



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

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



WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending January 25, 2004

Released 4:00 P.M.

January 26, 2004

WEATHER SUMMARY: Rainfall at the beginning of the week of January 18 through 24 amounted to nearly two inches in some central and southern Peninsula localities. Only traces fell in most western Panhandle areas. Mostly dry conditions during the rest of the week allowed field work to progress normally. Temperatures during the week averaged two to four degrees below normal in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 60s and 70s with Homestead, Miami and West Palm Beach recording at least one high in the 80s. Nighttime lows were in the 30s, 40s and 50s with several Panhandle and northern Peninsula areas reporting at least one low in the 20s.

FIELD CROPS: Tobacco transplant beds are progressing well in Columbia County with growers starting field preparations for other row crop planting. Sugarcane harvesting continues in the Everglades area. Significant rains early in the week replenished some soil moisture supplies. Soil moisture is rated short to mostly adequate with very short supplies reported for some areas of Columbia, Baker and Broward counties.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	Percent					
Very short	5	10	1	5	8	2
Short	30	25	28	30	22	12
Adequate	65	65	69	65	70	84
Surplus	0	0	2	0	0	2

VEGETABLES: Tomato growers are starting to prepare land for spring crop planting around Quincy. Sweet corn producers in Washington County are also preparing spring crop land. Columbia County growers replanted greens for spring crop harvesting. Cabbage harvesting is finished in Columbia County. The rain at the beginning of the week slowed strawberry harvesting around Plant City and Dover with the drier conditions during the rest of the week speeding picking activities. Recent cold weather slowed some cabbage cutting in the northern Peninsula. Vegetables being harvested include snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, peppers, radishes, squash and tomatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and north, the pasture is poor to fair due to cool temperatures and dry soil conditions. The small grain winter forage is slow to grow. Cattle are being fed hay and supplements. In the central and southern Peninsula, recent rain improved the growing conditions. Statewide, cattle condition is mostly good.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	Percent			
Very poor	5	10	0	1
Poor	15	20	10	9
Fair	40	50	35	45
Good	40	20	55	45
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: Nearly ideal winter weather prevailed during the week with cool nights and moderately cool days. Early in the week, a cold front passed slowly through the State bringing varying amounts of rainfall to almost all citrus areas. Temperatures were in the mid to low 30s in some locations with daytime highs in the 60s and 70s. Rainfall amounted to three quarters of an inch in some locations with most receiving over one-half inch. Some growers returned to irrigation to maintain tree condition and encourage continued fruit growth. With the colder weather, trees are hardy and should withstand any later cold weather. Some growers are starting to fertilize groves in anticipation of new growth emerging in the spring. Most fresh fruit packinghouses are packing all available varieties with emphasis on the export of grapefruit increasing. Varieties being packed include oranges (Navels, Hamlins, Pineapple, and Valencia), white and colored grapefruit, Sunburst and Honey tangerines, tangelos, and Temples. Processing plants are open to receive and process fruit on a continuous basis with volumes at peak levels.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25
Navel oranges	47,000	43,000	39,000
Early and Mid oranges	9,533,000	7,651,000	8,465,000
Valencia oranges	3,000	15,000	19,000
Grapefruit	996,000	1,360,000	1,357,000
Early tangerines	59,000	27,000	7,000
Honey tangerines	149,000	152,000	109,000
Tangelos	46,000	46,000	33,000
Temples	51,000	54,000	69,000

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