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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending March 31, 2002

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**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Afternoon storms provided limited moisture to some localities during the week of March 24 through 30. Rainfall ranged from mostly traces to over an inch at Okahumpka and Pensacola. Several sites reported no measurable rain for the week. The danger for wildfire is high in most localities. Temperatures averaged from one degree below normal at Pensacola to five degrees above at many central and southern Peninsula localities. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s. Most nighttime lows were in the 40s, 50s and 60s.

**FIELD CROPS:** Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are mostly adequate to short. Sugarcane harvesting is nearly finished with several mills closed. Tobacco transplanting is gaining momentum. Producers are preparing to plant cotton and peanuts with some to start in about two to three weeks.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last year
Percent						
Very	1	6	28	2	2	28
Short	44	49	38	34	56	45
Adequate	55	45	29	64	42	27
Surplus	0	0	5	0	0	0

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** In the Panhandle, pasture condition is poor to fair due to dry soil conditions. Recent near freezing temperatures hurt the grass in some locations. In the northern area, pasture condition is fair due to drought. Cool season forages are starting to head, and warm season permanent grass is greening-up. In the central counties, pasture condition is fair. Stock ponds are very low. Southwest, pasture condition is mostly fair. Statewide, the condition of cattle is fair to good.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
Percent				
Very poor	10	0	0	0
Poor	15	5	10	0
Fair	55	75	50	65
Good	20	20	40	35
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** This was a very windy, warm and dry week. Rain is needed in all areas. Growers are irrigating with all types of equipment. Many single and two row bed groves are being flood irrigated. Many counties have reported below average rainfall for the month of March. The recent warm and dry weather has helped bring this year's bloom cycle to a conclusion. Citrus trees are now starting to set next year's crop of fruit. The Valencia harvest is very active with virtually all of these late type fruit going to the processors. Grapefruit movement is also very busy with most of the fruit being processed. However, many white and colored grapefruit are still being packed for fresh utilization. Honey tangerine and Temple harvest are both slowing as supplies are running low.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops prior to harvest, to help generate new growth and for fire protection. Hedging and topping continue in harvested groves. Dead and dying trees are being removed and burned. Resets are being planted in all areas where there is sufficient irrigation.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Mar 17	Mar 24	Mar 31
Navel oranges	1,000	0	0
Early & Mid oranges	1,362,000	193,000	221,000
Valencia oranges	3,435,000	6,642,000	6,877,000
All grapefruit	2,887,000	2,684,000	2,504,000
Early tangerines	3,000	1,000	0
Honey tangerines	180,000	165,000	143,000
Temples	90,000	51,000	27,000
Tangelos	8,000	1,000	1,000

**VEGETABLES:** Mostly dry weather increased the need for irrigation over the central and southern Peninsula. Vegetables available include tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, parsley, potatoes, radishes, snap beans, squash, sweet corn and strawberries.

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