

The Week in Florida Agriculture

April 28 - May 4, 2008

Land preparation and spring planting continue in the Panhandle and Big Bend.

Planting of peanuts and cottons is under way. Peanut planting progress is 12 percent completed. By comparison, peanut planting was 9 percent finished by this time last year.

Tomatoes are being planted and are in good condition.

Watering restrictions due to a continued lack of rain are being reported.

Vegetables: Vegetables moving through the market: snap beans, celery, cabbage, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, okra, peas, peppers, radishes, squash and tomatoes.

Livestock and Pastures: In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition is poor to excellent. The condition of cattle is poor to good. In central areas, pasture condition is very poor to good. Cattle condition is poor to good. In the southwestern areas, pasture is very poor to excellent. Those that still have hay are feeding it. Statewide, cattle condition is mainly in fair to good condition.

Drought Update: Most of the state received little or no rain, especially in central and southern areas. Central and southern counties continue to see no measurable rain for crops. Indian River County reported watering restrictions due to a continued lack of rain. In the Panhandle, most pasture remains drought-stressed and dry. Cool weather is keeping grass growth to a minimum. In Central Florida, pasture condition is poor due to drought. In southwest, most pasture is stressed from lack of moisture. Where available, irrigation is under way. Lake Okeechobee level is dropping and closed the week at 10.25 feet.

Citrus: Temperatures in citrus-producing areas are average for this time of year. No significant rainfall has been reported since the first week of April. Trees are beginning to show slight afternoon wilt during the heat of the day. Growers are running irrigation almost daily to keep the trees and new fruit in healthy condition. Many growers are still pushing trees with greening, while some are treating the trees before the symptoms show. Harvest is about halfway through on Valencia. Colored grapefruit harvest decreased rapidly due to limited availability. Honey tangerine harvest is 150,000 boxes per week.

Watermelon growers report low yields for the week. Rainy and cool conditions from previous weeks may have affected pollination of the watermelon crop.