

# The Week in Florida Agriculture

April 21-27, 2008

Peanut planting in areas of the Panhandle is 7 percent complete.

Warm weather is helping the corn crop growth.

Some cotton is being planted in fields where there is sufficient moisture.

Potato harvest continues in the Hastings area.

Harvesting of squash continues.

Although extremely dry in areas, there is enough moisture in some parts to plant soybeans, peanuts and other spring crops.

Strawberry harvest continues in Starke.

Cucumbers continue to be planted in Fort Pierce.

**Vegetables:** Broccoli, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, eggplant, lettuce and peppers are being marketed.

**Aquaculture:** The commercial gag and black grouper fishery in the South Atlantic and greater amberjack fishery reopens at midnight on May 1, 2008.

**Drought Update:** Little to no rain throughout the week. Drought is still the biggest factor in restricting grass growth. Seasonal windy conditions and lack of rainfall have hurt forage growth. In central areas two weeks without rain and high winds have been bad for forage growth. No significant rainfall was recorded across the citrus belt. Lake Okeechobee level dropped slightly to 10.39 feet.

**Livestock and Pastures:** In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition is fair, having improved following recent rains and showers. Some acreage of winter grazing has been hayed. Some cattle are being fed supplemental hay on operations where the pasture is poor. The condition of cattle is mostly good. In central areas, pasture condition is fair and cattle are in fair condition. In the southwestern areas, pasture condition is very poor to good. Statewide, cattle condition is mainly fair.

**Citrus:** Temperatures in citrus-producing areas are normal for this time of year. Drier weather the past couple of weeks has prompted growers to run irrigation on a more robust schedule. Overall, trees of all ages look good with lots of foliage and healthy new fruit. New trees are being planted as available where there is sufficient irrigation to keep the trees healthy during the dry season. Harvesting crews are moving large quantities of Valencia oranges to the processors. Grapefruit harvest, at about a million boxes this week, is expected to drop off more rapidly with the availability lessening. Honey tangerine harvest, at over 150,000 boxes per week, is being harvested primarily for the processed market.

Most spring crops look good in Immokalee; however, some diseases are showing up in the melon fields.

Harvesting and packing of beans, corn, squash, and tomatoes continue in Florida City.