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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending December 28, 2003

Released 4:00 P.M.

December 29, 2003

WEATHER SUMMARY: Cool and mostly dry conditions during the week of December 21 through December 27 allowed field work to progress normally. Temperatures averaged two to seven degrees below normal in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 60s and 70s with some southern Peninsula localities recording at least one high in the 80s. Nighttime lows ranged from the 20s to the 50s. Frost occurred in lowland areas of the Panhandle and northern and central Peninsula. Most rainfall totaled from none in several localities to about a third inch. West Palm Beach reported over two inches of rain for the week.

FIELD CROPS: Sugarcane harvesting continues in the Everglades area. Most small grains in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula escaped severe damage from the recent freezing temperatures. A Barley Yellow Dwarf virus infestation was observed in Jefferson County. Mostly dry weather depleted surplus supplies of soil moisture with most areas becoming more dry. Short to adequate soil moisture supplies were reported for some northern Peninsula and a few southern Peninsula localities. Very short to short moisture exists along the southeastern coast. Most Peninsula and Panhandle localities report adequate soil moisture. Seminole County contains a few small areas with surplus soil moisture.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	1	1	0	5	1	0
Short	19	19	5	15	19	6
Adequate	79	75	59	79	79	68
Surplus	1	5	36	1	1	26

VEGETABLES: Mostly clear conditions permitted planting and harvesting to stay on schedule with most producers pausing for the holiday observance during the last part of the week. Recent cool temperatures helped strawberry development. Harvesting is currently very active to meet the New Year's holiday demand. Vegetables and noncitrus fruit available include snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, peppers, radishes, squash, strawberries and tomatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Pasture condition is mostly fair and down slightly from the previous week. Cool temperatures and cloudy, short days are limiting cool season forage growth.

Hay feeding is active in the north and central areas. Statewide, the condition of cattle is mostly good.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	5	5	0	0
Poor	10	5	5	5
Fair	50	35	30	25
Good	35	55	60	70
Excellent	0	0	5	0

CITRUS: Rainfall over the citrus region was widely scattered with some areas receiving very little and others receiving moderate amounts. Most reporting stations recorded under one inch. The east coast had light rainfall on several days. Temperatures in the citrus areas were at normal levels for this time of year with highs in the 70s and lows in the 40s. Most growers reduced irrigation to force trees into a semi-dormant condition. After several weeks of cold weather, trees are hardy and should withstand any later cold weather. Growers and packers report good natural color and excellent external appearance on tangerines, early oranges, and grapefruit. Most fresh fruit packing houses reduced shipments during the holiday week. Varieties being packed include early and midseason oranges (Navels, Hamlins, and Pineapple), white and colored grapefruit, Sunburst and Honey tangerines, tangelos, and Temples. After shutting down for one day this week, all processing plants reopened to receive fruit. With the exception of last week, volume for processing is reaching peak levels.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28
Navel oranges	469,000	189,000	61,000
Early and Mid oranges	8,442,000	8,280,000	5,111,000
Grapefruit	897,000	781,000	567,000
Early tangerines	311,000	276,000	137,000
Honey tangerines	1,000	17,000	26,000
Tangelos	115,000	66,000	22,000
Temples	0	6,000	4,000

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