The Week in Florida Agriculture

April 7-13, 2008

Planting is winding down in areas of the Panhandle.

The cool, dry weather in late spring is giving a boost to winter wheat.

Potato harvest has begun in the Hastings area.

Corn planting is near completion, but some major producers are waiting for saturated soil to dry.

Strawberries continue to be harvested.

Drought Update: Precipitation of less than a half-inch was scattered throughout the state and increased soil moisture in some areas. Moderate rainfall was recorded in Fort Pierce and Immokalee, totaling less than a half-inch for the week. Other areas had no significant rainfall. As a result of recent rainfall, canals and lakes are carrying ample water needed for irrigation. A rising Lake Okeechobee closed the week at 10.53 feet, a level not seen since March 27, 2007.

Vegetables: Beans, sweet corn, radishes, squash, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, tomatoes and escarole are being marketed.

The strawberry season in Plant City has ended due to heavy rains.

Harvesting of spring crops has begun in areas of the southern peninsula.

Livestock and Pastures: In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition is in fair condition. Unseasonably cool temperatures are slowing forage growth in much of the area. Condition of the cattle is mainly fair to good. In central areas, pasture and cattle conditions are poor to good. In the southwestern areas, pastures are mainly in good condition, showing improvement due to recent rains with some localized field flooding. Statewide, cattle condition is mainly in fair condition.

Growers in the Fort Myers area are harvesting collards, peppers, cabbage and kale.

Light volumes of watermelon are being harvested in Immokalee.

Citrus: Citrus-producing counties experienced continued warm weather all week. Growers are wrapping up final applications of pesticides and fertilizers, are hedging and topping behind harvest, and conducting young tree care. The bloom period is just about ended for the season. Early oranges and grapefruit are forming small pea-size fruit, while late oranges are dropping the last of their bloom. Valencia harvest, at over 6 million boxes again this week, is in full swing. A large majority of the remaining white grapefruit this season will be marketed as processed. Honey tangerines, typically grown for the fresh fruit market, are being processed at a rate higher than normal. Other varieties being harvested include Valencia oranges, and small amounts of Temple oranges and grapefruit.

Compiled by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Division of Marketing and Development