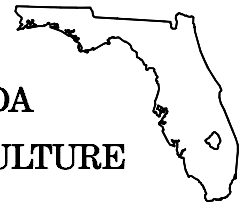




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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending January 13, 2002

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Temperatures dropped to freezing or near freezing levels over western Panhandle, northern Peninsula, central Peninsula, and a few southern Peninsula areas during the first part of the week of January 6 through 12. Temperatures at the major stations averaged two to seven degrees below normal. Most daytime highs were in the 60s but reached into the 70s by the end of the week with several stations recording record or near record highs by the end of the week. Lows averaged in the 30s and 40s at most of the major stations with Miami daily lows averaging in the 50s. Lows in the teens occurred in a few western Panhandle localities. All western Panhandle and northern areas, as well as several central localities recorded at least one low in the 20s with freezes and frosts reported. Storm fronts crossing the State brought from traces at most stations to over an inch of rain at Tallahassee. Another storm front crossing the State on Sunday, January 13 dropped traces to about a half inch rain over northern, central and a few southern localities.

FIELD CROPS: Rainfall continued to replenish soil moisture supplies in the western Panhandle and in some northern and central Peninsula localities. Topsoil and subsoil moisture remains mostly short to adequate. Tobacco growers are seeding hot beds. Recent cold and dry weather affected the growth of some small grains with high aphid populations causing concern about disease in a few localities. Producers are baling the last fields of cotton. The cold weather damaged canopy and terminal buds on some sugarcane but caused no stalk damage. Sugarcane harvesting remains active in the Everglades region.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	2	4	5	3
Short	31	47	33	54
Adequate	67	49	62	43
Surplus	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, north and central counties, cold temperatures at or below 32 degrees have severely slowed forage production. Ranchers are feeding hay. Recent rains are beginning to put some standing water in ponds and low spots. Statewide, the condition of cattle is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	5	0	0	0
Poor	20	30	10	10
Fair	55	65	70	60
Good	20	5	20	30
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: There were many areas in Florida's citrus belt that had below freezing temperatures on the morning of January 9th. Generally temperatures were not low enough long enough to do any damage to citrus trees. There was some minor icing of fruit found in the coldest locations. However, most of the fruit in those regular cold pockets is of the early maturing varieties and have already been harvested or are on the schedule to be picked very soon. The frost and freezing temperatures did very little foliage damage to the trees except in those coldest locations where some of the outside leaves were burned and will fall off. This cold spell and the one around the 3rd of the month were very beneficial to most of the trees for the upcoming bloom period. Harvesting crews have been very active moving more than a million boxes of fruit each day since the first of the year. Fresh fruit shippers are busy filling orders for all types of early and midseason fruit.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops primarily for fire protection now that frost has killed a lot of vegetation in the groves. Growers were busy this week running their irrigation systems for cold protection. There are some pre-bloom fertilizer applications going on at this time.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Dec 30	Jan 6	Jan 13
Navel oranges	113,000	109,000	130,000
Early & Mid oranges including Ambersweet	6,545,000	8,138,000	8,361,000
All grapefruit	635,000	875,000	1,005,000
Tangerines	218,000	208,000	140,000
Honey Tangerines	7,000	26,000	73,000
Tangelos	73,000	90,000	148,000
Temples	0	10,000	38,000

VEGETABLES: Harvesting continued with producers currently assessing damage from the near freezing temperatures around Immokalee and Ft. Pierce. Most Dade County acreage escaped significant damage because temperatures stayed above freezing. Cold temperatures burned some plant leaves on some young sweet corn and lightly burned some lettuce around Lake Okeechobee with plants expected to recover. Vegetables available include tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, parsley, pickles, radishes, snap beans, squash, and a few strawberries.

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