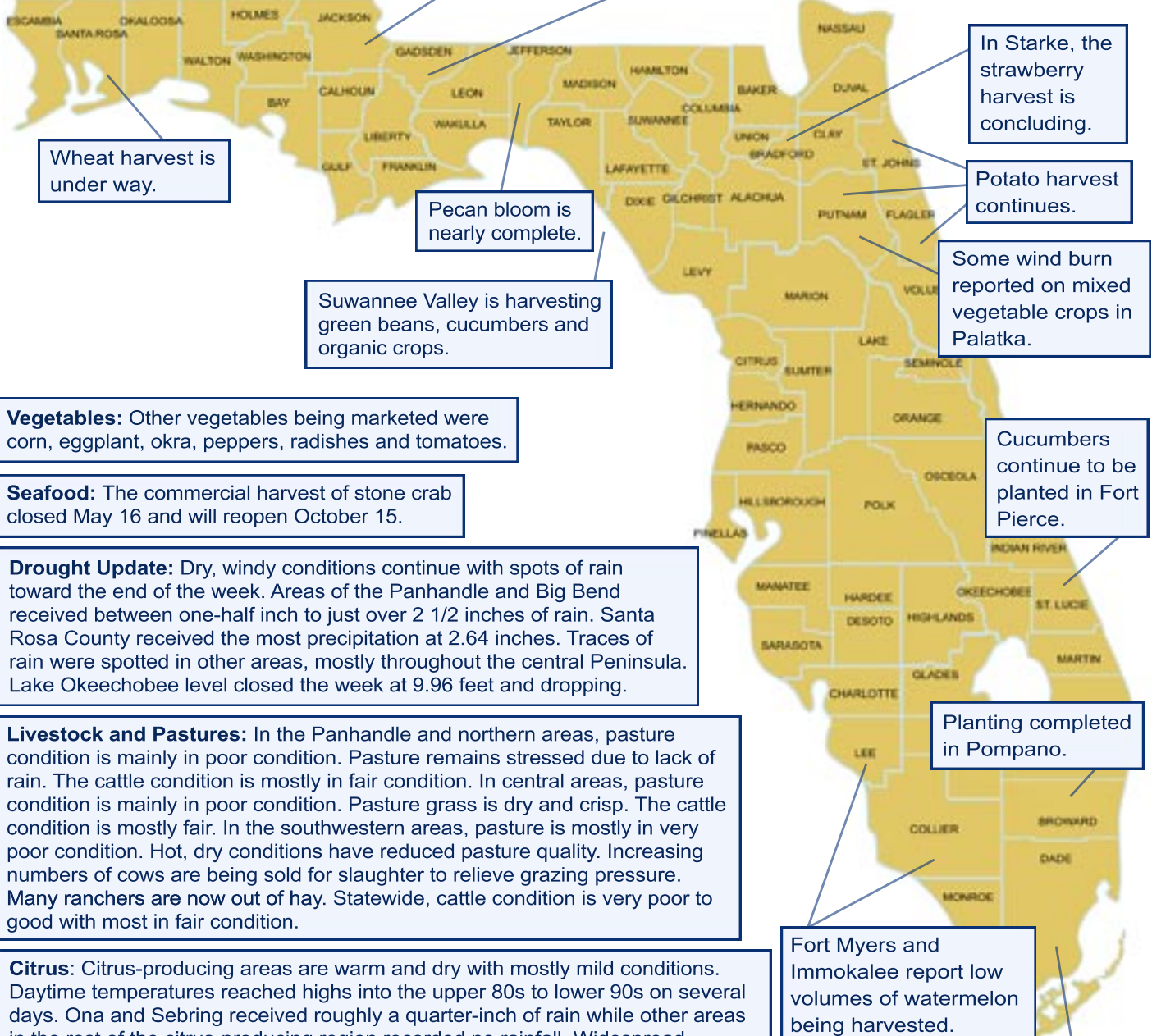


# The Week in Florida Agriculture

May 12-18, 2008

Peanut planting continues with 62 percent completed, compared to 39 percent this time last year.

Squash harvest continues throughout Gadsden County.



Wheat harvest is under way.

Pecan bloom is nearly complete.

Suwannee Valley is harvesting green beans, cucumbers and organic crops.

In Starke, the strawberry harvest is concluding.

Potato harvest continues.

Some wind burn reported on mixed vegetable crops in Palatka.

**Vegetables:** Other vegetables being marketed were corn, eggplant, okra, peppers, radishes and tomatoes.

**Seafood:** The commercial harvest of stone crab closed May 16 and will reopen October 15.

**Drought Update:** Dry, windy conditions continue with spots of rain toward the end of the week. Areas of the Panhandle and Big Bend received between one-half inch to just over 2 1/2 inches of rain. Santa Rosa County received the most precipitation at 2.64 inches. Traces of rain were spotted in other areas, mostly throughout the central Peninsula. Lake Okeechobee level closed the week at 9.96 feet and dropping.

**Livestock and Pastures:** In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition is mainly in poor condition. Pasture remains stressed due to lack of rain. The cattle condition is mostly in fair condition. In central areas, pasture condition is mainly in poor condition. Pasture grass is dry and crisp. The cattle condition is mostly fair. In the southwestern areas, pasture is mostly in very poor condition. Hot, dry conditions have reduced pasture quality. Increasing numbers of cows are being sold for slaughter to relieve grazing pressure. Many ranchers are now out of hay. Statewide, cattle condition is very poor to good with most in fair condition.

**Citrus:** Citrus-producing areas are warm and dry with mostly mild conditions. Daytime temperatures reached highs into the upper 80s to lower 90s on several days. Ona and Sebring received roughly a quarter-inch of rain while other areas in the rest of the citrus-producing region recorded no rainfall. Widespread, significant rainfall has not been recorded since early April. Most trees still look good with heavy foliage and healthy new fruit. Some trees are showing afternoon wilt during the hottest parts of the day. Hedging and topping continue into the later part of the citrus season. Other production activities include spraying, mowing, brush removal, and resetting. Growers are combating greening by removing trees and attempting to control the Psyllids with pesticides. Valencia processing is maintaining around the 6 million-box level, with adequate availability of fruit remaining to continue this level into June. Some processing plants plan to run Valencia oranges into the second week of July. Large quantities of grapefruit utilization are over, but small amounts will continue to trickle in for several more weeks. Honey tangerine harvest went over 100,000 boxes this week, mostly for the processed market.

Cucumbers continue to be planted in Fort Pierce.

Planting completed in Pompano.

Fort Myers and Immokalee report low volumes of watermelon being harvested. Immokalee's low volume is due to cool nighttime temperatures and disease.

Florida City harvesting and packing beans, tomatoes and okra.