported a half inch to an inch while other regions reported either no rain or only traces for the week. Temperatures at the major stations averaged one to six degrees above normal. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s while nighttime lows were mostly in the 40s, 50s and 60s. Pensacola and Tallahassee reported at least one daily low in the 30s.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are mostly short to adequate. Several western Panhandle and northern Peninsula areas remain very dry while a few southern Peninsula localities report surplus subsoil moisture. Cotton harvesting is nearing the end. Sugarcane harvesting and planting remain active in the Everglades area.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	8	14	4	11
Short	23	22	26	14
Adequate	58	64	59	65
Surplus	11	0	11	10

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern counties, pasture condition is very poor to poor due to drought. Many cattlemen are feeding supplemental hay. In the central area, cattle condition continues fair to good. Pastures are still green but grass growth is at a standstill due to drought. Haying is active. In the southwest, pasture condition varies from fair to good due to normal winter die-back of permanent pasture grass. Statewide, cattle condition ranges from very poor to good, with most pasture fair to good.

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

CITRUS: The weather was very mild this week with only scattered rains in isolated areas. Most of Florida's citrus producing counties are currently reporting below average rainfall for the month of November. A few growers on the high sand hills and drier areas are irrigating to maintain good tree condition. There is very little new growth except for some younger trees in the southern part of the State. Almost all of the early and mid season fruit have excellent on-tree coloring, with Sunburst tangerines showing some of the best natural orangish-red color. Picking crews slowed at midweek due to the Thanksgiving holiday. However, many were back to work Friday through Sunday sending many loads to the juice plants. Fresh fruit packing houses cranked up again over the weekend shipping Navels, early oranges, white and colored grapefruit, tangerines and tangelos. Virtually all the processors are now open and taking both field-run fruit and packing house eliminations.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops prior to harvesting and for fire protection. Dead tree removal and burning of grove trash continues in all areas. Some growers in the southern part of the citrus belt are still fertilizing and liming. A few clean up sprays are being applied to mid and late season crops.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Nov 12	Nov 18	Nov 25
Navel oranges	292,000	265,000	186,000
Early & Mid oranges including Ambersweet	3,332,000	5,293,000	5,963,000
All grapefruit	666,000	593,000	540,000
Tangerines	350,000	275,000	156,000
Tangelos	24,000	55,000	49,000

VEGETABLES: Most southern Peninsula harvesting paused to observe Thanksgiving Day. Producers are picking tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, pickles, eggplant, radishes, snap beans, squash, strawberries, sweet corn and watermelons.

SNAP BEANS: Dade--Young acreage remains in very good condition. Planting continues. Harvesting is active with good quality available. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking remains active with some producers finished. Quality is fair to good. North--Harvesting continues. Quality is mostly good. Southwest--Condition is good. Planting is steady. Harvesting is gaining momentum. Quality is fair to good. Yields are low from oldest fields. East Coast--Crop condition is good. Hand harvesting continues. Quality is good. Volume is light.

SWEET CORN: Everglades, Lake Placid--Picking is gaining momentum. Quality is mostly good. Southwest--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Picking is steady with fair quality available. Volume remains light. Zellwood--Harvesting is slowing seasonally. Dade--Plant growth is good. Planting continues. East Coast--Condition is good. Planting is slowly increasing. Pulling is expected to start over the next seven to ten days.

CABBAGE: Zellwood--Producers are gearing up for harvest which is expected to begin soon. Dade--Condition is good. Planting is active. Harvesting is expected to begin in about two weeks.

CUCUMBERS, fresh market: Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Planting remains steady. Harvesting is increasing seasonally. Quality is good. East Coast--Crop condition is fair to good. Picking continues with super select and select grades available. Quality and color are good. Workers are removing plants from acreage completely harvested. Palmetto-Ruskin, Plant City--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is mostly steady with some harvesting slowing seasonally. Quality and color are fair. Sizes remain variable. Zellwood--Picking of pickle varieties for fresh market is active. Quality is mostly good.

CUCUMBERS, pickles: West Central--Crop condition is fair. Picking remains mostly steady with some growers finished. Quality is fair. Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting of a limited acreage is active. Picking is steady with good quality available. Dade--Harvesting is virtually finished. Planting continues with growers discing fields completely picked for replanting.

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

EGGPLANT: East Coast--Crop condition is rated very good. Cutting continues with very good quality and color available. Tying is active. Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Cutting remains steady with fair to good quality available. Color is good. Sizes are variable. North--Harvesting remains active. Quality is mostly good. Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting is active. Harvesting is increasing with fair to good quality available. Some fruit shows sand scars. Dade--Crop condition remains good. Planting is nearing the end. Picking is slowly gaining momentum. Quality is good. Workers are staking younger plants as needed.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE: Everglades--Harvesting is gaining momentum.

LETTUCE: Everglades--Harvesting is increasing seasonally.

OKRA: Dade--Cutting is nearing the end with some producers finished. Quality is good. Volume is very light.

BELL AND OTHER SWEET PEPPERS: Southwest--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Planting is steady. Picking of Bell varieties is increasing seasonally. Quality is fair to good. Harvesting of other sweet varieties is steady with good quality available. East Coast--Crop condition is good. Transplanting remains active. Harvesting of green Bells continues. Quality is very good. Picking of red Bells and cubanelles is yielding a light volume of good quality. Workers are leveling land, laying plastic and irrigating as needed. West Central--Condition is fair to good. Harvesting is steady. Quality is fair with some misshaped fruit not meeting grade. Color is good with medium to large sizes available.

HOT PEPPERS: Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Planting and harvesting are steady. Quality is good. East Coast--Picking is active. Volume is light.

POTATOES: Southwest--The crop is in good condition. Planting continues at a steady pace. Dade--Oldest acreage is beginning to sprout with plants making good stands. Planting remains active and is expected to continue for most of December. West Central--Planting is expected to start over the next seven to ten days.

RADISHES: Everglades--Harvesting is slowly increasing.

SQUASH: Southwest--Crop condition is good. Planting and harvesting are steady. Quality is good. East Coast--Plant growth is good.

Cutting of zucchini and yellow varieties continues with fancy and medium grades available. Quality and color are good. Dade--Planting is on schedule. Harvesting is increasing seasonally. Quality is good. Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is steady. Quality is fair to good. Color is good. North--Picking is active. Quality is mostly good.

STRAWBERRIES: Plant City, Dover, Floral City, Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is good. Warm temperatures are hindering crop development. Picking is slowly gaining momentum. Quality, color and sizes are fair to good. Dade--Condition is good. Oldest plants are showing small berries. U-Pic harvesting is expected to start about mid-December.

TOMATOES: Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Planting remains steady. Picking continues to increase as more acreage reaches maturity. Quality is fair to good for first picks and good for second picks. Sizes are variable. Workers are spraying, staking, pruning and tying as needed. East Coast--Fruit setting is improving and sizing is good. Planting continues. Producers are making first, second and third picks. Quality is mostly good. Volume is increasing seasonally. Workers are irrigating, leveling land, laying plastic, pruning and tying as needed. West Central--Condition is rated mostly fair to good. Picking continues but is starting to slow seasonally. A limited volume is expected for January harvesting. Spraying and tying are active. Dade--Condition is rated very good. Planting is active. Harvesting of a light volume is expected to start about mid-December. Workers are irrigating, spraying, making plant beds, laying plastic, and staking as needed. Quincy--Picking is nearing the end.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is steady. Picking is increasing seasonally. Quality is fair to good. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Picking remains mostly steady. Quality is good. Volume is decreasing seasonally.

PLUM TOMATOES: Southwest--Condition is fair to good. Transplanting is steady. Picking is increasing seasonally. Quality is fair to good. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting is steady. Quality and color are good. Volume is decreasing seasonally.

WATERMELONS: Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition remains fair to good. Harvesting is decreasing seasonally. Quality is fair to good. Color is good. Sizes are variable.

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