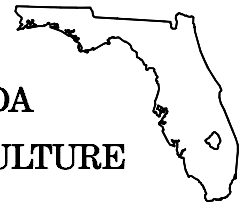




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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending January 6, 2002

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WEATHER SUMMARY: A cold front dipping into central and southern Peninsula localities brought freezing to near freezing temperatures and significant rainfall during the week of December 30 through January 5. Hard freezes and light snow flurries occurred in the western Panhandle and some northern Peninsula areas. Temperatures at the major stations averaged four to twelve degrees below normal. Daytime highs were mostly in the 50s and 60s with Pensacola highs in the 40s and Miami highs in the 70s. Lows were in the 30s, 40s and 50s. Rainfall ranged from traces to over two and a half inches.

FIELD CROPS: The recent rainfall replenished soil moisture supplies in most areas. However, western Panhandle and northern Peninsula localities reported mostly short supplies while central and southern Peninsula areas reported mostly adequate supplies. Cooler temperatures prior to the hard freezes in the western Panhandle and northern Peninsula hardened some small grains although some freeze damage is expected. Sugar-cane harvesting continues in the Everglades region.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very short	18	2	19	5
Short	31	31	27	33
Adequate	51	67	54	62
Surplus	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Statewide, pasture condition was lower due to a couple nights of hard freeze in the Panhandle and down into the central Peninsula. In the Panhandle, winter forage condition is very poor due to drought and cold temperatures. In the northern counties, cattle condition is poor and pasture condition is fair due to drought. In the central areas, pasture condition is very poor to good. Mole cricket damage was bad this fall. In the southwest, cold and rainy weather was hard on cattle, however, grass is greening up and growing. Statewide, cattle condition is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
Percent				
Very poor	0	5	0	0
Poor	10	20	5	10
Fair	40	55	40	70
Good	50	20	55	20
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: Cold temperatures on the morning of January 3rd were not cold enough long enough to cause any appreciable damage to Florida's citrus crop. There were some low recordings below 30 degrees, however damage to fruit and foliage occurs when temperatures fall below 28 degrees for more than 4 hours. Frost was a minor problem on Saturday morning, but temperatures rapidly warmed up and there was virtually no foliage burn. The cold weather was very beneficial to trees for the upcoming bloom period. There were a few scattered rains that helped ease the current dry conditions. Early and midseason harvest for processing continues to be very active in all areas. Fresh fruit packing houses are running early and mid oranges, grapefruit, tangerines and tangelos.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops for fire protection and prior to harvest. Growers are removing and burning dead trees. Few sprays are being applied to some of the late season fresh crops.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Dec 23	Dec 30	Jan 6
Navel oranges	309,000	113,000	109,000
Early & Mid oranges including Ambersweet	6,366,000	6,545,000	8,138,000
All grapefruit	982,000	635,000	875,000
Tangerines	317,000	218,000	208,000
Honey tangerines	4,000	7,000	26,000
Tangelos	141,000	73,000	90,000

FOLIAGE, FLORICULTURE AND OTHER NURSERY PRODUCTS: Growers fired up heaters and sprinkled plants as protection from the cold temperatures around Pierson with some foliage singed in unprotected areas. Most plants will recover from the freeze damage. Northern nurseries took measures to minimize cold damage. Producers in northern and central areas are currently evaluating actual freeze losses.

VEGETABLES: Producers reported no major damage to crops from the cold temperatures. Gusty winds accompanying the cold front blew sand across fields which reduced some quality. Oldest potato plants around Hastings were singed by the cold but will recover. Recent potato plantings escaped damage because most ground did not freeze. Cabbage harvesting is steady around Hastings with no significant cold damage reported. Strawberry producers ran overhead sprinklers to form ice caps on plants as protection from cold as needed with short term supplies reduced. Other vegetables available include tomatoes, peppers, Chinese cabbage, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, pickles, radishes, snap beans and squash.

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