

Weather Crop Report

Week ending May 7, 2006

WILD FIRES OUTBREAK ACROSS THE PENINSULA; RAIN NEEDED

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Most areas across the Sunshine State received no rain last week, except for the Panhandle areas during the week of May 1 through 7. The lack of precipitation coupled with the prolonged drought conditions sparked several wild land fires across the Peninsula. Marianna and Quincy reported over one inch of rainfall for the week. Nearly three inches of rain fell in Monticello. Carrabelle and Jay reported over a half inch. Elsewhere, no rain to only traces was reported. Temperatures for the week averaged from two degrees below normal to two degrees above normal. Daytime highs were in the 80s and 90s. Nighttime lows were in the 50s and 60s with a few areas recording at least one low in the 40s.

FIELD CROPS: Dry conditions halted field activities in most areas of the Panhandle and northern Peninsula due to harden soils. Peanut growers in Gadsden County stopped peanut planting until rains loosen soils. Peanut planting will resume in Jackson County when growers receive ample rains. Peanut planting is only 14 percent finished compared with 11 percent planted by this date last year and the five-year average of 22 percent finished. Some cotton fields will have to be replanted due to seed rotting in Jackson County. High temperatures, along with a lack of precipitation are drying soils across the State. Topsoil moisture supplies are rated mostly very short to short in the Panhandle and across the northern Peninsula. Jefferson and Union counties reported short to adequate soil moisture supplies. Holmes reported very short to adequate soil moisture. Soil moisture supplies throughout areas in the central and southern Peninsula recorded mostly very short to short soil moisture supplies.

Percentage of peanuts planted to date:		
This year	Last year	5-year average.
14	11	22

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	49	40	2	52	35	1
Short	46	30	21	38	40	31
Adequate	5	30	66	10	25	57
Surplus	0	0	11	0	0	11

VEGETABLES: Dry, clear conditions allowed harvesting to proceed on schedule. Cabbage cutting continued to slow as the season winds down. Tomatoes around Quincy are in good condition. Cantaloupe cutting was underway with light amounts available. Growers marketed snap beans, blueberries, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, okra, peppers, potatoes, radishes, squash, tomatoes and watermelons during the week. Light supplies of lettuce were also available.



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LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Pasture throughout the State is suffering from drought. In the Panhandle, most pasture and cattle are in fair condition. In the North, most pasture and cattle are in poor condition. Hay feeding is active. In the central areas, pasture is in very poor to fair condition with most in poor condition. Grass is not growing due to prolonged drought. Some water holes used for cattle have gone dry and others are very low. In the southwest, pasture is in poor to fair condition. Ranchers are battling brush fires. Statewide, cattle condition varies from poor to fair with most in fair condition.

Condition	Cattle		Pasture	
	This week	Last week	This Week	Last week
<i>Percent</i>				
Very poor	1	0	5	15
Poor	9	40	45	35
Fair	70	45	49	45
Good	20	15	1	5
Excellent	0	0	0	0

CITRUS: Conditions continue to be warm and dry across the citrus belt. Even with cool mornings, daytime temperatures reached the low 90s in all areas and a high of 95 degrees in Sebring. No rainfall was recorded for the week in any of the monitored counties. Generally, groves with irrigation are holding up okay, but those groves without irrigation are beginning to show permanent leaf wilt. In some areas, fruit quality is beginning to suffer with Valencias having a squishy feel and a rough exterior texture. Caretakers have been spraying for diseases, hedging after harvest and mowing. Some growers are applying copper sprays to control citrus canker. Valencia weekly harvest has been running over five million boxes. Labor shortages are being reported due to pickers moving to other crops and possible immigration labor reform issues. Grapefruit harvest has slowed significantly the last two weeks with the majority going to processing. Honey tangerine utilization is still running over one hundred thousand boxes a week and being picked primarily for the fresh market.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED - WEEK ENDED			
Crop	April 23	Apr 30	May 07
<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>			
Valencia	5,153	4,781	5,062
Grapefruit	368	188	136
Honey Tangerines	127	132	117
Temples	3	1	2

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