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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending April 11, 2004

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FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE



WEATHER SUMMARY: Scattered rains missed many areas during the week of April 4 through 10. Rain totaled about an inch in Pensacola and MacClenny. Most localities receiving rain during the period reported a quarter to a half inch falling. Temperatures for the week averaged from normal to two degrees below in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s with Palmdale and West Palm Beach recording at least one high in the 90s. Nighttime lows remained in the 40s, 50s and 60s with some northern Peninsula and Panhandle localities reporting at least one low in the 30s. However, Jay, in the extreme western Panhandle, recorded no lows below 50 during the week. Significant storms on Sunday, April 11 mostly crossed over the central Peninsula and a few southern Peninsula areas, but broadened to include both the northern and southern Peninsula on Monday, April 12. The thundershowers brought from traces to over two and a half inches of precipitation on Sunday, April 11 to many Peninsula localities with the Sunday storms missing most Panhandle and many northern Peninsula areas.

FIELD CROPS: Cotton planting started in Jackson County with low soil temperatures and hard soils causing most Panhandle and northern Peninsula producers to wait on warmer, wetter conditions. Spring crop planting is on schedule in Gadsden County with no known delays. Corn planting and land preparations for cotton and peanut planting is nearly finished in Washington County. Pecans are budding out in Jefferson County. Rain near mid-week in Baker County boosted tobacco growth. Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are short to adequate in the Panhandle, very short to short in the northern Peninsula and short to mostly adequate in the central and southern Peninsula. Washington, Jackson, Madison, Taylor, Baker Union, Marion, Volusia, Brevard, St. Lucie, Charlotte, Broward and Dade counties reported some areas with very short soil moisture. Okeechobee County reported a few localities with surplus soil moisture.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	15	6	1	10	2	0
Short	40	46	7	45	40	3
Adequate	44	47	81	45	57	92
Surplus	1	1	11	0	1	5

VEGETABLES: Strong winds in Madison County are tossing some irrigated vegetable plants about. Central and northern Peninsula producers are picking blueberries with very light supplies available. Harvesting of very light amounts of okra is underway in Dade County, and a few southern Peninsula producers are picking very small quantities of watermelons. Strawberry harvesting is nearly finished in the Plant City area. Other vegetables available include snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, potatoes,

radishes, squash, and tomatoes. Very light supplies of endive, escarole and lettuce also remain available as harvesting nears the end.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Permanent pastures are starting to green in localities receiving recent rains. However, most Panhandle and northern Peninsula pastures need rain. Most surface ponds in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula are low. Earlier rains in Madison County boosted the growth of winter grazing. Most pastures deteriorated due to the continued dry weather with most northern Peninsula grazing rated poor to fair. Most pasture in the Panhandle and in the central and southern Peninsula is rated fair to good. Cattle condition is mostly fair, Statewide.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	5	5	0	0
Poor	15	10	15	5
Fair	60	50	50	50
Good	20	30	35	40
Excellent	0	5	0	5

CITRUS: Variable weather prevailed this week in the citrus belt with daytime high temperatures reaching into the high 80's and lows into the mid and upper 40's on several mornings. Virtually no rainfall was recorded until the end of the week when a strong front passed through the state. Less than a half inch was recorded by the end of the week. Growers are irrigating frequently to maintain upper soil moisture levels as trees show abundant new growth. Bloom is complete in all areas. Cultural practices are continuing including fertilizations, hedging following harvest, and post bloom spray applications. Most fresh fruit packinghouses are packing all available varieties including Valencia oranges, white and colored grapefruit, and Honey tangerines. Processing plants are receiving and processing fruit with weekly volumes of grapefruit beginning to decline and Valencia orange amounts increasing.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED WEEK ENDED

Crop	Mar 28	Apr 4	Apr 11
Navel oranges	4,000	2,000	3,000
Early and Mid oranges	21,000	6,000	3,000
Valencia oranges	8,435,000	8,652,000	8,093,000
Grapefruit	2,026,000	1,844,000	1,501,000
Honey tangerines	188,000	187,000	164,000
Temples	55,000	63,000	30,000

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