



WEATHER CROP

Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
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Week ending January 25, 2009

FREEZE DAMAGE BEING ASSESSED

WEATHER SUMMARY: During the week of January 19-25, maximum high temperatures reached the upper 60s and 70s; minimum lows were mostly in the 20s and 30s, with some in the teens. Many areas throughout the State experienced frosts, freezes, and windy conditions. Temperatures in major cities were an average of 3 to 9 degrees below normal. A few scattered showers fell across the State; Baker County in the Big Bend and some locations in the central Peninsula received between 0.2 and 0.4 inches.

FIELD AND NURSERY CROPS: Some nurseries in Highlands County reported freeze damage to ornamentals. Producers with covered nursery crops reported little damage. Oat and rye forages in Columbia County underwent some setback, whereas wheat was hardly affected. Soil moisture levels were reported as mostly adequate in the Panhandle, but very short to short in the rest of the State.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	15	5	7	20	7	13
Short	40	27	22	31	26	41
Adequate	44	67	70	46	63	46
Surplus	1	1	1	3	4	0

VEGETABLES: Preparing for the cold and wind, growers covered plants for protection and harvested heavily. Late in the week producers throughout the State assessed freeze effects after temperatures fell into the 30s and 20s for several hours. Initial reports from south Florida growers declared significant damage to vegetables, but the actual extent was not yet known. Growers expected widespread losses of the more sensitive crops. In areas that were just beginning to plant, no damage was experienced. Berry growers sprayed crops with water to form a protective layer of ice. Plant City growers reported some damage to strawberry blooms. Orange, Seminole, and Washington counties reported strawberry loss. Potatoes already planted were covered in the Big Bend, with only slight damage reported. Planting of potatoes continued. Some cabbage suffered leaf burn. Damage to leafy greens in Columbia County left them unmarketable. Vegetables moving through the market were strawberries, beans, cabbage, celery, avocados, sweet corn, cucumbers, greens, eggplant, endive/escarole, okra, peppers, radishes, squash, and tomatoes. Preparations for spring planting continued.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: The pasture condition throughout the State was mainly very poor to fair due to the cold and freezing temperatures, but also to drought. Pastures in much of the State were brown from the freeze. In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition was very poor to good. The freezing weather burned the Bahia pasture that had greened up. Recent freeze caused some setback on oat and rye forages; wheat was not affected as much. It will take a week or so to overcome the cold damage. Cattle condition was fair to excellent. In the central areas, pasture condition was very poor to good. Pastures received severe damage from the cold. Cattle were being fed supplemental hay. In the southwestern areas, pasture was very poor to good with most poor to fair. Two days of freeze and or frost caused widespread damage to pastures. Most pastures browned by frost. Hay supplies stored by ranchers are low. Statewide, cattle condition was very poor to excellent with most fair to good.

Condition	Cattle		Pasture	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	10	5	25	10
Poor	5	5	40	20
Fair	45	40	30	40
Good	35	45	5	30
Excellent	5	5	0	0

CITRUS: Wednesday morning, several citrus areas experienced the effects of a hard freeze as a result of a northern cold front passing over the State. Growers reported heavy frost on the trees and ice in the fruit. The most northern citrus producing areas dropped below 28 degrees in the early morning and sustained below freezing temperatures for several hours. Several southern areas recorded temperatures 25 degrees or less. As a precautionary measure, many growers ran irrigation pumps to help insulate trees from sub-freezing temperatures. Early and midseason harvesting was about two thirds complete. Processing plants were running early-midseason oranges at full capacity. Tangerine harvest is making a transition from the early variety Sunburst to the later variety Honey. Grapefruit were being picked at the rate of about 700,000 boxes per week with a large amount of the fresh fruit being exported. Caretakers continue to mow, hedge, and run irrigation.

Estimated Boxes Harvested - Week Ended			
Crop	Jan 11	Jan 19 ^{1/}	Jan 25 ^{2/}
	<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>		
Early and mid oranges (including Ambersweet)	6,432	7,137	5,286
Navel oranges	79	83	52
Grapefruit	714	832	695
Sunburst tangerines	66	46	14
Honey tangerines	99	122	107
Tangelos	93	98	14
Temples	6	29	19
^{1/} Includes Monday. Eight day week for comparison purposes.			
^{2/} Excludes Monday. Six day week for comparison purposes.			

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