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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending May 2, 2004

Released 4:00 P.M.

May 3, 2004

WEATHER SUMMARY: Scattered showers replenished soil moisture in most localities especially at the end of the week of April 30 through May 1. Rainfall ranged from less than a tenth inch at Bronson to about five and a half inches at Ona and Umatilla. Some Panhandle areas received about three and a half inches while most Peninsula localities reported from a half inch to three and a half inches for the week. Temperatures in the major cities averaged from two degrees below normal at Pensacola to three degrees above at Daytona Beach and West Palm Beach. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s while nighttime lows were in the 40s, 50s, 60s and 70s. Several central and southern Peninsula localities reported at least one high in the 90s. Scattered storms continued to drop ample rain over some localities on Sunday and Monday, May 2 and 3.

FIELD CROPS: Most crops escaped flood damage except for a few spots in low lying areas. Some growers stopped planting cotton prior to the rains because soils were too dry. Peanut planting is 15 percent finished compared with 8 percent planted last year and the five-year average progress of seventeen percent done by May 1. Most peanut producers delayed planting due to a lack of moisture and cool soil temperature with activity expected to get underway as soon as soils dry. Most tobacco growers have finished transplanting in Madison County. Most soil moisture supplies in the Panhandle are rated very short to short with Leon, Wakulla, Jefferson, Madison and Jackson counties reporting a few spots of adequate moisture. Jackson County also reported a few localities with surplus moisture. Most northern Peninsula soil moisture is very short to short with Baker, Madison, Nassau, Duval, Alachua, Marion and St. John's counties reporting a few localities with adequate moisture. Most central and southern Peninsula soil moisture supplies are short to adequate with St. Lucie County reporting very short soil moisture, Broward County reporting some areas with very short supplies, and Seminole and Dade counties reporting some localities with surplus supplies.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
<i>Percent</i>						
Very short	15	25	4	15	15	1
Short	45	45	33	50	40	29
Adequate	39	30	51	34	45	59
Surplus	1	0	12	1	0	11

VEGETABLES: Strong winds accompanying storms tossed vegetables with some yield prospects lowered. Producers in some parts of the Hastings area and central Peninsula are delaying potato digging until fields dry from the heavy rains. Other vegetables and non-citrus fruit available include snap beans, blueberries, cabbage, cantaloupes, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, okra, peppers, radishes, squash, tomatoes and very light supplies of watermelons.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Pasture condition in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula varies from very poor to good. Pasture was suffering from drought and cool conditions. However, since this past week's good rains, pastures are now greening up. In the central area, pasture condition is mostly fair. Rain late in the week promised improved pasture for next week. In the southwest, pasture condition is mostly fair. Some low lying pasture is temporarily flooded by heavy rain. Statewide, the condition of cattle varies from very poor to good, with most in fair condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
<i>Percent</i>				
Very poor	5	5	5	1
Poor	20	25	5	3
Fair	65	50	60	55
Good	10	20	30	40
Excellent	0	0	0	1

CITRUS: Typical spring weather continued this week in the citrus belt with daytime high temperatures reaching into the mid and upper 80s and lows into the 60s. Growers welcomed rainfall from a low pressure system and several fronts that moved through the state. With all stations reporting some rainfall, most occurred in interior areas with coastal stations receiving less. Over five inches was reported in some areas with most areas receiving a minimum of one-half inch. 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, decreasing amounts of colored grapefruit, and Honey tangerines. Processing plants are receiving and processing fruit with weekly volumes of grapefruit declining. Valencia orange harvest is at peak levels, near eight million boxes weekly.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED WEEK ENDED			
Crop	Apr 18	Apr 25	May 2
Navel oranges	2,000	1,000	3,000
Early and Mid oranges	1,000	0	0
Valencia oranges	8,184,000	8,441,000	8,518,000
Grapefruit	1,138,000	1,220,000	835,000
Honey tangerines	145,000	114,000	65,000
Temples	22,000	21,000	5,000

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