



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service  
1222 Woodward Street  
Orlando, Florida 32803  
407 / 648-6013

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>

# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending January 26, 2003

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January 27, 2003

**FLORIDA  
AGRICULTURE**



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Hard freezes and frosts dipped down the Peninsula during the week of January 19 through 25. Temperatures for the week averaged six to twelve degrees below normal in the major cities and set new daily record lows in several cities. Snow flurries occurred in a few east coast localities, such as Daytona Beach, caused by the freezing temperatures interacting with the warmer ocean. During the coldest mornings, temperatures fell into the teens at Crestview, Jacksonville, Marianna, Pensacola, Perry, and Tallahassee; into the twenties at Apalachicola, Brooksville, Cross City, Daytona Beach, Destin, Gainesville, Leesburg, Melbourne, Orlando, Panama City, Sanford, St. Petersburg, Tampa and Winter Haven; and into the thirties at Ft. Lauderdale, Ft. Myers, Ft. Pierce, Miami, Naples, Pembroke Pines, Pompano Beach, Punta Gorda, Sarasota, Bradenton, Vero Beach and West Palm Beach. Showers dropped mostly traces of rain over some Panhandle and Peninsula localities ahead of the cold. However, most localities recorded no measurable rain for the week.

**FIELD CROPS:** Drying conditions lowered soil moisture supplies which are rated short to mostly adequate. Very short moisture supplies are reported for the southeastern coast and a few localities in the northern Peninsula. Surplus moisture supplies are reported for the extreme northeastern corner. The continued cold temperatures and disease have lowered the yield prospects of some small grain acreage in the Panhandle. Some young sugarcane was damaged by the cold with growers currently assessing actual damages. Sugarcane harvesting continued in the Everglades region.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	1	1	0	2	1	0
Short	29	19	26	13	9	34
Adequate	69	75	74	84	85	66
Surplus	1	5	0	1	5	0

**VEGETABLES:** Producers provided freeze covers and irrigated some acreage as protection from the cold. However, the freezing and near freezing temperatures over the southern Peninsula caused varying damage to some crops, especially those with no cold protection. Future yield prospects are lowered with some acreage abandoned. Vegetables available include snap beans, cabbage, carrots, celery, cilantro, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, miscellaneous herbs, parsley, peppers, radishes, squash, tomatoes, and lighter supplies of strawberries.

**FLORICULTURE AND NURSERY:** Growers again provided cold temperature protection to ferns, potted foliage and other floriculture and nursery products with blankets, sprinklers and heaters. Some loss occurred with most plants to recover. Several producers harvested the Valentine's Day crop prior to the cold temperatures.

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** In the Panhandle, pasture condition is mostly poor. Small grain forage was hurt by freezing temperatures. In the north, pasture condition is very poor to fair due to extreme,

persistent cold, frost, and drought. Hay feeding is active and hay supplies are dwindling. Range and pasture in the central and southern counties are mostly in poor condition with grass growth limited by low temperatures. Statewide, the condition of cattle decreased due to poor pasture and harsh weather.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	10	0	0	0
Poor	45	30	10	5
Fair	35	20	50	35
Good	10	50	40	60
Excellent	0	0	0	0

**CITRUS:** The coldest Arctic weather of the fruit season invaded Florida's citrus belt Thursday and Friday nights. Temperatures below Interstate 4 generally were not low enough long enough to do much damage. There was a little icing of the fruit remaining to be harvested in the coldest spots. There was virtually no tree damage south of I-4. Generally, north of the Interstate temperatures varied considerably with some low readings in the mid to upper 20s. Most of the early and midseason fruit has been harvested in the coldest locations and there are very few Valencias located in the cold low lands. High winds prevented frost from forming on Thursday night which was the colder of the two nights. Harvesting crews rapidly moved into the cold locations over the weekend and sent most of that fruit to the processors. There was plenty of undamaged fruit being picked for the fresh fruit packers on Saturday and Sunday.

Caretakers were very busy during the first part of the week dirt-banking young trees as far south as Hardee and Highlands counties. Irrigation systems were prepared to run around the clock in many groves. Growers mowed, disced and chopped cover crops for good air drainage in their groves. Dead trees were pushed out and stacked for burning and grove heat. Fertilizers are being applied in most central and southern groves.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Jan 12	Jan 20	Jan 26
Navel oranges	166,000	130,000	121,000
Early & Mid oranges	8,220,000	8,331,000	6,468,000
Valencia oranges	1,000	2,000	10,000
All grapefruit	981,000	1,473,000	1,293,000
Early tangerines	8,000	3,000	2,000
Honey tangerines	147,000	122,000	101,000
Tangelos	275,000	217,000	142,000
Temples	44,000	66,000	88,000

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