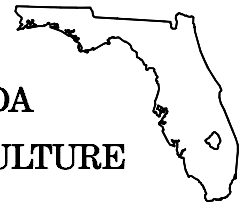




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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending December 2, 2001

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Welcomed rains fell in many western Panhandle and northern areas during the week of November 25 through December 1. Pensacola and Tallahassee reported about a half inch of rain for the week. However, more rain is needed to relieve drought conditions in the area. Most central and southern Peninsula localities reported no measurable rain with only traces reported by a few stations. Temperatures at the major stations averaged from three to eleven degrees above normal. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s. Nighttime lows were mostly in the 50s and 60s with Tallahassee and Pensacola reporting at least one low in the 40s.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are mostly short to adequate. Most Panhandle and northern Peninsula counties remain dry with recent rains improving supplies in a few localities. Big Bend areas and a few central Peninsula and west coast regions also remain dry. A very small area in the southern Peninsula reports surplus subsoil moisture. Cotton harvesting continues to slow with several producers finished. Sugarcane planting and cutting continue in the Everglades area.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	14	5	11	4
Short	22	42	14	33
Adequate	64	53	65	58
Surplus	0	0	10	5

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern counties, pasture condition is poor to fair. Warm weather and light rain greened up some pastures reducing the need for the feeding of supplemental hay. Farmers are still planting cool season forage. In the central area, cattle condition continues fair to good. The pasture growth is at a standstill due to the drought. In the southwest, pasture condition ranges from fair to good due to a normal winter die back of permanent pasture grass. Statewide, cattle condition ranges from poor to good with most pastures poor to fair.

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

CITRUS: Most areas of Florida's citrus belt were dry and unseasonably warm this week. Rain is needed and irrigation is currently being utilized to maintain good tree and fruit condition. New growth is limited generally to the younger trees in the southern citrus producing counties. On-tree fruit coloring is excellent on most of the early and midseason fruit. Harvesting crews are picking Navels, Hamlins, white and colored grapefruit, tangerines and tangelos for the fresh fruit markets. Most of the processors are working long hours to handle the large amount of fruit being picked each day.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops prior to harvesting and for fire protection. A few growers in the southern and coastal areas are completing their fall herbicide applications. Dead tree removal and the burning of those trees continues in most of the older groves. Very few resets are being planted at this time.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Nov 18	Nov 25	Dec 2
Navel oranges	265,000	186,000	424,000
Early & Mid oranges including Ambersweet	5,293,000	5,963,000	7,948,000
All grapefruit	593,000	540,000	699,000
Tangerines	275,000	156,000	304,000
Tangelos	55,000	49,000	106,000

VEGETABLES: Clear weather allowed planting and harvesting to proceed at a steady pace. Growers continue to harvest tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, pickles, radishes, snap beans, squash, strawberries and sweet corn.

SNAP BEANS: Dade--The crop is in very good condition. Planting is active with some harvested acreage being planted to a second crop of beans. Picking continues with good quality available. Volume is increasing seasonally. Southwest--Crop condition is rated good. Planting and picking are steady. Quality is good. West Central--Condition is fair to good. Harvesting is steady with good quality and color available. Sizes are fair to good. North--Picking is active. Quality is mostly good. East Coast--Plant growth is very good. Hand picking is yielding a light volume of very good quality.

SWEET CORN: Everglades, Lake Placid--Harvesting is active. Volume is light but increasing seasonally. Dade--Crop condition is good. Planting is active. East Coast--Planting is active. Harvesting started with a light volume of mostly good quality available. Zellwood--Picking is nearly completed. Southwest--Fall crop harvesting is finished.

CABBAGE: Dade--The crop is in good condition. Planting is on schedule. Harvesting of a light volume began. Zellwood--Harvesting is getting underway.

CUCUMBERS, fresh market: Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting of a limited acreage continues. Picking is steady with good quality available. East Coast--Crop condition is mostly good. Harvesting is active with super select and select grades of very good quality and color available. Growers are mowing acreage completely picked. Palmetto-Ruskin, Plant City--Crop condition is rated fair to good. Harvesting is slowing seasonally. Quality is fair to good. Sizes are variable. Zellwood--Harvesting of pickle varieties for fresh market continues.

CUCUMBERS, pickles: West Central--Crop condition is rated fair. Harvesting is slowing seasonally. Quality is fair to good. Southwest--The crop is in fair condition. Planting of a limited acreage continues. Harvesting is steady. Quality is good. Dade--Harvesting of a very light volume is active. Quality is good.

EGGPLANT: East Coast--Plant growth is good. Harvesting is active. Quality and color are very good. Tying and spraying continue as needed. Southwest--Condition is good. Planting of a limited acreage continues. Picking is steady with fair to good quality available. Dade--Crop growth is good but wind-borne sand is causing some fruit

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

scarring. Planting is completed. Harvesting is increasing with good quality available. North--Cutting continues with mostly good quality available. Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition remains fair to good. U-Pic harvesting is active with fair to good quality available.

ENDIVE/ESCAROLE: Everglades--Harvesting is active.

LETTUCE: Everglades--Harvesting continues.

OKRA: Dade--Harvesting of a very limited volume is active. Quality is good.

BELL AND OTHER SWEET PEPPERS: Southwest--Condition is rated fair to good. Planting and harvesting are steady. Quality is good. East Coast--Crop condition remains good. Transplanting is active. Harvesting of Bell varieties is yielding very good quality. Picking of cubanelles is producing good quality. Workers continue to level land and lay plastic as needed. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Picking is steady. Quality is fair to good. Color is good. Sizes are mostly medium to large with some extra large sizes available. Volume is increasing.

HOT PEPPERS: Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting remains steady. Picking continues with good quality available. East Coast--Picking continues with good quality available.

POTATOES: Dade--Oldest plants are making good stands. Planting is on schedule. Southwest--Condition is good. Planting remains steady. West Central--Crop condition is good. Planting is active.

RADISHES: Everglades--Harvesting of a light volume is active.

SQUASH: Southwest--Condition is good. Planting is steady. Picking continues with good quality available. East Coast--Crop condition is good. Harvesting continues with fancy and medium grades of good quality and color available. Volume is light. Dade--The crop is in good condition. Planting continues. Picking is active with volume increasing seasonally. Palmetto-Ruskin--Condition is fair to good. Harvesting is mostly steady with fair to good quality available. Sizes are variable.

Color is good. North--Harvesting continues with mostly good quality available.

STRAWBERRIES: Plant City, Dover, Floral City, Palmetto-Ruskin--Crop condition is good. Harvesting is increasing seasonally. Quality is mostly good. Volume is very light. Dade--The crop is in good condition. U-Pic harvesting is expected to start within the next ten days with a very light volume available. Most picking is expected to begin in late December.

TOMATOES: Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting is steady. Fruit set is good. Fruit sizing is slow due to cool nighttime temperatures. Harvesting is steady. Quality is good. First picks are yielding extra large to large sizes while second picks are producing mostly large and medium sizes. Packout is normal. Spraying, staking, pruning and tying continue as needed. East Coast--Plant growth is good. Transplanting is active. Picking continues with good quality available. Tying, pruning, land leveling and laying of plastic are active. West Central--The crop is in fair to good condition. Harvesting is active with 5x6, 6x6 and smaller sizes available. Quality is fair to good. Workers are tying and spraying as needed. Dade--The crop is in good condition. Oldest fields show good fruit sets. Planting is on schedule. Picking of a very light volume is expected to begin in ten to fourteen days. Irrigating, staking, plant bed making, and laying of plastic are active. Quincy--Harvesting is virtually finished.

CHERRY TOMATOES: Southwest--The crop is in fair to good condition. Planting and harvesting are steady. Quality is good. West Central--Condition is rated fair to good. Picking is slowing seasonally. Quality and color are fair to good.

PLUM TOMATOES: Southwest--Crop condition is fair to good. Planting and harvesting are steady. Quality is good. West Central--Crop condition is fair to good. Picking is slowing seasonally. Quality is fair to good. Color is good.

WATERMELONS: Palmetto-Ruskin--The crop is in fair to good condition. Cutting is winding down. Quality is fair to good. Sizes are variable.

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