

RECORD COLD SNAP SLOWS VEGETABLE HARVESTING

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WEATHER SUMMARY: A cold front swept across Florida early in the week of February 14 through 19. This cold frontal system set record lows across the State with temperatures averaging two to seven degrees below normal at major cities. Areas from the Panhandle down to the southern Peninsula experienced some frosts and hard freezes. Most chilling lows at the beginning of the week were below freezing with several stations recording record lows in the lower to upper 20s, but by the end of the week, temperatures were back in the 30s, 40s and 50s. Daytime highs were in the 60s, 70s and the lower 80s by the end of the week. Minimal traces of rainfall were received last week, increasing the potential for wildfires.

FIELD CROPS: Pine tree planting is active in Taylor County. Sugarcane harvesting remains active around the Everglades region. Topsoil and subsoil moisture in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula are short to mostly adequate with a few pockets of surplus supplies. Soil moisture supplies ranged from short to surplus in central and southern Peninsula localities.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	0	0	25	0	0	22
Short	22	1	48	24	5	31
Adequate	54	84	25	51	90	45
Surplus	24	15	2	25	5	1

VEGETABLES: Crop development continued to slow as cool temperatures swept across the Peninsula and Panhandle early last week. Some vegetable producers either covered plants with freeze cloths or ran overhead sprinklers for cold protection. Growers reported tomatoes sustained damage from the cold temperatures in some central Peninsula areas. Despite cooler temperatures in Gadsden County, growers still continued spring planting activities with land preparation still on schedule. Cold temperatures slowed harvesting of strawberries in central and southern Peninsula areas. Vegetables marketed last week included snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, eggplant, endive, escarole, peppers, squash and tomatoes. Very light supplies of cucumbers were also available.



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LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and north and central areas, a cold and hard freeze lowered the condition of some pasture. However, previous weeks rains helped pastures improve in general throughout the State. Supplemental hay feeding is very active. Statewide, cattle condition ranged from poor to excellent, with most in fair to good condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
<i>Percent</i>				
Very poor	0	5	0	0
Poor	15	30	5	5
Fair	50	55	35	65
Good	20	10	45	30
Excellent	15	0	15	0

CITRUS: Monday and Tuesday’s recorded temperatures were the coldest of the season, dropping down to 29 degrees in four of the seven routinely monitored areas. Other reports recorded lows of 24 to 29 degrees in the Immokalee area (Hendry and Collier counties) and temperatures on the Ridge (including Polk, Highlands, Hardee and DeSoto counties) as low as 25 degrees but mostly between 29 and 32. Durations below 28 were mostly only a few hours in a few spots. No fruit damage was reported from the cold weather. The rest of the week was noted by increasingly warm weather, reaching the high 70s to low 80s by the end of the week. No rainfall was recorded for the week. Increased topping, hedging and fertilizing is taking place after harvest. Growers are still irrigating due to the dry time of the year with little rain. Limited Valencia harvesting has begun with the main focus still on the early-midseason category. Grapefruit harvesting is still running around six-hundred thousand boxes weekly with more going to processing than fresh. Honey tangerine has been running just over a hundred thousand boxes per week for the last five weeks.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED - WEEK ENDED			
Crop	Feb 05	Feb 12	Feb 19
<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>			
Navel oranges	79	72	49
Early and Mid oranges	4,809	4,397	4,467
Valencias	0	0	56
Grapefruit	693	604	670
EarlyTangerines	10	7	6
Honey Tangerines	103	102	110
Tangelos	75	69	93
Temples	35	29	52

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