



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 December 21, 2008

## WARM AND DRY; WAITING ON WINTER FORAGES

**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Last week only traces of rain fell over the State. All locations received less than a tenth of an inch. High temperatures were in the 70s and 80s. Nighttime lows mostly ranged from the 30s to 50s. Temperatures were 3 to 11 degrees above normal.

**FIELD CROPS:** Sugarcane was harvested in Glades County. Potato fields in St. Johns County were being prepared for January and February plantings. Soil moisture levels were mostly adequate in the Panhandle and short to adequate in nearly all other areas.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	14	10	30	14	14	30
Short	29	20	36	25	15	45
Adequate	55	63	34	56	67	25
Surplus	2	7	0	5	4	0

**VEGETABLES:** Producers had clear skies as they harvested for the upcoming holiday demand and warm temperatures favored crop growth. Southern counties marketed peppers, tomatoes, squash, eggplant, cucumbers, and specialty crops. Other vegetables marketed were snap beans, sweet corn, endive, escarole, radishes, and strawberries. Light volumes of cabbage were harvested as well. The okra market decreased seasonally. Land preparations for the spring watermelon crop were underway in Charlotte County.

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture was in very poor to good condition with most poor due to the long fall drought. Forage in many locations was helped by warmer temperatures and recent rainfall. Dry soil conditions continued to stunt forage growth, while wet fields from recent heavy rains were holding up planting of remaining winter grains and forages. Cattle watering ponds water level was down. Supplemental hay was fed to compensate for the poor pasture condition. Cattle condition ranged from poor to excellent. In the central areas, pasture was very poor to excellent with most poor to fair. Drought and cold restricted grass growth. Cattle condition was poor to excellent with most fair to good. In the southwest areas, pasture was in very poor to good condition with most fair. Warm temperatures and dry air rapidly depleted the pasture's surface moisture. Statewide, cattle condition was mostly fair to good; pasture condition was poor to good.

Condition	Cattle		Pasture	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last Week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	0	1	5	10
Poor	5	5	25	20
Fair	45	44	50	45
Good	45	45	19	25
Excellent	5	5	1	0

**CITRUS:** All citrus-producing areas recorded above average temperatures for the week with highs reaching the low 80s during the day and dropping down to the 50s and 60s at night. Light, scattered rain was observed in some areas, but totals were less than one-tenth of an inch. The west coast has had abnormally dry to severely dry weather over the past three and a half months. Drought conditions now extend as far east as the center of the citrus-growing region. Citrus trees were reported in fair to good condition because of frequent irrigation. Some of the fundraising programs and holiday gift packing has finished at the houses. Harvesting and packing of Navel oranges, early tangerines, and red grapefruit was farther along than last season. Fresh white grapefruit and Tangelo harvest was lagging slightly. Processing of all oranges continues to be ahead of last season with over six million boxes processed for the week (not including Navels) compared to less than five million boxes last season. Although juice inventories are up this season, fruit maturity was ahead of last season requiring growers to pick fruit early and get it to plants. Other than harvesting, grove activity included fertilizing, cleaning up groves in preparation for harvesting, dormant spraying for psyllid control, and a small amount of hedging.

Estimated Boxes Harvested - Week Ended			
Crop	Dec 07	Dec 14	Dec 21
	<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>		
Early and mid oranges (including Ambersweet)	4,741	5,337	6,323
Navel oranges	329	344	205
Grapefruit	573	644	745
Fallglo tangerines	1	0	0
Sunburst tangerines	227	263	198
Tangelos	99	108	71

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