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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending September 7, 2003

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Tropical systems brought over five inches of rain to some localities, especially in the northern and central Peninsula, during the week of August 31 through September 6. However, some areas, mainly in the Panhandle, enjoyed some drying weather with only a quarter to a half inch of rain accumulating. Tropical Storm Henri, which passed over the central Peninsula, from Tampa to Daytona Beach, on Saturday, September 7, was the major source of rain for the week. Temperatures for the week averaged from normal to one degree below in the major cities. Daytime highs remained in the 80s and 90s while nighttime lows were mostly in the 70s.

FIELD CROPS: Peanuts are mostly in fair to good condition with some wetter acreage rated very poor to poor and some drier fields remaining in excellent condition. Peanut harvesting is active in Holmes, Santa Rosa, Jackson and Washington counties. Some Madison County peanuts are infested by white mold with vines holding up well despite the infestation. Growers dug a few Jackson County peanut fields in which leaf losses were severe due to heavy leafspot pressure. However, most Jackson County fields have an excellent crop set and the maturing of pods is on schedule. Corn harvesting is over three-fourths done in Washington County with drier conditions allowing most fieldwork to return to normal. Cotton defoliation started in Santa Rosa County with most acreage to be defoliated in about three weeks. Cotton bolls are beginning to open in Holmes County with defoliation to start soon. Some Jackson County cotton bolls are opening, but the majority of the acreage is just beginning to show blooms near the top of the plant. The last hay cuttings are taking place in Columbia County. No shortage of hay is expected, but the quality of hay will be down due to wet weather. Topsoil and subsoil moisture is mostly adequate to surplus. A few localities in the extreme southeast and northern Peninsula report short to very short moisture supplies.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	1	1	1	0	0	2
Short	4	4	15	2	2	16
Adequate	40	40	51	43	48	54
Surplus	55	55	33	55	50	28

VEGETABLES: Hasting's producers continue to plow cover crops and plant winter crop cabbage. The planting of fall crops continues in the central and southern Peninsula. Tomatoes in the

Quincy area are in mostly good condition with recent rains reducing yield prospects by increasing bloom and fruit drop. Tomato harvesting around Quincy is expected to begin in late September.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, pasture quality is lower due to excessive rainfall and soil moisture. Hay making is still limited due to constant rains but some hay has been put up in good condition. Grasshopper and spittlebug damage is high in some locations. In the northern counties, the last hay cutting is taking place. There is some spittle bug damage in Bermuda grass. In the central area, forage quality has not recovered from recent flooding, and some pasture in low areas is still flooded. In the southwest, pasture in low areas is in poor condition due to flooding. Statewide, cattle condition is fair to excellent, with most cattle in good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	5	10	0	0
Fair	25	15	20	10
Good	55	55	65	75
Excellent	15	20	15	15

CITRUS: Moderate, humid weather continued this week interrupted by the passage of Tropical Storm Henri on Friday and Saturday across the northern area of the citrus belt. Although the storm passed from west to east, the heaviest rainfall extended south from Tampa to below Ft Myers along the coast and inland from south of Lake Okeechobee northward. Heavy downpours up to six inches were reported in growing areas. Winds were light with no damage or fruit loss reported. Many low lying groves with heavy soils in the western and central areas continue to experience soggy ground. Growers are maintaining middles and lateral ditches to keep water moving away from tree roots. Summer spraying continues between rains with fresh fruit crops receiving more sprays than normal to keep insect populations from building up. Fruit growth is reported good and the majority of trees in sand hill locations are in excellent condition because of all the rainfall. Packing house crews are testing fruit for fresh shipments. Picking is expected to begin next week for limited shipments.

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