



WEATHER CROP



Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
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Week ending March 2, 2008

COLD TEMPERATURES BROUGHT SEVERAL FREEZE AND FROST REPORTS

WEATHER SUMMARY: Cool temperatures during the week of February 26 through March 2, resulted in several freeze and frost reports. Jefferson, Hernando, Hendry, and Flagler counties reported frost, while Flagler and Jefferson reported freezing temperatures during February 28 and 29. Hillsborough reported over one inch of rain for the week. Alachua followed with three quarters of an inch of rain; and Levy, Dade, Polk, Orange, Baker, Putnam, and Volusia counties with about half inch of precipitation. However, other areas of the Peninsula received very little measurable rain. The danger for wildfire remained for some areas. Temperatures in the major stations were three to five degrees below normal. The highest temperature reported was 89 degrees in Miami. Daytime temperatures ranged from the mid-70s to high 80s. Nighttime lows were mostly in the 30s. Some areas in Alachua, Hernando, Franklin, Santa Rosa, Suwannee, Baker, Jay, Jefferson, and Gadsden counties experienced lows in the mid-20s.

FIELD CROPS: In Flagler County, freezing temperatures damaged potatoes, which were 100 percent planted. Damage reports for potatoes was widespread and ranged from minimal to significant depending on location and stage of growth. In St. Johns County, cold temperatures did little damage to the potato crop as planting continued. Sugarcane harvesting continued in the Lake Okeechobee area. Both topsoil and subsoil moisture in the Panhandle was mostly adequate to surplus. Soil moisture supplies in the northern Peninsula were rated mostly short to adequate. Areas in the central Peninsula and southern Peninsula had mostly short to adequate soil moisture for the week.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	5	2	38	6	2	18
Short	23	19	35	26	34	45
Adequate	68	68	27	67	56	36
Surplus	4	11	0	1	8	1

VEGETABLES: The cold temperatures in Flagler County caused the cabbage crop, which was about 50 percent harvested, to show signs of damage but the extent was yet to be determined. In Jefferson County, cold temperatures negatively affected bloom for some early blueberry cultivars. Strawberry growers continued to harvest strawberries in the Plant City area. In Miami-Dade County, sweet corn was being harvested. Producers marketed snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, eggplant, endive, escarole, peppers, potatoes, radishes, squash, strawberries, and tomatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: The overall condition of Florida pastures improved over the previous week. In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition was mostly fair. Freezing temperatures at mid-week caused no apparent damage on winter grazing small grains, ryegrass, or clover. The condition of cattle was mostly fair. In central areas, pasture condition was mostly fair. Forage growth picked up after recent rainfall. Despite frost on February 28, pastures were pushing new growth. Cattle condition was fair to good. In the southwestern areas, pasture was very poor to excellent with most in fair to good condition. Statewide, cattle condition was mostly fair.

Condition	Cattle		Pasture	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	5	5	10	5
Poor	5	15	10	45
Fair	55	50	55	35
Good	35	30	24	15
Excellent	0	0	1	0

CITRUS: Amounts of rainfall up to three-fourths of an inch were reported this past week, all associated with a strong cold front that pushed through the State mid-week. Heaviest precipitation amounts occurred in the northern citrus area with lesser amounts further south. The east coast areas received very little rain. Temperatures following the front were in the low to mid-30s with patchy frost reported in colder locations. High temperatures were up to the mid-80s on several days. Growers, caretakers, and field personnel reported more new growth flush and bloom this past week with young trees in some southern locations in full bloom. Other areas were showing spotty bloom with evidence of heavier bloom yet to occur. Early fertilizer applications continued with irrigation to prepare for the upcoming bloom. Systemic pesticide applications continued to promote healthier trees for better crop set. Hedging and topping activities also continued. Varieties harvested included early, midseason, Navel, Temple, and increasing amounts of Valencia oranges; grapefruit; Sunburst and Honey tangerines; and tangelos. Grapefruit for processing harvest was increasing.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED - WEEK ENDED			
Crop	Feb 17	Feb 24	Mar 02
	<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>		
Early and Mid oranges	4,769	5,550	4,110
Navel oranges	19	14	9
Temples	24	33	42
Valencia oranges	1	41	424
Grapefruit	954	1,362	1,480
Sunburst tangerines	1	3	1
Honey tangerines	93	112	128
Tangelos	44	57	18

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