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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending May 18, 2003

Released 4:00 P.M.

May 19, 2003

WEATHER SUMMARY: Warm and mostly dry weather continued during the week of May 11 through 17. Temperatures averaged from two to five degrees above normal in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 80s and 90s while most nighttime lows were in the 60s and 70s. Jacksonville and Tallahassee recorded at least one low in the 50s. Sporadic showers dropped from a quarter to three-quarters of an inch of rain over the major cities. Several localities recorded no measurable rain for the week. The clash of the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico sea breezes brought thunderstorms and significant rains to some coastal and many inland areas on Sunday, May 18.

FIELD CROPS: Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies continued to dry out in most localities with no areas reporting any surplus supplies. Most soil moisture is short to adequate in all areas with very short supplies reported in scattered areas of both the Panhandle and the Peninsula. Some peanut producers are waiting for significant rains before planting dryland acreage. Peanut planting is 50 percent finished compared with 61 percent done by this date last year, and the five-year average progress of 57 percent done. Peanut and cotton emergence is good in most Panhandle and northern Peninsula areas. Irrigated tobacco is in mostly good to excellent condition. Hay baling is active, especially in some Panhandle and northern Peninsula counties.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
Percent						
Very short	25	10	45	15	1	23
Short	35	50	44	35	39	66
Adequate	40	40	11	50	60	11
Surplus	0	0	0	0	0	0

VEGETABLES: Producers continued picking for the Memorial Day market. Vegetables available include cantaloupes, cucumbers, eggplant, okra, peppers, potatoes, sweet corn, tomatoes, and watermelons. Harvesting is declining seasonally for snap beans, cabbage, celery, radishes and squash with lighter volume available.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: The condition of range and pasture decreased throughout the State due to drought. State-wide, the condition of the cattle ranges from fair to excellent, but most are in good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
Percent				
Very poor	5	0	0	0
Poor	15	5	0	5
Fair	40	40	25	15
Good	35	50	70	75
Excellent	5	5	5	5

CITRUS: Much needed rains fell in scattered areas throughout the citrus belt on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday nights. Some areas got rain on all days and others received thunderstorms on Friday which was the more general of the two rain events. New crop fruit is making good progress in well-cared-for groves. Some of the older sick trees and a few of the resets on the more sandy soils have been showing signs of wilting due to the hot dry weather of the past several weeks. The spring flush of new growth has generally hardened up and turned darker green. The next fresh growth will come with the summer rains. Harvest of Valencia oranges continues to be active in all areas as picking crews are rapidly trying to wind up this fruit season. Grapefruit harvest is all but over for this season as most east coast packing houses have closed. Several processors are trying to finish for the season. Some of those juice plants are running a limited schedule as supplies are limited. Honey tangerine harvest is just about complete for this season.

Caretakers are very busy mowing, chopping and discing cover crops to help protect their groves from fires. Hedging and topping continue in harvested groves. Dead trees are being cut out, pushed and burned where permits are available. Early summer sprays and fertilizations are underway in most groves. Resets are going into older groves where there is sufficient irrigation.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	May 4	May 11	May 18
Valencia oranges	6,994,000	7,467,000	5,655,000
All grapefruit	341,000	180,000	82,000
Honey tangerines	76,000	54,000	21,000

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