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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending October 27, 2002

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October 28, 2002

WEATHER SUMMARY: Warmer temperatures prevailed during the week of October 20 through 26. Temperatures averaged from three to five degrees above normal in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 70s, 80s, and 90s. Nighttime lows were in the 50s, 60s, and 70s. Scattered showers brought varying amounts of rain with totals ranging from no rain at Ft. Pierce, Immokalee and West Palm Beach to almost three inches at Lake Alfred. Orlando recorded over two inches of rain for the week. Quincy received about an inch and a third while Apopka, Daytona Beach, Dover, Homestead, Pensacola and Tallahassee reported about an inch. Several sites recorded traces to a half inch for the week.

FIELD CROPS: Rain falling over some Panhandle, Big Bend, and central and southern Peninsula localities improved soil moisture. However, most areas recorded only small amounts of rain for the week with soil moisture showing no improvement. Topsoil and subsoil moisture is rated mostly short to adequate with very short supplies reported by some northern and southeastern Peninsula localities, and surplus supplies reported in the southwestern Peninsula. Some northern producers are making the last cutting of hay for the year. Drier conditions in some Panhandle localities allowed some growers to finally dig peanuts with harvest progress 95% finished. Last year by this date 94% of peanuts were dug while the five-year average progress is also 94% harvested. However, high humidity continues to delay some cotton and peanut harvesting in the northern Peninsula and Panhandle regions. Sugarcane harvesting is active in the Everglades.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	5	0	3	5	0	6
Short	20	25	28	20	25	20
Adequate	70	70	51	70	70	52
Surplus	5	5	18	5	5	22

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, pasture condition is fair to good. Small grains for winter grazing are being planted. In the north and Big Bend counties, the condition of cattle is mostly fair while pasture is fair. The planting of small grains for winter forage is delayed by drought. In the south, range condition is fair to good. Statewide, the condition of the 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	0	0
Fair	25	40	20	25
Good	70	55	80	65
Excellent	0	5	0	10

CITRUS: Rainfall was generally scattered through most areas this week. Some growers reported little, if any, significant additional moisture, while others had good, hard thunderstorms. A few caretakers are irrigating on the high sand hills where the surface soils were drying out. Most of the well-cared-for groves and trees are in very good to excellent condition. The foliage is generally dark green and very healthy, partly as a result of the excellent summer rains. Lakes, ponds and water reservoirs are mostly full and at good levels going into the drier time of the year. On tree fruit color for most early varieties is excellent for the end of October. Harvesting crews are very active picking early fruit for the fresh packing houses. There are still only a few processors open that are taking packing house eliminations. Many more juice plants are expected to start up in the next few weeks.

Caretakers are very active mowing, chopping and discing cover crops prior to harvesting operations. Dead trees are being pushed out and burned. Some resets are still being planted. Growers are winding up their fall sprays, fertilizations and lime applications. Some herbicides are still being applied.

Estimated boxes harvested week ended			
Crop	Oct 13	Oct 20	Oct 27
Navel oranges	90,000	111,000	119,000
Early & Mid oranges including Ambersweet	110,000	114,000	250,000
All grapefruit	414,000	522,000	621,000
Tangerines	90,000	98,000	153,000
Tangelos	3,000	1,000	2,000

VEGETABLES: Fall crop harvesting in central and southern Peninsula areas continues to increase slowly. Snap bean picking is underway in northern localities. Sweet corn picking started in the Everglades region. Transplanting of strawberries around Plant City is nearing the end with growers expected to finish over the next two weeks. Strawberry picking is scheduled to begin in early November. Tomato picking is slowing around Quincy and getting underway in the Ruskin and other southern Peninsula areas. Other vegetables available include cucumbers, eggplant, okra, peppers, and squash.

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