



WEATHER CROP



Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
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Week ending January 6, 2008

FROST CHALLENGES GROWERS, CROPS

WEATHER SUMMARY: A cold front moved in around mid-week and temperatures dropped to the teens in the north Peninsula and Panhandle. Rainfall over half an inch was reported in some areas in the southern Peninsula and parts of the central Peninsula had over a quarter of an inch of rain. Daily temperatures for the major cities reached the upper 60s, 70s, and 80s; lows in the 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s. Temperatures averaged in the upper 50s, 60s, and 70s; low daytime temperatures averaged in the 30s, 40s, and 50s.

FIELD CROPS: Beginning of the week, local farmers were preparing their crops for the freezing temperatures. Potato planting continued in Palatka but growers took precautions by storing seed potatoes in barns with heaters. Unusually cold temperatures caused damage to small grains. The Panhandle soil moisture was mostly short to adequate. Big Bend and northern Peninsula soil moisture was mostly very short to short. Soil moisture in the southern Peninsula was mostly very short with adequate conditions in some areas. Field activity slowed for most of the week due to frost.

| Moisture Rating | Topsoil | | | Subsoil | | |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | This week | Last week | Last year | This week | Last week | Last Year |
| | <i>Percent</i> | | | | | |
| Very short | 28 | 42 | 2 | 27 | 36 | 3 |
| Short | 39 | 17 | 44 | 40 | 21 | 27 |
| Adequate | 33 | 41 | 53 | 33 | 43 | 67 |
| Surplus | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |

VEGETABLES: Harvesting was halted end of last week until frost damage was assessed. Areas of central and southern Peninsula reported damage to crops due to freezing temperatures; other areas were waiting before reporting extent of damage. Hillsborough County reported losses in strawberries, tomatoes, and ornamentals last week due to extremely cold and windy conditions. Hendry County reported a 10-15 percent loss from wind and freezing temperatures. Harvesting and packing of beans, okra, squash, and tomatoes in Florida City continued earlier in the week. Plant City reported damage to the strawberry crop but was expected to be minimal overall. Some growers kept a constant stream of water on the strawberry crop to keep from freezing. Pompano continued harvesting without interruption and reported all crops looked good. Wauchula reported the remaining blueberry and strawberry crop had little or no damage. Asparagus, bean, and peas marketing were steady.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Freezing temperatures, reaching below 20 degrees, damaged small grain forage in parts of the State. Drought continued to limit forage growth. In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition was very poor to good with most in fair condition. Ranchers are starting the cold season with little stock of hay and poor winter grazing. Lingering cold has stopped growth on any cool season forages. In central areas, pasture was in very poor to good condition with most fair. Pastures were very dry and brown in Sumter County. In the southwestern areas, pasture was very poor to good with most fair to good. Statewide, cattle condition ranged from very poor to excellent, with most in good condition.

| Condition | Cattle | | Pasture | |
|-----------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | This week | Last week | This week | Last week |
| | <i>Percent</i> | | | |
| Very poor | 5 | 20 | 15 | 20 |
| Poor | 15 | 5 | 20 | 15 |
| Fair | 30 | 45 | 40 | 30 |
| Good | 45 | 25 | 25 | 30 |
| Excellent | 5 | 5 | 0 | 5 |

CITRUS: Traces of rain were recorded early in the week, primarily in the central citrus growing areas. The most recorded rain was in Sebring at over half an inch. Early Thursday morning, temperatures dropped to the upper 20s and lower 30s across the citrus producing region. According to grower reports, Arcadia and Lake Alfred had lows of 27 degrees, Wauchula dropped to 28 degrees, and Sebring and Balm recorded lows of 29 degrees. Surrounding localities were one to three degrees higher. Isolated areas may have received minor fruit damage; however, the duration was not long enough to cause any significant damage to the trees or fruit. Weekly harvest amounts were back up this week following the holiday season. Early and midseason orange weekly harvest should be over five million boxes throughout January, primarily for processing. Most packinghouses will be finishing with Navel orange and Sunburst tangerine harvest in the next couple of weeks and transitioning to Temple orange and Honey tangerine harvest. Some houses were packing limited amounts of Pineapple oranges. Grove care included mowing, spraying, fertilizing, and irrigating. Hedging and topping was being conducted in many grapefruit groves on the east coast. Grove owners continued their combined approach to reduce psyllid populations in an effort to control greening. Varieties being harvested included early, midseason, Navel, and Ambersweet oranges; grapefruit; Sunburst and Honey tangerines, and tangelos.

| ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED - WEEK ENDED | | | |
|--|---|--------|--------|
| Crop | Dec 23 | Dec 30 | Jan 06 |
| | <i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i> | | |
| Early and Mid oranges | 4,768 | 3,736 | 5,463 |
| Navel oranges | 192 | 99 | 67 |
| Ambersweet oranges | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Grapefruit | 512 | 501 | 532 |
| Sunburst tangerines | 196 | 100 | 135 |
| Honey tangerines | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Tangelos | 82 | 46 | 100 |

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