



United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service

# WEATHER CROP



Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services  
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Week ending March 9, 2008

## HEAVY RAINS, WINDS SWEEP THE SUNSHINE STATE

**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Heavy rain swept across the State later in the week and caused thunderstorms and heavy winds. Gadsden County in the Panhandle along with Suwannee and Baker counties in the Big Bend, Broward County in the southern Peninsula, and many counties of the central Peninsula received more than three inches of rain. Very few areas received less than an inch of rain: Hernando County of the central Peninsula and Dade, Collier, Hardee of the southern Peninsula. Major cities averaged highs in the 60s, 70s, and 80s. Low temperatures averaged in the 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s, lows ranged from the 20s to the 50s.

**FIELD CROPS:** The local potato crop looked good in Palatka. The recent rains aided the condition of soil moisture in the central Peninsula but windy conditions dried out topsoil moisture. In the Panhandle, fields were very wet and little farming activity was under way. Soil moisture in the Panhandle and central Peninsula was mostly adequate to surplus. Soil moisture in the Big Bend and southern Peninsula was mostly short to adequate.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	6	5	40	4	6	26
Short	7	23	33	26	26	41
Adequate	79	68	26	66	67	32
Surplus	8	4	1	4	1	1

**VEGETABLES:** Light volumes of tomatoes and peppers were harvested in the southern Peninsula as crops affected by the January freeze came to maturity. In Florida City, crops looked good in the fields. Harvesting and packing of beans, corn, squash, and tomatoes continued. In Fort Myers, no damage from the cold front was reported. Harvesting of collard, peppers, cabbage, squash, and zucchini continued. Cucumbers were in good condition in Fort Pierce and continued to be replanted. Cabbage and mixed greens continued to be harvested in Palatka. Strong demand for strawberries continued in Plant City. Other vegetables marketed last week were sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, and radishes.

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition was poor to fair. Grazing in Gadsden County was very limited. Ponds were filling following recent rains. Pasture improved following warmer weather as cool season forages have begun to grow. Stock ponds were approaching normal levels. There was less pasture fertilized because of the increased cost of fertilizer. The condition of the cattle was mostly fair to good. In central areas, pasture condition was very poor to good with most in fair condition. Small grain winter pasture condition was very good, but a heavy frost on March 9 set pastures back. The cattle condition was very poor to good. In the southwestern areas, pasture was very poor to excellent with most in fair condition. The condition of pasture improved in Hendry County following recent rainfall. Statewide, cattle condition was very poor to good with most in fair condition.

Condition	Cattle		Pasture	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	5	5	15	10
Poor	15	5	20	10
Fair	45	55	40	55
Good	35	35	24	24
Excellent	0	0	1	1

**CITRUS:** Rainfall this week was plentiful in most citrus-growing areas as a powerful cold front swept over the State. Amounts were over two inches; upper interior areas received the most. All stations reported rainfall which was very beneficial for the upcoming bloom period. Temperatures before the cold front were very warm, up to the mid-80s; after the front passed, temperatures were in the mid-30s in low ground locations. With warm temperatures, growers and field personnel reported more new growth flush and bloom this past week with more groves in full bloom. More areas and types are showing spotty bloom with evidence of heavier bloom yet to occur. 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 continued before the bloom period. Varieties harvested included declining amounts of early, midseason, Navel, and Temple oranges. Increasing amounts of Valencia oranges and grapefruit for processing were also harvested. Honey tangerines, Tangelo, and early tangerine harvest neared completion.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED - WEEK ENDED			
Crop	Feb 24	Mar 02	Mar 09
	<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>		
Early and Mid oranges	5,247	4,110	2,739
Navel oranges	15	9	7
Temples	45	42	90
Valencia oranges	81	424	913
Grapefruit	1,445	1,480	1,481
Sunburst tangerines	2	1	6
Honey tangerines	123	128	151
Tangelos	38	18	16

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