



# WEATHER CROP



Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services  
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Week ending March 15, 2009

## DROUGHT CONDITIONS WORSEN, WARM TEMPERATURES PREVAIL

**WEATHER SUMMARY:** High daytime temperatures for the week ending March 15 reached the upper 70s to upper 80s. Throughout the State, lows dropped to the mid-40s and 50s. Major cities averaged highs in the 70s and 80s; lows ranged from the mid-40s to upper 60s. Mostly all counties reported little to no rainfall. Santa Rosa County was the exception, receiving 3.64 inches.

**FIELD CROPS:** Field work progressed at a rapid pace in Santa Rosa County. Small grains were doing well and preparation for row crops was underway. Columbia County growers prepared soil for tobacco, peanuts, and corn. Hamilton County planted corn and prepared fields for peanuts and sorghum. Spring planting preparation continued in Gadsden County. Sugarcane harvest was near completion in Glades, Palm Beach, and Hendry counties. Okaloosa County producers planted corn and prepared for soybeans, cotton, and peanuts. Union County reported a low supply of hay and great demand during drought conditions. Topsoil moisture was adequate in the Panhandle, short in the central and southern Peninsulas, and very short in the Big Bend. Subsoil moisture was mostly short in all areas.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	33	28	3	30	21	4
Short	49	48	14	46	47	22
Adequate	18	24	77	24	31	69
Surplus	0	0	6	0	1	5

**VEGETABLES:** Vegetable growers irrigated their fields due to lack of moisture. Columbia County growers prepared and planted watermelon, peppers, tomatoes, and sweet corn in irrigated fields. Cabbage harvest continued in St. Johns County despite earlier planted cabbage plowed under and replaced with potatoes. Collier, Hendry, and Lee counties reported salt problems in vegetables due to warm, dry field conditions. Santa Rosa County growers planted spring vegetables. Greens and cabbage were harvested in Putnam County. Manatee County growers began harvesting tomatoes and peppers. Other vegetables marketed were beans, broccoli, celery, eggplant, endive, and lettuce.

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** Pasture condition throughout the State declined due to drought and cool temperatures. In the Panhandle area, pasture condition was very poor to good. Drought and nighttime temperatures near or below freezing continue to be a problem in the west Panhandle. Some pasture has been severely overgrazed in Santa Rosa County. Small grain forage was also beginning to suffer because of dry weather. Pastures were greening up after the last cold snap. Cattle were being fed supplemental hay. Perennial grass has yet to emerge. Cattle condition was poor to excellent with most in fair to good condition. In the northern areas, pasture was very poor to good. Cool season grains were growing but dry soil limited forage yield. Some cool season forage starting to reach full maturity. In the central areas, pastures were greening up but there was no moisture for growth. Stock pond water levels were low and some were dry. Ranchers were pumping water for their stock. Hay supplies were low and demand high. Cattle were in very poor to good condition with most poor or fair. Pasture in the southwest was in very poor to fair condition. Drought has decreased the pasture quality. Limited pasture was being irrigated. 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	9	5	20	25
Poor	25	20	45	40
Fair	40	45	30	30
Good	25	29	5	5
Excellent	1	1	0	0

**CITRUS:** A high pressure system remained over the Peninsula for the week bringing with it low humidity, warm temperatures, and “tinder dry” conditions. Some areas reported early morning patchy fog and smoke caused by scattered wildfires. Temperatures averaged in the mid to upper 80s for most of the citrus-producing regions with the warmest weather reported in the central and southern citrus-producing regions. Rainfall was scarce and drought conditions continue to worsen. New limb growth has been reported on the trees as they slowly begin to recover from late January and early February freezing temperatures. Fertilizing, aerial spraying, and hedging were the dominant activities in the well-cared-for groves while growers make preparations for the return of the anticipated citrus bloom period. The Valencia harvest continues with packinghouses taking late oranges and cleaning up the remaining quantities of the early and midseason varieties. Honey tangerines still continue to be processed and should be completed soon. White and colored grapefruit harvesting also continues at a strong rate with many boxes remaining for harvesting.

Estimated Boxes Harvested - Week Ended			
Crop	Mar 01	Mar 08	Mar 15
	<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>		
Early and mid oranges	2,800	2,272	816
Temples	74	90	56
Valencia oranges	463	1,025	1,945
Navel oranges	2	2	1
Grapefruit	1,015	1,301	1,084
Tangelos	11	4	1
Sunburst tangerines	1	0	0
Honey tangerines	83	98	64

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