

# Weather Crop Report

Week ending September 25, 2005

## RITA'S RAINS SLOWED SOME FIELD ACTIVITY

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**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Hurricane Rita's outer bands brought heavy rains to the extreme southern Peninsula and to the extreme western Panhandle as it moved northwest through the Gulf of Mexico during the week of September 19 through 25. Some northeastern and central Peninsula localities, mainly along the Atlantic coast, also received significant rainfall during the week. Precipitation ranged from less than a tenth inch at Carabelle and Monticello, to over three inches at Key West, Jay and Homestead. Temperatures for the week averaged one to seven degrees above normal in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 80s and 90s while nighttime lows were in the 60s and 70s.

**FIELD CROPS:** Outer rain bands from Hurricane Rita provided relief in some dry areas but slowed field activities in other areas. Adequate rains in Washington County allowed growers to plow peanuts. Very dry conditions delayed the maturation of some peanuts in Jackson County with rain needed to soften the hard soils. Rains allowed peanut harvesting to progress in Madison County but the hay fields are in poor condition. Some growers in Suwannee County had to irrigate peanut fields in order to dig since continuous dry weather hindered digging in the hardened soils. Late planted peanuts are under stress in dry areas of the northern Peninsula. Statewide, peanut condition is rated 1 percent poor, 35 percent fair, 40 percent good and 24 percent excellent. Problems with insects were reported in Leon County. Most topsoil and subsoil moisture supplies in the Panhandle were short to adequate with some areas reporting very short supplies. Soil moisture supplies across the Peninsula were short to adequate with some pockets of very short and surplus supplies reported.



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Percentage of Peanuts Harvested to date:		
This year 25	Last year 29	5-year average 33

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	4	8	0	3	3	0
Short	25	32	0	27	26	0
Adequate	68	54	56	60	55	47
Surplus	3	6	44	10	16	53

**VEGETABLES:** Strong, gusty winds blew plastic off some Dade County fields which delayed planting by about half a week. About one percent of the winter tomato acreage has been transplanted around Homestead. Less rainfall around Immokalee, Plant City, Palmetto and Ruskin allowed planting to remain mostly on schedule. Heavier rains around Quincy interrupted some tomato pruning and tying with some grape types picked near the end of the week. Strawberry growers around Plant City prepared ground and laid plastic for winter crop transplanting. Producers around Hastings started planting cabbage. Okra harvesting remained active on clear days in Dade County.

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** In the Panhandle, pasture is in poor to good condition with most fair to good. Grasshoppers and spittle bugs are prevalent. Some pasture is in good shape for late September, but most needs moisture. Cattle are in fair to excellent condition. Rain is needed before soil will be ready for land preparation for planting of winter small grains for pastures. In the northern areas, pasture is in poor to good condition with most in fair condition due to drought. Cattle condition ranges from fair to good. In the central areas, pasture ranges from poor to excellent condition. Pasture in excellent condition received rain from Hurricanes Rita and Katrina; other areas are suffering from drought. Cattle condition is mostly good. In the southwest, pasture condition is poor to good with most in good condition and cattle condition is poor to good. Statewide, condition of the cattle ranges from poor to good with most in good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	20	15	5	5
Fair	35	35	30	30
Good	40	45	60	60
Excellent	5	5	5	5

**CITRUS:** Temperatures continued to be hot, reaching the low 90s in all areas, except on the east coast which only reached 87 degrees. Rainfall ranged from four tenths of an inch in Lake Alfred to almost two inches in Ft. Pierce. Growers are keeping trees in good condition with little afternoon wilt showing in well-cared-for groves. Grove maintenance was light the last week with some scattered fertilizing, liming, mowing, and clean-up continuing in all areas as we move into the picking season. Three fresh fruit packing houses are open with more planning to be open by the middle of October. Varieties being packed include Fallglo tangerines and colored grapefruit. Ambersweet will be beginning within the week.

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