



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 8, 2009

DRY AND UNSEASONABLY COOL

WEATHER SUMMARY: Last week's maximum temperatures reached the 70s and lower 80s. Nightly lows were mostly in the 20s, 30s, and 40s. Major cities averaged highs in the 60s and 70s, while lows averaged in the 30s, 40s, and 50s. Overall temperatures were 5 to 8 degrees below normal. Locations as far south as Hendry County reported frost early in the week. Very little precipitation was received in the State. Marion, Santa Rosa, and Polk counties reported traces of rain. No precipitation was recorded for other locations.

FIELD CROPS: Growers were preparing fields for corn, wheat, and other row crops. Taylor County continued to plant pine trees. Small grains were reported in good condition. Early planted potatoes in northeast Florida escaped cold damage, but newly emerging plants received some damage. Soil moisture conditions were short to adequate in the Panhandle and southern region, while the Big Bend and central Peninsula encountered very short to adequate soil moisture supplies. Pasco County reported that wildfires continued.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	28	24	6	21	22	4
Short	48	41	9	47	41	26
Adequate	24	35	78	34	35	66
Surplus	0	0	7	1	2	4

VEGETABLES: Producers in northern areas continued land preparations for spring crops. Levy County set watermelons. Dry conditions delayed some planting and caused producers to irrigate throughout the State. Broccoli and cabbage harvests had good yields in St. Johns County. Escambia, Hillsborough, and Bradford counties harvested strawberries. Some vegetables in the fields sustained minor frost damage. The volume of vegetables moving through the market was slightly reduced due to recent drought and cold stress. Vegetables marketed included tomatoes, sweet corn, snap beans, squash, sweet potatoes, greens, celery, eggplant, endive/escarole, peppers, and radishes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: Pasture condition throughout the State declined due to drought and below freezing temperatures. Much winter forage has yet to recover from frost of recent weeks and summer pasture has not yet started to grow due the cold. In the Panhandle area, pasture condition was very poor to good. Winter grazing offers excellent pastures and improved condition. Dry and unusually cold weather continues to adversely affect pasture and winter forage in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. Because of poor grass growing conditions, cattle were being fed hay to supplement their diet. The freezes early this week slowed growth of forages in Washington County. Cattle condition was poor to excellent. In the northern areas, pasture was very poor to good with most in poor condition. Cool season forage was doing moderately well. In Duval County, low soil moisture threatens rye grass growth. In the central areas, pasture condition was very poor to good with most in fair condition. In Pasco County, the drought deepens. Wildfires continue sporadically. Cattle men were buying hay to feed their cattle and hay was expensive. Stock watering pond levels were low and some had dried up. Pastures were very short. Smaller cattle operations were selling some cattle due to the short pasture and the high price for hay. Cattle condition was very poor to good. Pasture in the southwest was very poor to fair. Some cattle producers supplementing pasture with feed in Charlotte County. Supplemental irrigation was being used where available. Statewide, cattle condition was very poor to excellent with most fair.

Condition	Cattle		Pasture	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	5	5	25	14
Poor	20	30	40	50
Fair	45	35	30	30
Good	29	29	5	5
Excellent	1	1	0	1

CITRUS: A cold front moved across the State early Sunday morning bringing with it much cooler temperatures throughout the citrus producing areas. Kenansville and Palmdale both recorded early morning lows in the high 20s. A gradual warming trend returned Tuesday with temperatures climbing to the low 80s in the central and southern regions. Many areas, especially in the south, have not had any appreciable precipitation in two months and are experiencing drought conditions. Ft. Pierce has been lacking significant rainfall since December. With the warmer temperatures returning many trees were showing new growth, new leaves, and a small amount of bloom. Hedging, topping, irrigating, fertilizing, aerial spraying, and mowing practices continue in the groves. The Valencia harvest has begun with packinghouses taking late oranges in small quantities while the processing of the early and midseason varieties has slowed significantly. Honey tangerines should finish early due to freeze damage and a smaller crop in the southern citrus areas. White and colored grapefruit harvesting continues at a strong pace.

Estimated Boxes Harvested - Week Ended			
Crop	Feb 22	Mar 01	Mar 08
	<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>		
Early and mid oranges	4,580	2,800	2,272
Temples	31	74	90
Valencia oranges	60	463	1,025
Navel oranges	2	2	2
Grapefruit	1,009	1,015	1,301
Tangelos	22	11	4
Sunburst tangerines	0	1	0
Honey tangerines	75	83	98

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