

The Week in Florida Agriculture

December 22-28, 2008

Pecan harvest is wrapping up. Yields are lower than expected due to nut drop and limb breakage from Tropical Storm Fay.

Potatoes are being planted. Cabbage and broccoli are being harvested.

Cotton harvest is complete. Winter forage growth is good and grazing has begun.

Forestry: As part of the 2009 Super Bowl Environmental Program, 740 red mangrove trees have been planted in Terra Ceia in Northern Manatee County.

Vegetables: Vegetables being marketed include cucumbers, eggplant, green beans, peppers, squash sweet, corn, tomatoes, and specialty items. Vegetable growers' activity includes planting, staking, spraying, and performing other cultural needs.

Livestock and Pastures: Pasture condition statewide is poor to good. Cattle condition is mostly fair to good. In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture is mainly poor to fair. Some small-grain winter forage (wheat and ryegrass) is up and being grazed, but much has not grown enough to provide graze. Permanent pastures are greening up. Hay and protein supplements are being fed. The dry weather continues to stunt pastures and impact cattle watering ponds. Cattle condition is in fair to good condition. In the central areas, pasture is mainly in poor condition. Cattle condition is mostly poor to good. In the southwestern areas, pasture is very poor to good. Most pasture is poor due to drought; however, some locations are still flooded from rains of several weeks ago.

Citrus: Citrus-producing areas recorded another week of warmer-than-average temperatures. Light, scattered rain totaled less than one-tenth of an inch in the western, northern, and southern areas. Fort Pierce had the most rain at three-tenths of an inch. Moderate drought conditions continue to extend as far east as the center of the citrus-growing region. A few processing plants were shut on Wednesday and Friday; with some only shut down on Christmas Day. Even with lower prices and high juice inventories, processing of early oranges continues to be ahead of last season. Harvesting of Sunburst tangerines should continue for the next couple of weeks until Honeys and Temples are ready to be harvested. Other than harvesting, grove activity includes fertilizing, cleaning up groves, dormant spraying for psyllid control, and a small amount of hedging.

Sugarcane harvest is under way in South Florida.