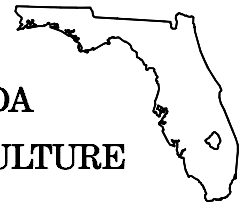




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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending January 5, 2003

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WEATHER SUMMARY: A cold front swept over the state early in the week of December 29 through January 4 and brought significant rains to most areas. Rainfall for the week ranged from about a quarter inch in Tallahassee and West Palm Beach to over four inches in Orlando with most localities recording one to two inches from the storms. However, the southeastern coast and extreme southern Peninsula remained mostly dry. Temperatures for the week averaged from one degree above normal at Jacksonville to three degrees below normal at Tampa. Most daytime highs were in the 60s and 70s. A few areas recorded at least one high in the 80s. Most nighttime lows were in the 40s and 50s. Many localities recorded at least one low in the 20s or 30s with hard freezes and frosts occurring in several areas from the Panhandle and northern Peninsula to most central Peninsula localities.

FIELD CROPS: Soil moisture supplies are mostly adequate. Some areas that received the heavy rains this week are reporting surplus supplies with a few reports of water standing in places that were dry for the past four or five years. Other localities where the rains did not fall are reporting short to very short supplies, especially along the southeastern coast and a few northern Peninsula and Big Bend areas. Sugarcane harvesting continued during the week in the Everglades area with some slowdown for the holiday observance and scattered rains.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	1	0	2	1	0	5
Short	4	5	31	4	5	33
Adequate	50	60	67	50	70	62
Surplus	45	35	0	45	25	0

VEGETABLES: Some planting and harvesting slowed as the rain spread southward and growers observed the holiday. The cooler temperatures slowed the maturation of some crops but boosted the development of strawberries. Vegetables available include snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, parsley, peppers, radishes, squash, tomatoes and strawberries. Quality is mostly good.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern counties, the condition of small grain forage deteriorated due to freezing temperatures. Near freezing temperatures in the central area slowed grass growth. Some pastures in the north and central areas have water standing in places. The grass in the standing water soured and lowered the condition of the cattle and calves. Hay feeding is active throughout the State. State-wide, the condition of cattle ranges from poor to fair, with most in good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	10	0	0	0
Poor	15	15	15	0
Fair	20	30	30	35
Good	55	55	55	65
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: New Year's eve brought some very hard pounding rains and thunderstorms. The upper part of the citrus belt including both coasts received four to six inches of new moisture. The southern citrus growing counties received one to three inches. Lakes, ponds, streams and rivers are all at very high levels, with some overflowing their natural banks. Temperatures Friday thru Sunday were very cold with lows dipping into the lower thirties and high twenties in historical low ground locations. There was some frost, but no damage to citrus. The cold temperatures are a current benefit to citrus by helping slow or retard any new growth. Most harvesting crews worked long hard hours moving fruit to the processors. Some juice plants are working around the clock to utilize the fruit on their yards. Packing house eliminations are going to several juice plants. Fresh fruit packers are shipping the last of the Navels and other early-mid oranges. Fresh packed Sunburst tangerines are also just about finished for the year. The east coast packing houses are very actively moving grapefruit.

Caretakers are busy discing and deep plowing groves to help dry out the wet soils. Hedging and topping are both very active in harvested groves. Dead trees are being pushed out and burned in all areas. A few growers in the southern and coastal regions are applying fertilizers to help generate future new growth and bloom.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Dec 22	Dec 29	Jan 5
Navel oranges	300,000	88,000	113,000
Early & Mid oranges including Ambersweet	7,595,000	5,685,000	8,114,000
All grapefruit	704,000	623,000	887,000
Early tangerines	173,000	25,000	28,000
Honey tangerines	29,000	61,000	108,000
Tangelos	216,000	104,000	226,000
Temples	2,000	10,000	23,000

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