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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending September 15, 2002

Released 4:00 P.M.

September 16, 2002

**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Tropical Storm Hanna dumped from four to fifteen inches over the Panhandle and Big Bend area at the end of the week of September 8 through 14 and on Sunday, September 15. Other Peninsula areas received from one to nearly five inches as Hanna formed in the Gulf earlier in the week. A few central and southern Peninsula localities received from two tenths to less than an inch of rain for the week. Temperatures at the major stations averaged from one degree below to one degree above normal.

**FIELD CROPS:** Rainfall from Tropical Storm Hanna caused some lowland flooding which will delay fieldwork this week. Soil moisture improved over the Panhandle, the Big Bend area and the northern Peninsula as Hanna provided abundant rains. Prior to the weekend rains, soil moisture in these areas was mostly short. Soil moisture over the central and southern Peninsula is adequate to surplus with a few localities missed by the recent rain reporting short to very short soil moisture supplies. The rainfall increased the moisture content of some peanuts dug but not yet harvested with growers planning to allow this acreage to dry before combining. Peanut condition is rated mostly fair to good. Five percent of peanuts are harvested. The rainfall reduced the quality of cotton with open bolls with some to recover. Armyworms continue to plague hay producers with harvesting delayed in wetter areas until the ground dries. The planting of small grains for grazing is getting underway in the Panhandle.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	1	1	0	3	2	1
Short	14	14	12	12	14	17
Adequate	45	49	42	55	54	48
Surplus	40	36	46	30	30	34

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** In the Panhandle and north, prior to the weekend rains, pasture condition declined with most pasture rated in fair condition. Short soil moisture conditions, armyworm damage, and hot weather affected the pasture condition. The cattle condition tracked the pasture condition lower, with most cattle in fair condition. In the central and

south counties, the pasture is mostly in good condition. Statewide, the condition of cattle is mostly good.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	5	0	5	0
Fair	15	10	10	5
Good	80	80	85	85
Excellent	0	10	0	10

**CITRUS:** Tropical Storm Hanna skirted up the west coast of Florida the middle part of this week. The feeders and side bands from the storm dumped a lot of rain on the citrus belt. Rainfall amounts were generally in the one to four inch ranges with a few west coast growers reporting more than five inches of new rain. The recent tropical weather is producing a tremendous amount of new foliage on trees in all areas. The abundant moisture is causing limited splitting on some of the early fruit. However, most new crop fruit is in excellent condition. Fresh fruit packing houses have crews testing fruit in all areas of the citrus belt for early shipments. So far this season, packers have shipped Navels, Ambersweet oranges, early tangerines and a few grapefruit.

Caretakers are very busy mowing, chopping and discing cover crops that have made a lot of new growth with the recent heavy rains. Growers are cutting out and burning dead trees and general grove debris. Resets are still being planted in some of the larger groves. Liming, fertilizing, spraying and herbiciding continue in all areas.

**VEGETABLES:** Abundant rain around Quincy from Tropical Storm Hanna caused no significant damage to the tomato crop but may reduce the quality of some immature fruit. Strawberry growers around Plant City and Dover are laying plastic. Fall crop planting continues in most central and southern Peninsula localities although rainfall from Hanna delayed some activity. Dade County producers continue to market light supplies of okra.

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