



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

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



WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending April 7, 2002

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April 8, 2002

WEATHER SUMMARY: Spotty showers provided some relief to drought conditions over the central Peninsula during the week of March 31 through April 6. However, most localities need more rain to bring water levels back to normal. Rain for the week totaled from traces at Daytona Beach to almost an inch and a quarter at Jacksonville with several central and southern Peninsula localities reporting a half inch to an inch for the week. Temperatures at the major stations averaged one to four degrees above normal. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s. Nighttime lows were in the 40s, 50s and 60s.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are short to mostly adequate. Tobacco transplanting and corn planting are very active in northern Peninsula areas. Growers continue to prepare land for peanut and cotton planting which are expected to begin in one to two weeks. Sugarcane harvesting is almost done with several mills closed.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last Year	This week	Last week	Last Year
Percent						
Very	2	1	3	3	2	8
Short	43	44	68	44	34	66
Adequate	55	55	28	53	64	26
Surplus	0	0	1	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and north, the pasture is in fair condition. Warm season pastures are greening nicely and slight grass growth is beginning. However, grass growth is hampered by drought. Summer forage land preparation is underway. In the west central area, pasture condition is poor due to drought. Statewide, most cattle are in fair condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
Percent				
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	0	5	10	0
Fair	90	75	75	65
Good	10	20	15	35
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: There were some scattered rains and even a thunderstorm or two in most areas this week. Rainfall accumulations ranged from a trace to more than two inches in the center of the State and on both coasts. Growers that had heavy rains have discontinued using their irrigation for now. There is an abundance of new growth on virtually all trees in well-cared-for groves. New crop fruit is making good progress. Harvest of Valencia oranges is very active in all areas with most of this late fruit going to the juice plants. Movement of white and colored grapefruit continues for both fresh and processing with most of the fruit coming from the lower east coast. Picking of Honey tangerines and Temples is slowing.

Caretakers are busy mowing, chopping and discing cover crops. Post bloom nutritional sprays are being applied in all areas. A few fresh crops are now getting their second sprays. Hedging, topping and cutting of limbs and branches has been reported in all parts of the citrus belt. Dead tree removal and burning of the grove trash continues.

Estimated boxes harvested week ended			
Crop	Mar 24	Mar 31	Apr 7
Early & Mid oranges	193,000	221,000	4,000
Valencia oranges	6,642,000	6,877,000	7,226,000
All grapefruit	2,684,000	2,504,000	1,974,000
Honey tangerines	165,000	143,000	113,000
Temples	51,000	27,000	8,000

VEGETABLES: Dry conditions are providing excellent harvesting weather for most crops. Strawberry picking is nearly complete. Vegetables available include tomatoes, peppers, blueberries, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, parsley, potatoes, radishes, snap beans, squash and sweet corn.

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