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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending November 30, 2003

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Mostly mild conditions during the first half of the week of November 23 through 29 gave way to cold temperatures during the last half with many northern and central Peninsula, and Panhandle localities recording at least one low in the 30s. Heavy frosts occurred in the colder areas. Many Panhandle areas reported lows in the 20s on Sunday, November 30 accompanied by hard freezes. Temperatures for the week averaged from three degrees below normal to two degrees above in the major cities. Daytime highs averaged in the 60s, 70s and 80s. Nighttime lows averaged in the 40s, 50s and 60s. Rainfall ranged from none in several central and southern Peninsula areas to over one and a half inches in Jay. Most Panhandle and Big Bend localities received from a half inch to one and a half inches of rain during the week. Elsewhere, most reports showed no rain or only traces falling.

growing. Dry conditions in some central and southern areas are slowing grass growth.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
Percent				
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	5	5	0	5
Fair	35	25	25	15
Good	55	65	70	70
Excellent	5	5	5	10

FIELD CROPS: Sugarcane harvesting continues in the Everglades region. Rainfall over the Panhandle delayed most cotton picking with most acreage already harvested. Rainfall over the Panhandle and Big Bend areas replenished most soil moisture. Mostly dry conditions elsewhere lowered topsoil moisture supplies.

CITRUS: Very limited rainfall occurred in the citrus producing areas as the first strong cold front of the winter moved through the State late in the week. Only trace amounts occurred in most areas with one station reporting a quarter of an inch rain for the week. Temperatures dipped into the high 30s and low to mid 40s as far south as Immokalee on two mornings. Most growers continue to irrigate in the sand hill groves to maintain surface moisture levels. Warmer temperatures prevailed early in the week and then turned colder as the front passed through the State. Cover crop control ahead of harvest and dead tree removal and replacement continues. Fruit growth is reported good and the majority of trees are in excellent condition. Growers and packers report good natural color and excellent external appearance on early tangerines, early oranges, and grapefruit. Most fresh fruit packing houses are open. Varieties being packed include early oranges (Navels, and Hamlins), white and colored grapefruit, Sunburst tangerines, and Orlando tangelos. All processing plants are reported open and receiving eliminations and field run fruit. As more harvesting crews arrive, volume for processing is expected to increase. Some plants closed on Thanksgiving Day while others reduced shifts.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
Percent						
Very short	1	1	4	1	1	9
Short	24	19	18	14	19	24
Adequate	74	79	72	84	79	65
Surplus	1	1	6	1	1	2

VEGETABLES: Freezing temperatures brought most Panhandle and northern Peninsula harvesting to an end. Cooler, drier weather in central and southern Peninsula localities permitted planting and picking to remain on schedule. Most growers paused field work for the Thanksgiving observance. Irrigation is active in drier areas of the central and southern Peninsula. Vegetables available include snap beans, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, okra, peppers, squash, tomatoes and a very light volume of watermelons.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Nov 16	Nov 23	Nov 30
Navel oranges	189,000	264,000	224,000
Early and Mid oranges	4,338,000	5,340,000	5,917,000
Grapefruit	438,000	893,000	709,000
Tangerines	315,000	308,000	157,000
Tangelos	25,000	35,000	49,000

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Cattle condition is rated fair to mostly good. Pasture condition is rated fair to mostly good. Cold temperatures in the Panhandle and northern areas are deteriorating some grazing with most small grain pastures still

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