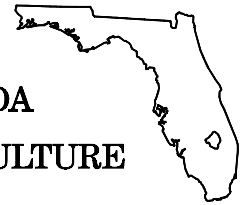




Florida Agricultural Statistics Service
 1222 Woodward Street
 Orlando, Florida 32803
 407 / 648-6013

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>



WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending March 20, 2005

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March 21, 2005

WEATHER SUMMARY: Rainy days slowed some field activities during the week of March 14 through 20. Rainfall ranged from about a quarter of an inch at Hastings to over four inches at Bradenton. Most localities received an inch or more for the week with some north central Peninsula areas only getting a half inch to an inch. Some flooding occurred in Taylor County. Temperatures in the major cities averaged normal to four degrees below with cloud cover impeding warming by the sun. Daytime highs were in the 60s, 70s and 80s while nighttime lows were in the 40s, 50s and 60s. Several localities recorded at least one daily low in the 30s.

FIELD CROPS: Corn planting was active in Washington County. Producers prepared land for cotton and peanut planting in several Panhandle and northern Peninsula counties. Continuous rainfall hindered planting in some localities throughout the week. However, the rains continued to replenish soil moisture across the Panhandle and Peninsula. Topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies are rated mostly adequate to surplus. Soil moisture supplies in the Panhandle areas are mostly adequate. Northern Peninsula soil moisture is rated adequate to surplus in several localities. Central and southern Peninsula areas report short to mostly adequate soil moisture with a few spots reporting adequate to surplus supplies. Very short to adequate soil moisture supplies were reported for Dade County. In Hernando County, soil moisture supplies ranged from short to surplus.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	1	1	1	1	1	0
Short	4	6	20	10	12	26
Adequate	79	78	76	74	72	71
Surplus	16	15	3	15	15	3

VEGETABLES: Muddy fields kept some growers from planting and picking. Producers are currently assessing the damage to quality caused by the recent rains. Plastic in Washington County is already laid and waiting to be planted. Blueberry growers prepared for harvest which is expected to start over the next two weeks. Some strawberry producers recently opened fields for "U-Pic" as the season winds down. Other vegetables and non citrus fruit harvested during the week include snap beans, cabbage, celery, cucumbers, peppers, potatoes, radishes, squash, sweet corn and tomatoes. Very light amounts of eggplant, endive, escarole and lettuce were also available.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, recent rains filled stock ponds. Some pastures have standing water in low spots. Clover is in full bloom. Permanent pastures not being grazed are greening up well. In the northern areas, warm season pastures are starting to green up, and cool season forage are doing well. Winter grazing is looking rough. Feeding

of hay to livestock is very active. In the central areas, pasture condition improved due to warmer temperatures and rain this past week. In the southwest, the increasing day length and temperatures have contributed to improved range condition. Statewide, the condition of cattle is mostly good.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	5	5	0	5
Poor	10	10	5	10
Fair	25	50	20	40
Good	60	35	75	45
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: Abundant rainfall was recorded in all citrus producing counties again this past week. Temperatures reached the low to mid 80s during the day, but dropped to the mid to low 40s in most areas at night, and to the mid 30s in the northern counties. Cooler nighttime temperatures held back the bloom to later stages compared to this time the past three years. Scattered stages of blooms are being reported from small bloom buds to blossoms showing, primarily in the southern area and on weaker trees. New growth is abundant on most varieties with generous flush coming on strong in many areas. Cultural practices in anticipation of bloom include fertilizations, copper sprays and herbiciding. Early and mid orange harvesting is winding down, with increasing amounts of late oranges (Valencias) being picked mostly for processing. White and colored grapefruit are being picked for both fresh and processing. Tangelo and Temple harvesting is decreasing, with Honey tangerine harvesting remaining steady, primarily for the fresh market.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED WEEK ENDED			
Crop	Mar 06	Mar 13	Mar 20
In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes			
Early & Mid oranges	2,313	1,163	360
Navel oranges	3	0	0
Late oranges	816	1,424	2,183
Grapefruit	547	543	503
Tangelos	49	30	5
Sunburst tangerines	0	1	0
Honey tangerines	120	116	115
Temples	85	26	8

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