



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

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



WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending September 21, 2003

Released 4:00 P.M.

September 22, 2003

WEATHER SUMMARY: Drier weather continued during the week of September 14 through 20 when Hurricane Isabel drew moisture away as it traveled up the eastern coast and made landfall on the outer banks of North Carolina. Some outer bands of rain from Isabel fell in scattered areas with most localities escaping the effects of the storm. Most stations recorded less than a half inch of rain for the week with a few localities reporting no measurable rain falling. Tampa, Miami, Homestead and Tallahassee recorded from about one to over two inches of rain. Temperatures in the major cities averaged one degree above normal to two degrees below. Daytime highs were mostly in the 80s with nearly all localities reporting at least one high in the 90s. Nighttime lows were in the 60s and 70s with several localities in the northern Peninsula and eastern Panhandle reporting at least one low in the 50s.

VEGETABLES: Hastings growers continue to plow cover crops, prepare land for broccoli planting, and transplant cabbage. Okra harvesting remains active in Dade County. Picking of tomatoes around Quincy is expected to begin over the next seven to fourteen days with drier, cooler weather aiding fruit development.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and north, most pasture is in good condition, but drought stress is showing on some bahia and other pastures. However, dryer conditions are decreasing armyworm damage. Pasture in the central and southern counties is mostly in good condition, but some locations have pastures with standing water. Statewide, the condition of cattle is good.

FIELD CROPS: The drier conditions are allowing hay baling to gain momentum and are slowing infestations of armyworms. Peanut digging is 30 percent complete compared with 18 percent dug by this date last year and the five-year average progress of 27 percent harvested. Peanut growers reported that the crop is in fair to mostly good condition with a significantly smaller acreage rated excellent and a very small acreage rated very poor to poor. The dry weather continues to stress peanut plants. Most cotton growers are preparing for harvesting with picking of the oldest acreage getting underway. Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are decreasing with supplies rated short to mostly adequate. A few localities in the southern Peninsula reported surplus soil moisture while soil moisture is rated very short for a small area in the southeastern Peninsula.

| Condition | Range | | Cattle | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | This week | Last week | This week | Last week |
| | Percent | | | |
| Very poor | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Poor | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Fair | 15 | 20 | 10 | 15 |
| Good | 70 | 60 | 85 | 75 |
| Excellent | 9 | 15 | 5 | 10 |

| Moisture Rating | Topsoil | | | Subsoil | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | This week | Last week | Last year | This week | Last week | Last Year |
| | Percent | | | | | |
| Very short | 1 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Short | 14 | 9 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Adequate | 60 | 60 | 63 | 65 | 60 | 59 |
| Surplus | 25 | 30 | 27 | 25 | 30 | 26 |

CITRUS: Most of this week was warm, dry, and humid with scattered showers in several areas. Temperatures were in the upper 80s and lower 90s in most of the citrus growing counties. New growth is slowing on the older trees while many younger trees still have lush new foliage. Harvest is underway with Navels, Fallglo tangerines, some white and colored grapefruit, and a few Ambersweets in the packinghouses.

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