

For the Month of December 2016

FLORIDA: December started mostly warm and dry. The Panhandle and northern counties were under abnormally dry conditions, which spread throughout the month to include several counties in the middle of the state. Cotton, soybean, and peanut harvesting all wrapped up at the beginning of the month. Sugarcane harvest continued in Glades, Hendry, and Palm Beach Counties. Less winter cover crops and forages were able to be planted in the Panhandle and northern part of State due to the dry conditions. Flagler and Putnam counties began harvesting cabbage and leafy greens. Farmers in southwest Florida harvested green beans, beets, collards, cucumbers, eggplant, herbs, kale, peppers, squash, Swiss chard, tomatoes, watermelon. Palm Beach County farmers used ditches, canals, and other equipment to irrigate. Miami-Dade County harvested green beans, pole beans, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, yellow squash, sweet potatoes, sweet corn, zucchini, boniato, bitter melon, malanga, and avocado. The dry conditions and warm temperatures had pasture quality and quantity declining steadily throughout the month. The cattle, however remained in mostly fair to good condition. Supplemental feeding was reported in several counties. Early orange harvest activities increased at the beginning of month. Grapefruit harvest was in full swing by the end of the month, with internal quality holding well. All processing plants were open and accepting field-run fruit by the end of the month. The navel oranges, white grapefruit, and red grapefruit harvest schedule is slightly ahead of last season. Grove work includes irrigating, mowing, spraying, fertilizing. Caretakers are replacing unproductive trees and taking care of healthy older trees and resets with varioud types of fertilization programs. Old, non-productive groves are being pushed and cleared.