

The Week in Florida Agriculture

September 13-19, 2008

Peanut digging is 73 percent complete, compared with 66 percent this time last year, and a five-year average progress of 74 percent.

The longleaf pine cone crop is abundant this year. Longleaf pine produce larger quantities of seed every three to seven years. This is the first abundant seed season since 2003. Cone harvesting continues through October.

Cool season forage and grains are being planted.

Cabbage planting is near completion.

Cotton and soybeans are being harvested.

Winter small grains and forage are being planted, with delays experienced in some very dry areas.

Permanent pasture forage is not growing due to shortened daylight.

The first tomato harvest is expected soon.

Seafood: Wholesalers report a good supply of pompano.

Vegetables: Cucumbers, eggplant, okra, squash, avocados and tomatoes are moving through the market.

Livestock and Pastures: The quality and quantity of summer pasture is declining. In the Panhandle, pastures are fair with most in good condition. Already-planted winter forage is emerging, but further planting has been delayed by low topsoil moisture. Forage growth is slow due to cool weather. In the northern areas, pasture condition ranges from fair to good. Growth in hay fields has slowed due to shorter days and cooler nights. Most growers are making their final hay cuttings. Cattle condition is fair to good. In the central areas, pasture condition is mostly fair. Some pastures are not growing due to drought, while in other areas pastures are still recovering from Tropical Storm Fay. The protein content of pasture is low which will affect calf growth and weight. Some cattle are in poor condition but hoof rot problems are clearing up as pastures dry out. In the southwest areas, pasture condition is very poor to excellent, with poor condition caused by drought. Statewide, cattle condition is mostly good.

Citrus: Weather conditions are generally cooler with light winds and sunny skies in most of the citrus-producing counties. Over the past weekend a cold front moved through the state bringing much cooler temperatures. Rainfall has been light throughout the state with the exception of Hendry County. Immokalee reported scattered showers and received the most rain in the southern areas with slightly over a half an inch. Citrus trees are in overall good condition in well-tended groves with fruit sets above average on early oranges and early tangerines. Maturity levels on early and late oranges show the crop is ahead of recent historical averages. Grove activity includes limited harvesting, irrigating, herbiciding and mowing. Scouting for canker and greening continues. Thirty-nine packinghouses have opened and are shipping fruit; five processing plants are running fruit in small quantities. Varieties being packed include early oranges (Navels, Ambersweet, and Hamlin), white and colored grapefruit, and Fallglo tangerines.

Some concern of disease due to recent rains.