

DRY CONDITIONS INCREASED CROP IRRIGATION

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Most areas of the State received no rainfall, increasing the use of crop irrigation, during the week of March 6 through 12. Only Ft. Lauderdale, Kenansville, Live Oak, Marianna, Pensacola and Umatilla reported traces of rain for the week. The potential for wild fires increased, especially over the central and southern Peninsula. Temperatures hovered near normal in most major cities with daytime highs in the 70s and 80s. Pensacola highs for the week averaged 7 degrees above normal. Nighttime lows averaged in the 40s, 50s and 60s with some Panhandle and northern localities recording at least one low in the 30s.

FIELD CROPS: The dry, clear conditions spurred land preparations for field crop planting in the Panhandle and northern Peninsula. In Jackson County, corn planted earlier is up to a good stand and small grains are growing well. Corn planting is active in Suwannee County with growers irrigating plantings. Sugarcane harvesting is slowing seasonally around Lake Okeechobee with some mills already closed. Most localities reported short to adequate soil moisture supplies. St. Lucie and Palm Beach counties reported a few spots with very short soil moisture.

| Moisture Rating | Topsoil | | | Subsoil | | |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | This week | Last week | Last year | This week | Last week | Last Year |
| | <i>Percent</i> | | | | | |
| Very short | 10 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Short | 45 | 25 | 7 | 25 | 26 | 12 |
| Adequate | 45 | 75 | 79 | 70 | 73 | 73 |
| Surplus | 0 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 14 |

VEGETABLES: The dry conditions allowed planting and harvesting to proceed at a rapid pace. Producers started setting watermelons in Suwannee County. Cabbage growers increased cutting to meet the St. Patrick's Day demand. Other vegetables and non citrus fruit marketed during the week included snap beans, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, parsley, peppers, radishes, squash, strawberries, sweet corn and tomatoes.

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LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, pasture condition is poor to excellent. Small grains are responding to moderate temperatures and growing well. Grass growth is held back in some locations by drought. In the north and central areas, pasture condition is poor to good with drought the limiting factor. Over seeded small grain forage is growing. In the southwest, pasture condition is poor to fair and cattle is poor to good with most in good condition. Statewide, cattle condition ranges from poor to good.

| Condition | Cattle | | Pasture | |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | This week | Last week | This week | Last week |
| <i>Percent</i> | | | | |
| Very poor | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Poor | 10 | 25 | 20 | 45 |
| Fair | 40 | 25 | 45 | 20 |
| Good | 50 | 50 | 30 | 30 |
| Excellent | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 |

CITRUS: Above average daily temperatures were recorded for the week of March 6 through 12, with most areas recording at least one day in the mid 80s. The highest temperatures were in the south at over 86 degrees. No rainfall was recorded for the week in any citrus producing counties. The warm temperatures and lack of precipitation encouraged growers to continue daily irrigation. Topping, hedging, fertilizing and spraying is taking place after harvest. Bloom is progressing well with some trees showing a bouquet bloom and some trees just beginning to form bloom buds. Feathery new growth is evident on trees in well-cared-for groves. Early midseason harvest has begun to wind down and processors are reporting only a few million boxes left for harvest. Valencia harvesting is underway, but still running behind last year's weekly levels. Grapefruit harvesting is still strong with about two thirds of the weekly totals going to processing. Honey tangerine harvest is holding steady at over one-hundred thousand boxes weekly, while Temple harvesting continues to be nominal.

| ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED - WEEK ENDED | | | |
|---|--------|--------|--------|
| Crop | Feb 26 | Mar 05 | Mar 12 |
| <i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i> | | | |
| Navel oranges | 59 | 27 | 11 |
| Early and Mid oranges | 3,906 | 3,104 | 2,570 |
| Valencia | 289 | 301 | 906 |
| Grapefruit | 791 | 961 | 1,003 |
| Early Tangerines | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| Honey Tangerines | 145 | 132 | 140 |
| Tangelos | 58 | 49 | 8 |
| Temples | 27 | 36 | 24 |

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