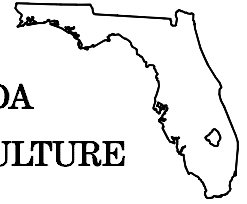




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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending September 22, 2002

Released 4:00 P.M.

September 23, 2002

WEATHER SUMMARY: Scattered showers brought varying amounts of rain during the week of September 15 through 21. Rainfall totals ranged from no rain in Immokalee to over four inches at Avalon. Most localities received a half inch or less of rain for the week. Temperatures in the major cities averaged two to four degrees above normal. Daytime highs were in the 80s and 90s while nighttime lows were in the 60s and 70s.

FIELD CROPS: Drier conditions allowed hay making and peanut digging to get back on schedule, especially in the Panhandle and Big Bend areas. Peanut digging is 20 percent finished versus 28 percent dug by this date last year and the five-year average of 33 percent harvested. Peanuts are in mostly fair to good condition. Cotton baling is slowly gaining momentum with most growers to start over the next two to three weeks. Topsoil and subsoil moisture is mostly adequate with short supplies reported for drier areas of the Panhandle and northern Peninsula and surplus supplies reported for a few central and southern Peninsula localities.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	5	1	3	5	3	5
Short	5	14	11	10	12	10
Adequate	65	45	46	60	55	48
Surplus	25	40	40	25	30	37

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and north, land is being prepared for cool season forage planting. Panhandle pastures are in mostly good condition following ample rains. Army worms continue to cause damage and mole crickets are becoming very active. The pastures in the north and Big Bend counties, however, are mostly in poor condition, with rain needed for grass to grow. In the central and southern areas, pasture is mostly in good condition. Statewide, most cattle are in good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	5	5	5	5
Fair	10	15	10	10
Good	75	80	75	85
Excellent	10	0	10	0

CITRUS: Rains and thunderstorms were a little less frequent this week in most areas. However, virtually all citrus producing counties in the State have water-logged soils. Most ponds, lakes, streams and water reservoirs are full with some running over their banks. Very few groves have been more than a couple of days without hard rains. This has been a very wet summer and early fall. There continues to be an abundance of new growth on most trees in well-cared-for groves. New crop fruit is in very good condition and making excellent progress. There is some splitting on early fruit where the skin cannot grow as rapidly as the juice increases. Fresh fruit packers are testing all types and kinds of early bloom fruit for immediate fresh shipments. The packing houses have shipped limited quantities of Navels, Hamlin and Ambersweet oranges, early tangerines, colored and white grapefruit.

Caretakers are staying very busy mowing, chopping and discing cover crops that are still making a lot of new growth with the help of the recent rains. Vines are being removed from tree tops because they are shading the new fruit and foliage. Dead trees are being pushed and cut out and then burned. Some resets are still going in the larger groves. Fall fertilizing, liming, spraying and herbiciding continues in all areas.

VEGETABLES: Tomato harvesting is getting underway this week around Quincy with most growers to start in early October. Okra harvesting is active in Dade County. Fall crop planting continues in many southern Peninsula localities.

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