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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending February 29, 2004

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FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE



WEATHER SUMMARY: Significant rains occurred early to mid-week over nearly all localities during the week of February 22 through 28. Rainfall totaled from about an inch at Ft. Lauderdale to nearly five inches in Brooksville. Most areas received two to three inches. Temperatures for the week in the major cities averaged from six degrees below normal at Jacksonville and Tallahassee to one degree above at West Palm Beach. Daytime highs were in the 50s, 60s and 70s with several central and southern Peninsula localities recording at least one high in the 80s. Nighttime lows were in the 40s, 50s and 60s with several Panhandle and northern and central Peninsula localities reporting at least one low in the 30s.

FIELD CROPS: Soggy soils slowed some land preparation for peanut and corn planting in northern Peninsula and Panhandle areas. The wet conditions also hindered some sugarcane harvesting in the Everglades with most on schedule. Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are adequate to surplus in most areas. Wakulla, Columbia, Lake and Seminole counties reported a few spots of short soil moisture.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	0	1	9	0	1	6
Short	2	14	34	3	14	34
Adequate	68	81	48	72	82	56
Surplus	30	4	9	25	3	4

VEGETABLES: Rains delayed some planting and harvesting in most areas. Potato digging continues in southern Peninsula localities. Strawberry growers are supplying fruit to the festival at Plant City which runs through March 7. Other vegetables available include snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, peppers, radishes, squash, and tomatoes. Only very light amounts of cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole and lettuce are available.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, the condition of cattle varies from fair to good. Pasture condition is poor at some locations due to flooding. In the northern area, the condition of cattle is good and pasture is fair to good with most in fair condition. Cool season forage is fair due to cold weather and wet ground in low places. In the central counties, grasses are growing and greening up. Pasture is mostly fair. In the southern area, most of the cattle are in good condition, and the condition of

pasture is mostly fair. Statewide, cattle condition is poor to excellent with most in good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	0	4	0	0
Poor	15	10	10	5
Fair	60	40	35	25
Good	25	45	50	70
Excellent	0	1	5	0

CITRUS: This week's weather was dominated by a slow moving cold front that moved through the State mid-week, bringing needed rainfall and colder temperatures. Most coastal and some upper interior stations reported over 2.5 inches of rain with all other areas reporting over 2 inches from the three day event. Temperatures dropped to the mid-40s following the front with cloudy, windy conditions extending into the weekend. Growers are reporting feathery new growth and abundant bloom buds on oranges and grapefruit. Because of the colder weather this week and last, full open bloom is several weeks away. Cultural practices in anticipation of bloom are beginning including fertilizations and hedging following harvest. Most fresh fruit packinghouses are packing all available varieties with emphasis on export of grapefruit. Varieties being packed include oranges (primarily Valencia), white and colored grapefruit, Honey tangerines, and Temples. Processing plants are receiving and processing fruit on a continuous basis with weekly volumes of early-mid oranges declining as grapefruit amounts increase.

Crop	Estimated boxes harvested week ended		
	Feb 15	Feb 22	Feb 29
Navel oranges	10,000	2,000	1,000
Early and Mid oranges	6,309,000	5,089,000	3,641,000
Valencia oranges	244,000	889,000	1,404,000
Grapefruit	1,960,000	2,207,000	1,939,000
Early tangerines	2,000	4,000	0
Honey tangerines	149,000	127,000	169,000
Tangelos	35,000	11,000	13,000
Temples	129,000	124,000	102,000

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