



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service
 1222 Woodward Street
 Orlando, Florida 32803
 407 / 648-6013

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>



WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending March 3, 2002

Released 4:00 P.M.

March 4, 2002

WEATHER SUMMARY: Mostly drier, cooler weather allowed field work to progress at a normal pace during the first half of the week of February 24 through March 2. Temperatures plunged to freezing and near freezing levels over the western Panhandle and much of the northern and central Peninsula near the end of the week. Temperatures at the major stations averaged five to ten degrees below normal for the week. Most daytime highs were in the 60s and 70s. Most lows were in the 30s around Jacksonville, Pensacola and Tallahassee, in the 40s around Daytona Beach, Orlando and Tampa, and in the 50s around Miami and West Palm Beach. Tallahassee recorded at least one low in the teens while Jacksonville and Pensacola recorded at least one low in the 20s. A frontal system brought significant rains to the western Panhandle and northern Peninsula at the end of the week. Most southern and central Peninsula areas to received no rain. Tallahassee recorded three and a half inches. The frontal system continued to cross the State on Sunday and Monday March 3 and 4 with rain continuing over the western Panhandle and northern Peninsula as well as many central and some southern Peninsula localities. The rains continue to decrease the danger of wildfires in most areas.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are short to mostly adequate. A small area of the Panhandle that missed some of the recent rainfall is still reporting very short subsoil moisture. A few central Peninsula areas that received the recent rains reported surplus moisture. This week's rains replenished soil moisture in most western Panhandle and northern Peninsula areas. Low temperatures in the teens retarded growth of some small grains in the western Panhandle. Land preparation for the planting of field crops continued until the end of the week rainfall and cold temperatures arrived.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil		Subsoil	
	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very short	4	0	4	2
Short	22	13	34	26
Adequate	74	78	62	68
Surplus	0	9	0	4

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern counties, small grain, ryegrass forage condition was hurt by a hard freeze on February 28 and again by a frost on March 1. Stock pond levels are low and the fire hazard was high through mid-week. The killing frost extended to many counties in the central area. Pasture condition is good in much of the central areas as a result of excellent rains February 22nd and 23rd. Much of the southwest range is dry and the pasture condition is fair. Statewide, the condition of the cattle varies from poor to good.

Condition	Range	Cattle
-----------	-------	--------

	Last week	This week	Last week	This week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	15	15	0	20
Fair	50	65	60	30
Good	35	20	40	50
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: A fast moving cold front dropped temperatures to near freezing in many areas of Florida's citrus belt on the morning of February 27th. There was very little frost due to the winds. There was minimal leaf burn in the coldest northern locations. Temperatures were not low enough long enough to do significant damage to the fruit remaining to be harvested. Also, there were several rains and showers during the week in just about all areas that continued to enhance the current tree condition. Bloom is making very good progress with virtually all trees showing some stage of new growth and bud development. Harvest of early and midseason oranges is just about complete as the picking crews are starting to move Valencia oranges and grapefruit to the processors. The fresh fruit packers are continuing to ship Temples, tangerines and white and colored grapefruit.

Caretakers are discing, mowing and chopping to try to help activate some of the trees into producing new growth and bloom buds. Growers are hedging and topping mostly harvested groves. Dead tree removal and total grove pushing continue. Burn permits are being limited in some areas due to high winds and dry grasses.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Feb 17	Feb 24	Mar 3
Navel oranges	41,000	29,000	11,000
Early & Mid oranges	6,800,000	5,147,000	3,860,000
Valencia oranges	275,000	575,000	1,164,000
All grapefruit	2,055,000	2,065,000	2,151,000
Early tangerines	14,000	7,000	9,000
Honey tangerines	134,000	147,000	159,000
Temples	142,000	192,000	175,000
Tangelos	86,000	59,000	32,000

VEGETABLES: Planting and harvesting continued at a normal pace with the southern areas of production remaining mostly dry for the week. Vegetables available include tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, parsley, potatoes, radishes, snap beans, squash, sweet corn and strawberries.

To receive this report via e-mail, send an e-mail message to listserv@newsbox.usda.gov with the following message: **subscribe usda-fl-crop-weather your.name** An example: **subscribe usda-fl-crop-weather John Smith**. The report will be e-mailed automatically to your e-mail address each week.

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