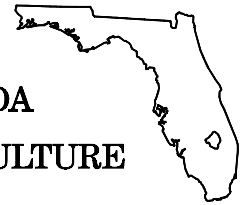




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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending January 23, 2005

Released 4:00 P.M.

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Dry, cool conditions prevailed during most of the week of January 17 through 23 with a cold front bringing near freezing temperatures to most areas on January 24. Most localities recorded less than two tenths inch of rain with several reporting no measurable rain falling. Temperatures in the major cities averaged two to six degrees below normal. Daytime highs were in the 60s and 70s while nighttime lows were in the 30s, 40s and 50s. Most lows on January 24 were in the 20s and 30s.

FIELD CROPS: Dry conditions allowed field work to progress on schedule. Sugarcane harvesting is active in the Everglades region with some growers concerned about the cold temperatures causing leaf damage to the new plantings. Pine tree planting is active in the Big Bend area. Topsoil moisture in most Panhandle localities is mostly adequate. Soil moisture throughout the Peninsula is short to mostly adequate with a few scattered pockets of surplus supplies. Hernando County reported very short to surplus moisture supplies. Very short moisture supplies were reported for spots of Broward County. In Volusia County some localities reported very short to adequate moisture supplies.

FERNS AND FOLIAGE: Cut fern producers in the Pierson area and potted foliage growers around Apopka ran overhead sprinklers and heaters to protect plants from freezing temperatures on January 24. Growers are currently assessing effects of the freeze but it appears most plants escaped damage.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	2	1	6	0	1	6
Short	37	39	29	29	24	24
Adequate	60	55	65	67	70	70
Surplus	1	5	0	4	5	0

VEGETABLES: Growers are currently assessing damage from the cold temperatures on January 24. Strawberry growers ran overhead sprinklers to form ice caps over plants and berries as protection from the freezing temperatures with most acreage escaping significant damage. Some vegetable producers covered plants with freeze cloths and also ran overhead sprinklers for cold protection. Some growers delayed harvest due to prices being below the cost of production. Vegetables and non-citrus fruit marketed by producers included snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, peppers, radishes, squash, strawberries and tomatoes with very light amounts of cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, Romaine lettuce and okra available.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: The western Panhandle pasture is in good condition following recent rains. In the eastern Panhandle and northern counties, cool season forages are in fair condition, as dry weather suppressed growth. Supplemental feeding of hay is active. In the central and southwest areas, pastures are poor to good with flooding in some locations and dry in others. Statewide, the condition of the cattle is mostly fair.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	5	0	0	0
Poor	25	30	10	5
Fair	45	50	55	60
Good	25	20	35	35
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: Primarily the week of January 17 to 23 was cool and dry, with highs reaching the mid 70s during the day. Two cold fronts, one on Tuesday and one on Sunday evening dropped temperatures to the high and mid 30s in all citrus producing areas across the state. The cooler weather should help trees remain hearty for the colder weather forecasted early next week. Rainfall recorded for the week was between zero and two tenths of an inch. Caretakers are continuing to mow, hedge and top, and are still removing hurricane damaged trees. Limited irrigation is taking place in areas where there has been a lack of rain. Late oranges are coloring in all areas, with early and mid oranges being picked for mostly processing. Sunburst tangerines and tangelos are also being picked for processing. Fresh fruit packing houses are still running early oranges (Navels and Hamlins), white and colored grapefruit, Sunburst tangerines, increasing amounts of Tangelos, Temples, and Honey tangerines.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED WEEK ENDED

Crop	Jan 09	Jan 16	Jan 23
<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>			
Early & Mid oranges	6,579	6,483	4,545
Navel oranges	71	74	58
Grapefruit	476	612	448
Tangelos	103	114	88
Sunburst tangerines	84	38	12
Honey tangerines	89	156	93
Temples	16	29	26

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