



WEATHER CROP



Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
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Week ending March 23, 2008

NORTH MOSTLY DRY; RAINS IN CENTRAL, SOUTHERN PENINSULA

WEATHER SUMMARY: Mostly clear weather and warm temperatures during the week of March 17 through 23 allowed growers to continue with spring plantings. Most localities reported very little rainfall during the week, except for areas in the central and southern Peninsula. Homestead, in Dade County, reported 2.5 inches of rain. It was followed by Collier, Broward, and Glades with 1.8, 1.5, and 1.2 inches of rain, respectively. In the central Peninsula, Hillsborough received about an inch of precipitation. However, most other areas to the north of the Peninsula and in the Panhandle received very little measurable rain. Temperatures in the major stations were one to four degrees above normal. The highest temperature reported was 88 degrees in Lake and Highlands counties. High temperatures ranged from mid-70s to upper 80s. Nighttime lows varied from upper 30s to mid-60s.

FIELD CROPS: The dry, clear conditions allowed land preparations for field crop planting to continue in the Panhandle. In Washington County, growers prepared land to plant peanuts and cotton. Soil moisture supplies in the southern Peninsula were rated very short to adequate. Areas throughout the Panhandle, northern, and central Peninsula had short to adequate soil moisture levels. Suwannee County reported both dry and wet pockets of land for this past week. St. Johns County reported that potato plantings were in good condition.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	15	2	50	6	4	47
Short	27	15	38	46	21	39
Adequate	56	77	12	46	70	14
Surplus	2	6	0	2	5	0

VEGETABLES: Spring planting of vegetables is underway in parts of the Panhandle. In St. Johns County, broccoli and cabbage crop were winding down. Producers throughout the State marketed snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, peppers, squash, strawberries, okra, radishes, and tomatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition was very poor to good with most fair. Pastures flooded from locally heavy rains were returning to normal. Warmer weather and adequate rain favored pasture conditions in most areas; however, nighttime temperatures near freezing have slowed forage growth. Permanent summer grasses started to green up, but there has been no significant growth yet. The condition of cattle was mostly fair. In central areas, pasture condition was very poor to good with most in poor condition. Cattle condition was mostly fair. In the southwestern areas, pasture was very poor to good with most in poor condition. Scattered showers kept pastures green. Seasonal pasture fertilization has been limited this year due to extremely high fertilizer prices. Low fertilization combined with the effects of the drought, pose a serious problem to future forage stands. Cattle were fair to good, depending on supplemental feed and hay. 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	10	5	20	10
Poor	25	15	40	29
Fair	45	35	25	25
Good	20	45	14	35
Excellent	0	0	1	1

CITRUS: All citrus producing areas received some rainfall from a slow, disorganized cold front that moved over the State last week. Amounts ranged from one quarter inch to over 1.75 inches in the lower interior areas. Temperatures following the cold front were in the mid-40s; however, high temperatures were up again to the mid-80s on several days. The reported rainfall was timely and very beneficial for the spring flush of new growth and bloom. Well-cared-for groves were reported in excellent condition for this time of year. Growers, caretakers, and field personnel continued to report new growth flush with full, open bloom on orange trees this past week. Grapefruit and tangerine varieties were beginning to show some open bloom and expanding buds in most areas. Early fertilizer applications continued with some irrigation to support the new growth and bloom. Systemic pesticide applications continued to promote healthier trees for better crop set. Hedging and topping activities continued. Varieties being harvested included declining amounts of early, midseason, and Temple oranges, increasing amounts of Valencia oranges; and steady grapefruit and Honey tangerines.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED - WEEK ENDED			
Crop	Mar 09	Mar 16	Mar 23
	<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>		
Early and Mid oranges	2,739	1,256	504
Navel oranges	7	4	2
Temples	90	42	100
Valencia oranges	913	2,339	3,725
Grapefruit	1,481	1,347	1,267
Sunburst tangerines	6	1	0
Honey tangerines	151	172	134
Tangelos	16	9	4

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