

The Week in Florida Agriculture

January 5-11, 2009

The wheat crop is doing well due to recent favorable conditions. More rain is still needed to improve small grain growth.

Cabbage and broccoli producers have been irrigating fields.

Potatoes are being planted.

Greens, cabbage and strawberries are being harvested.

Seafood: King mackerel are in good supply.

Forestry: Prescribed fire, a common forest management and tool, is currently being conducted. Contact the Division of Forestry to obtain the required burning authorization for silvicultural and agricultural prescribed burning.

Vegetables: Preparation for spring planting in progress. Some growers in southern Florida have abandoned fields after the first picking due to poor prices. Other vegetables marketed during the week included snap beans, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive/escarole, peppers, radishes and squash. Many growers in northern Florida are concerned about the approaching cold front and its potential damage.

Strawberry harvesting continues.

Tomatoes are being harvested.

Some blight reported on tomato crop due to cool and wet conditions earlier in the season.

Livestock and Pastures: Pasture condition throughout the state is very poor to good. In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition is mostly poor. Winter pastures (winter wheat, ryegrass) are beginning to show significant stress from lack of moisture, while cool-season forage is doing well. Bahia pasture is greening up, however very little volume is available for grazing. Some winter forage has just reached the grazing stage and some will be ready for grazing at the end of the month. Slow growth on all small grains is due to dry conditions. Cattle condition is fair to good. In the central area, pasture condition is very poor to good. Some cattle are grazing on ryegrass forage. Cattle are being fed supplemental hay, including peanut hay. Hay supplies are low and some ranchers have used up stored hay. In the southwestern area, pasture is very poor to good with most in fair condition. Statewide, cattle condition is mainly fair to good.

Sugarcane harvest continues.

Citrus: Florida's citrus-producing areas experienced another week without significant rainfall. Temperatures again reached the upper 70s to lower 80s on several days in all areas. With rainfall amounts well below average since mid-December, abnormally dry conditions cover most of the citrus region. Citrus growers have been irrigating heavily, doing light fertilization, and mowing for picking crews. Some hedging and topping of grapefruit performed on the East Coast after harvest. Early and midseason harvest is in full swing, at almost 6 million boxes weekly. Sunburst tangerine utilization has slowed but is expected to last about another month. Honeys are being picked, but still in small quantities.

Decrease in landscaping activity has resulted in lower demand for nursery crops.

