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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending April 21, 2002

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## FLORIDA AGRICULTURE



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Storms during early-to-mid week dropped from traces to over five inches of rain with heavier amounts falling over Apopka, Bradenton, Dover, Ft. Pierce, Immokalee, Lake Alfred, Okahumpka, Tampa and West Palm Beach. Several localities recorded less than a half inch of rain for the week of April 14 through 20. Daytime highs were mostly in the 80s with several localities recording at least one high in the 90s. Lows were mostly in the 60s and 70s. Temperatures averaged two to nine degrees above normal at the major stations.

**FIELD CROPS:** Recent rains reduced the danger of wildfire in the western Panhandle and most of the northern Peninsula. However, several central and southern Peninsula localities remain very dry. Topsoil and subsoil moisture is short to mostly adequate. Drier conditions over the Panhandle and northern Peninsula allowed field work to progress normally. Cotton planting is increasing. Tobacco is in good condition. Peanut planting is getting underway.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last Year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	1	6	37	1	2	58
Short	23	60	54	31	72	28
Adequate	76	30	9	68	26	14
Surplus	0	4	0	0	0	0

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** Pasture conditions improved slightly throughout the northern and eastern counties following the rain. In the Panhandle, pasture and hay is growing rapidly. Stock ponds are still short despite heavy rains at some locations. The condition of the cattle is fair to good. Clover is blooming and the condition of winter forage is peaking. In the Northern counties, warm season grasses for pasture and hay in many locations are making good growth due to warmer temperatures and adequate moisture. However, other locations are still hurting from drought. Central area cattle and pasture are in fair condition. In the southwest, pasture conditions improved slightly following the return of seasonal showers. Statewide, cattle condition is fair to good.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	5	20	5	10
Fair	45	65	50	55
Good	50	15	45	35
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** This was a very warm week with temperatures at the end of the week reaching the lower 90s in many areas. There were a few scattered coastal showers Monday through Wednesday. Growers are using all types of irrigation to keep trees in good condition. Tristeza and young tree or sand hill decline are wiping out a lot of trees in all areas of the citrus belt. However, the well-cared-for groves on different rootstocks have a lot of new growth and varying amounts of new crop fruit that is making good progress. Harvest of Valencia oranges continues in full swing with the processors limiting the amount of fruit that is picked. Grapefruit movement continues active with most of these fruit coming from the lower east coast. Fresh grapefruit shipments are slowing as supplies are limited. Most of the remaining Temples are being processed. Honey tangerines are still being packed for fresh utilization with some going to the juice plants.

Caretakers are mowing, chopping and discing cover crops for moisture preservation and fire protection. Hedging, topping and chopping up of trash limbs were reported in all areas. Post bloom nutritionals are generally completed with second sprays underway. Dead trees are being pushed out with resets going in the larger groves.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Apr 7	Apr 14	Apr 21
Early & Mid oranges	4,000	0	NA
Valencia oranges	7,226,000	7,401,000	NA
All grapefruit	1,974,000	2,044,000	NA
Honey tangerines	113,000	80,000	NA
Temples	8,000	19,000	NA

**VEGETABLES:** Cabbage harvesting is nearing the end. Harvesting of most vegetables in Dade County is beginning to slow as temperatures become hot. Vegetables available include tomatoes, peppers, blueberries, Chinese cabbage, celery, cantaloupes, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, parsley, potatoes, radishes, snap beans, squash, sweet corn and watermelons.

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