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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending May 5, 2002

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May 6, 2002

WEATHER SUMMARY: Hot temperatures continued during the week of April 28 through May 5. Temperatures at the major stations averaged three to ten degrees above normal. Daytime highs were in the 80s and 90s while nighttime lows were in the 60s and 70s. Lake Alfred, Ocklawaha, Pierson and Umatilla recorded at least one high at 98. Most localities recorded no measurable rain for the week. Thunderstorms crossing the mid-Peninsula on Tuesday, April 30 dropped from a third to three-fourths inch of rain over Putnam Hall, Tavares, Apopka and Pierson. The danger for wildfires increased in most areas of the Peninsula.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are mostly short with very short supplies reported in several areas. Dryland crops are showing stress due to the lack of rain. Thirty percent of peanuts are planted compared with 32 percent last year. Some growers are waiting on rain before beginning their peanut planting while others are planting deeper where moisture is available. Some cotton germination is delayed due to dry soils. Oldest cotton and peanuts are making good stands in the western Panhandle.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last Year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	23	2	35	16	2	43
Short	57	72	60	64	62	52
Adequate	20	26	5	20	36	5
Surplus	0	0	0	0	0	0

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, the cattle and pasture conditions are fair, with growth limited by the drought. In the north and central areas, the pasture condition is poor to fair due to drought. The grass in some areas is crisp. Ranchers are feeding hay to supplement poor pasture. In the southwest, the pasture condition is mostly fair. Statewide, cattle are mostly in fair to good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	5	0	0	0
Poor	30	10	10	0
Fair	40	60	50	75
Good	25	30	40	25
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: This was a very hot and dry week in Florida's citrus belt. Virtually all growers and caretakers are irrigating with all types of equipment. However, some areas do not have sufficient water sources to apply the needed extra moisture. There is some afternoon leaf curl, wilt, and fruit softening in many non-irrigated groves. The current Valencia harvest continues at a rapid pace. Most of these late oranges are going to the juice plants. Grapefruit movement is slowing as supplies are limited mostly to the lower east coast. Some grapefruit are still being packed for fresh utilization. Honey tangerine and Temple harvest are both just about over for this season with very few crops remaining to be picked.

Caretakers are very busy mowing, chopping and discing cover crops for moisture conservation. Dead and dying trees are being removed and burned. Burning permits are limited in some areas due to the extreme dry conditions. Growers are spraying, fertilizing and herbiciding. Resets are being planted in groves where there is sufficient irrigation.

Estimated boxes harvested week ended

Crop	Apr 21	Apr 28	May 5
Valencia oranges	7,998,000	8,079,000	7,295,000
All grapefruit	1,821,000	1,529,000	1,309,000
Honey tangerines	32,000	18,000	6,000
Temples	14,000	16,000	2,000

VEGETABLES: Hot weather is lowering the quality of some potatoes. Potato digging is nearly one-third finished around Hastings. Blueberry harvesting is near the seasonal peak. Producers curtailed some squash harvesting due to the low market. Other vegetables available include tomatoes, peppers, Chinese cabbage, celery, cantaloupes, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, parsley, potatoes, radishes, snap beans, sweet corn and watermelons.

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