



WEATHER CROP

Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
2290 Lucien Way, Suite 300, Maitland, FL 32751
(407) 648-6013 · (407) 648-6029 FAX · www.nass.usda.gov/fl

Week ending January 2, 2011

2010 Ends with Record Freezing Temperatures

Weather Summary: A cold front swept the State early in the week of December 27 through January 2. Freezing temperatures set new record lows across the Sunshine State. Unseasonably cold temperatures averaged one to five degrees below normal. Hard freezes and frosts occurred in several regions from the Panhandle down to the southern Peninsula. Evening lows were in the lower 20s and 30s with the wind chill factor in the teens at several stations. Areas recording lows in the teens included Alachua, Brooksville, Okahumpka, Quincy, and Tallahassee. Most daytime highs were in the 70s. Towards the end of the week temperatures warmed up with a few areas recording at least one high in the 80s. Rainfall ranged from none to over an inch in a few localities. Jay recorded two and a half inches of rain. The cold temperatures coupled with the continuous dry weather sparked several dry land wildfires across Florida.

Soil Moisture Ratings

| Moisture Rating | Topsoil | | | Subsoil | | |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Previous week | Previous year | Current week | Previous week | Previous year | Current week |
| | (percent) | (percent) | (percent) | (percent) | (percent) | (percent) |
| Very short | 25 | 0 | 26 | 20 | 1 | 32 |
| Short | 35 | 26 | 37 | 32 | 25 | 29 |
| Adequate | 38 | 65 | 35 | 45 | 62 | 36 |
| Surplus | 2 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 12 | 3 |

Field Crops: Sugarcane growth was stopped due to the freeze. Growers were harvesting when the bitter, cold weather hit. Some plant cane which will be used for seed next season was destroyed. Planting of potatoes was halted due to extreme drought conditions in Flagler County. Actual potato seed was not affected by the frigid temperatures. Cotton, peanut, and soybean growers disked and conducted soil tests for the upcoming growing season.

Vegetables: Harvesting of vegetables was hindered due to sub-freezing temperatures. Growers were trying to recover and assess damage from prior freeze when the latest freeze hit. To assist growers, the state of emergency for agricultural crops that was issued prior was extended. The order raised weight restriction on trucks carrying agricultural products so growers could harvest and ship as much produce as possible to reduce production loss. Some producers put freeze cloths over vegetables for protection. Nearly 80 percent of the sweet corn crop in western Palm Beach County was destroyed from the first cold snap. Sweet corn producers in Homestead were assessing the extent of the damage to younger plants. Snap beans were impacted by the freeze. A number of growers for snap beans and sweet corn used helicopters for cold protection to prevent frost from settling on crops. Cabbage development was delayed due to the cold spell. Strawberries were able to survive the freeze as growers ran overhead sprinkler systems to form ice caps on berries. The cold weather will delay the berries growth and development. Harvesting of snap beans, eggplant, bell peppers, and strawberries was curtailed due to cold weather. Only light shipments of vegetables were available for marketing with some shipments completely halted due to cold weather.

Floriculture and Nursery: Nursery and floriculture producers were assessing the damage from the latest freeze.

Livestock and Pastures: Statewide, the pasture condition improved slightly, but most was in poor condition. In the Panhandle and northern areas, the pasture condition was mostly poor. Winter forage growth was lower than normal due to cold weather. Cool season forages were not very productive due to the hard freezes and dry conditions. Summer pasture was completely dormant and grazed down. Some irrigated pasture fields were not yet grazeable. The cattle condition was mostly fair. Hay was fed where available. In the central area, the pasture condition ranged from very poor to good with most in poor condition. The cattle condition ranged from very poor to good with most in fair condition. Cattle were being fed hay. In the southwestern area, the pasture condition ranged from very poor to excellent with most in poor condition. The cattle condition was mostly fair. Statewide, the condition of the cattle ranged from poor to excellent with most in fair condition. Cows were calving and required more feed.

Cattle and Pasture Condition

| Condition | Cattle | | Pasture | |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Previous week | Current week | Previous week | Current week |
| | (percent) | (percent) | (percent) | (percent) |
| Very poor..... | 5 | 0 | 20 | 15 |
| Poor..... | 10 | 10 | 50 | 55 |
| Fair..... | 45 | 50 | 25 | 20 |
| Good..... | 39 | 35 | 5 | 9 |
| Excellent..... | 1 | 5 | 0 | 1 |

Citrus: Highs during the early part of the week were in the 40s and 50s, with early morning lows in the 20s and 30s, rising to highs in the 70s and 80s, with lows in the 50s as temperatures returned to a more normal range. Six of the 25 stations recorded precipitation this week. Alachua reported the most precipitation with 0.33 inch of rainfall. Overall, there were moderate to severe drought conditions in most of the citrus area according to the U.S. drought monitor, last updated on December 28. Indian River, Brevard, and St Lucie counties experienced extreme drought conditions, while surrounding counties experienced severe conditions. Harvest was well underway with forty-four packinghouses and fourteen processors receiving fruit. Cultural practices included application of lime and irrigation.

Citrus Estimated Boxes Harvested

[In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes]

| Crop | December 19, 2010 | December 26, 2010 | January 2, 2011 |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | (boxes) | (boxes) | (boxes) |
| Early and mid oranges..... | 4,561 | 3,633 | (NA) |
| Ambersweet..... | 5 | 2 | (NA) |
| Navel oranges..... | 222 | 105 | (NA) |
| Grapefruit..... | 509 | 241 | (NA) |
| Tangelos..... | 81 | 70 | (NA) |
| Tangerines..... | 263 | 137 | (NA) |
| Total..... | 5,641 | 4,188 | (NA) |

NA Not available.

This report is available, at no cost, on the NASS web site: http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Florida/Subscribe_to_FL_Reports/index.asp. To set-up this free subscription, select Florida Crop-Weather; enter your name and your email address, click on Subscribe. This report will be sent automatically each week; or call us at 800/344-6277 and we will enter the subscription for you. The precipitation and temperature data used in this report originates from the Florida Automated Weather Network (FAWN). Data for individual reporting stations is available at: <http://fawn.ifas.ufl.edu> maintained by UF/IFAS Information Technologies.