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# WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending October 24, 2004

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**FLORIDA  
AGRICULTURE**



**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Scattered rains covered many localities throughout the State during the week of October 18 through 24 with totals ranging from a tenth inch in Daytona Beach to nearly three inches in Homestead. However, a few areas received less than a tenth inch of rain, such as Balm, Bradenton, Jacksonville, Lake Alfred, MacClenny, Okahumpka, Ona, Pensacola, Putnam Hall and Tampa. Temperatures in the major cities averaged from normal in West Palm Beach to eight degrees above normal in Pensacola. Most daytime highs were in the 80s while nighttime lows were in the 50s, 60s and 70s.

**FIELD CROPS:** Rainfall over some Panhandle and southern Peninsula localities improved soil moisture, while in other areas the soil moisture supplies dried. The few localities getting rain in the Panhandle and southern Peninsula reported surplus moisture levels while scattered areas in the northern and central Peninsula and in the Panhandle reported short to adequate supplies. Very short soil moisture was reported for spots in the southeastern Peninsula. In Taylor County, hay making was active as well as in other areas as weather permitted. Rains delayed cotton and peanut harvesting in Washington County around mid-week; however, by the end of the week harvesting resumed. Nearly 35 percent of cotton picking was completed in Santa Rosa. Peanut digging progress reached 91 percent finished. Last year by this date, 94 percent of peanuts were dug with the five-year average at 92 percent completed.

### PERCENTAGE OF PEANUTS HARVESTED TO DATE

This year	91%
Last year	94%
5 - year average	92%

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	1	1	4	0	1	4
Short	11	9	29	3	9	27
Adequate	55	70	65	64	70	63
Surplus	33	20	2	33	20	6

**VEGETABLES:** Disease is affecting cucurbits in Dade County. Cabbage and broccoli planting remained active in the Hastings region with a very limited acreage of potatoes already planted. Most potato producers around Hastings plan to start planting in late December and early January. Panhandle producers, around Quincy and Chipley, continued to pick tomatoes with a strong demand and light supplies driving prices to record high levels. Producers continued to pick watermelons with very light supplies available. Other vegetables available include okra,

sweet corn and pickles. Harvesting of snap beans, eggplant, peppers and squash is getting underway with very light supplies available.

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** The condition of range and pasture is mostly good in all but the central areas. In the Panhandle, north and Big Bend areas, pasture grass growth has slowed down due to cooler night temperatures. Haying was active and the planting of winter grazing continued. Pasture and winter grazing in some locations could stand a little rain. In the central areas, pasture condition is mostly poor as some pastures are still flooded and cattle condition is mostly fair. Statewide, the condition of the cattle is mostly good.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	0	5	0	0
Poor	20	15	0	5
Fair	25	35	30	30
Good	50	40	60	60
Excellent	5	5	10	5

**CITRUS:** Light rainfall occurred across the citrus areas, mostly towards the beginning of the week, with only northern and central stations receiving more than an inch for the entire reporting period. The coastal areas were dryer, with the east coast reporting less than a half-inch, and the west coast reporting less than a tenth of an inch for the week. Warm temperatures were predominant throughout the week, with cooler temperatures coming through towards the end of the week, dropping to the low 60s by Sunday in all areas. Groves are beginning to dry out significantly due to the small amounts of rain and mild weather over the past few weeks. Moderate temperatures helped encourage color break in early and mid oranges as well as grapefruit. About half of the fresh fruit packing houses are now open with only about three processing plants running. Varieties being packed include early oranges (Navels, Ambersweet, and Hamlins), white and colored grapefruit, and Fallglo tangerines.

### ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED WEEK ENDED

Crop	Oct 10	Oct 17	Oct 24
	<i>In thousands of 1 3/5 bu. boxes</i>		
Early & Mid oranges	9	34	62
Navel oranges	3	27	58
Grapefruit	40	95	115
Tangerines	49	112	127

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