



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

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



WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending February 2, 2003

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Cool, dry conditions persisted during the week of January 26 through February 1. Temperatures in the major cities averaged from one to three degrees below normal. Daytime highs were mostly in the 60s while most nighttime lows varied from the 30s to the 50s with most Panhandle and northern Peninsula localities recording at least one low in the 20s. Marianna recorded almost a quarter inch of rain for the week while Pensacola, Tallahassee, Jay, Quincy and West Palm Beach reported traces. Most other localities received no measurable rain for the week

FIELD CROPS: Dry, windy weather continues to lower soil moisture supplies which are rated short to adequate. Very short supplies are reported for the Panhandle and the southeastern coast. Producers in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula are beginning to prepare land for spring crop planting. Pine tree planting is active in northern areas. Sugarcane harvesting continues in the Everglades with very little cold damage noticed for the crop being cut. However, the recent cold damaged some foliage on new plantings and the ratoon crop with plants expected to recover.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	1	1	0	0	2	0
Short	54	29	44	35	13	43
Adequate	45	69	56	65	84	57
Surplus	0	1	0	0	1	0

VEGETABLES: Cool temperatures continued to slow crop development with the recent cold weather lowering the amount harvested of the more tender vegetables. Vegetables available include snap beans, cabbage, celery, cilantro, sweet corn, eggplant, miscellaneous herbs, parsley, peppers, radishes, squash, tomatoes, and lighter supplies of carrots, cucumbers, endive, escarole, lettuce and strawberries.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, unusually cold weather and drought continues to slow growth of small grain forage. Hay and protein supplementation is necessary to maintain cattle condition. Dusty and windy conditions, along with fluctuating temperatures, are causing respiratory problems in cattle. In the north, the pasture condition is very poor to poor due to cold, disease and low rainfall. In central Florida, the pasture is in poor to fair condition due to cold, frost and drought. In the south, the pasture condition is poor due to drought and cold. Statewide, cattle and calves are mostly in fair condition

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	15	10	0	0
Poor	45	45	10	10
Fair	40	35	70	50
Good	0	10	20	40
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: This was a very nice and mild week in Florida's citrus belt. Nighttime temperatures were in the upper 40s and lower 50s with 60s for daytime highs. Due to the freezing temperatures on January 24, many growers have been running their irrigation equipment to help minimize the effects of the low temperatures. New growth has started to pop out in the form of pin head bloom buds in a lot of the terminal leaf axles. Daytime temperatures in the 70s will help to develop this new growth, which is very normal following cold weather. Harvest of early and midseason oranges is slowing in some areas as supplies are running low. Valencia movement is increasing as more of these late season fruit pass minimum maturity tests. Processors are limiting deliveries from the field so that they may distribute the remaining supplies of the early and midseason fruit. Fresh fruit packing houses are slowing down due to the slow retail demand. Some varieties have glutted the markets following the cold weather. Fresh shipments of both white and colored grapefruit are active in virtually all of the east coast packing houses. Harvest of Temples is increasing for both fresh and processing.

Caretakers are very busy cutting cover crops for fire protection and prior to harvesting. Dead trees are being removed and burned when permits can be obtained. Hedging and topping continues in harvested groves in all areas. Growers are fertilizing to help promote new growth and bloom buds.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Jan 20	Jan 26	Feb 2
Navel oranges	130,000	121,000	100,000
Early & Mid oranges	8,331,000	6,458,000	7,086,000
Valencia oranges	2,000	10,000	65,000
All grapefruit	1,473,000	1,293,000	1,357,000
Early tangerines	3,000	2,000	6,000
Honey tangerines	122,000	101,000	125,000
Tangelos	217,000	142,000	87,000
Temples	66,000	88,000	125,000

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