



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

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



WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending December 14, 2003

Released 4:00 P.M.

December 15, 2003

WEATHER SUMMARY: Cool, dry conditions continued during most of the week of December 7 through 13, except for heavy rains over the Panhandle at the end of the week. Temperatures for the week averaged from four degrees below normal to six degrees above in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 60s and 70s. Nighttime lows were in the 30s, 40s and 50s. Several Panhandle and northern Peninsula localities recorded at least one low in the 20s. Rainfall for the week totaled from none in most Peninsula areas to a little over three inches in Jay. Pensacola reported two inches falling during the week. The passage of a cold front over the Peninsula on Sunday, December 14 brought from about one-third to over three inches of rain to most areas.

FIELD CROPS: Panhandle growers are finishing the cotton harvest with most acreage already picked. Sugarcane harvesting continues in the Everglades area. Rainfall over many Panhandle areas improved soil moisture with most supplies rated adequate. Some Big Bend and a few localities of the central and southern Peninsula reported very short to short moisture supplies. Elsewhere, soil moisture is rated mostly adequate.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	10	10	0	5	8	1
Short	15	20	10	15	17	7
Adequate	74	69	60	79	74	58
Surplus	1	1	30	1	1	34

VEGETABLES: Northern growers are preparing land for spring crop watermelons. Harvesting in the central and southern Peninsula is very active as producers satisfy the holiday demands. Strawberry picking in the Plant City-Dover area is gaining momentum. The cutting of cabbage and other leafy crops is in full swing around Hastings. Cole crops in Madison County are in good condition. Harvesting of fall crop okra is nearing the end. Other vegetables available include snap beans, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, peppers, radishes, squash and tomatoes. Heavy rains in some central and southern Peninsula localities on Sunday, December 14 lowered the quality of some of the more tender crops.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Warm season, permanent pasture production in most of the northern half of the State has ended due

to heavy frost. Cool season forages are almost ready for cattle to graze. Winter pasture planting is nearly complete, with rain needed. However, some scattered showers are causing haying delay. Pastures not yet touched by heavy frost still retain some forage for cattle and horses. Statewide, the condition of the cattle is mostly good.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	5	2	0	0
Poor	5	8	5	5
Fair	30	35	15	30
Good	60	50	75	60
Excellent	0	5	5	5

CITRUS: Rainfall this week occurred in all citrus areas in conjunction with a cold front that moved through the State late in the week. Most reporting stations recorded over one inch while some coastal areas recorded over three. Temperatures were near normal levels for this time of year with highs in the 60s and lows in the mid 40s on several mornings. Most growers have reduced irrigation to force trees into a semi-dormant condition. Cover crop control ahead of harvest and dead tree removal and replacement continue. 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 and packing for fund raising groups. Varieties being packed include early and midseason oranges (Navels, Hamlins, and Pineapple), 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 increasing.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14
Navel oranges	290,000	483,000	411,000
Early and Mid oranges	6,702,000	7,527,000	8,596,000
Grapefruit	639,000	758,000	844,000
Tangerines	231,000	291,000	306,000
Tangelos	59,000	124,000	109,000

To receive this report via e-mail, log onto <http://www.usda.gov/nass/ss0-rpts.htm> Then click on "Subscribe" (upper right part of screen), then select "Florida Crop-Weather", enter your name and your e-mail address, then click on "Subscribe". The report will be sent automatically to your e-mail address each week.

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