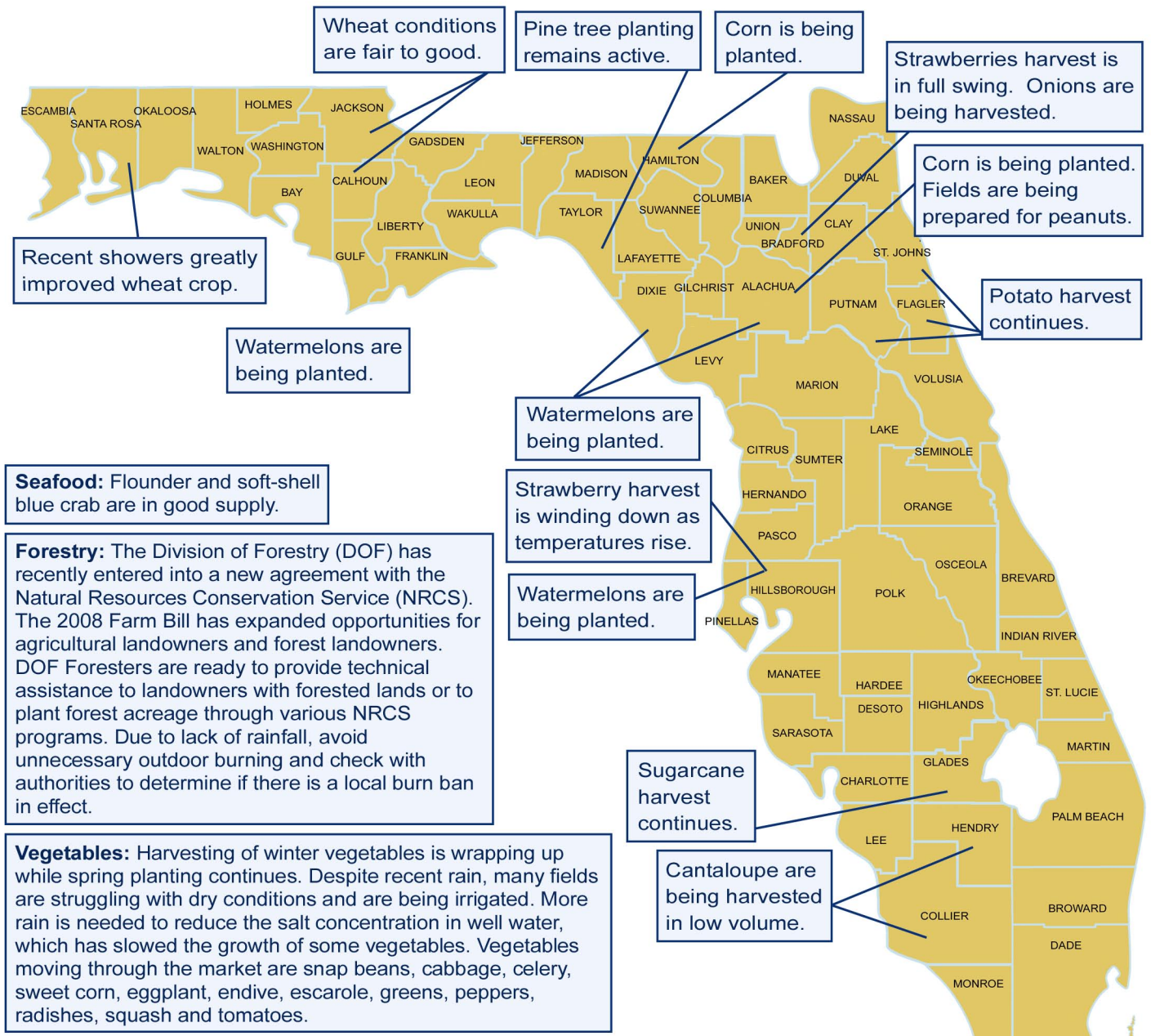


# The Week in Florida Agriculture

March 16-22, 2009



**Seafood:** Flounder and soft-shell blue crab are in good supply.

**Forestry:** The Division of Forestry (DOF) has recently entered into a new agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The 2008 Farm Bill has expanded opportunities for agricultural landowners and forest landowners. DOF Foresters are ready to provide technical assistance to landowners with forested lands or to plant forest acreage through various NRCS programs. Due to lack of rainfall, avoid unnecessary outdoor burning and check with authorities to determine if there is a local burn ban in effect.

**Vegetables:** Harvesting of winter vegetables is wrapping up while spring planting continues. Despite recent rain, many fields are struggling with dry conditions and are being irrigated. More rain is needed to reduce the salt concentration in well water, which has slowed the growth of some vegetables. Vegetables moving through the market are snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, eggplant, endive, escarole, greens, peppers, radishes, squash and tomatoes.

**Livestock and Pastures:** Pasture condition is poor due to drought. Supplemental hay is being fed throughout the state. In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition was very poor to good with drought the leading factor in poor forage growth. Rain over the weekend and warmer weather improved grazing conditions in the Panhandle. Cattle condition is poor to excellent. Summer grass (Bahia) is emerging following recent rain in Holmes, Escambia and Washington counties. Spring clover forage was growing well. New pastures are being seeded. In the central areas, pasture is mostly very poor to poor with some pasture fair to good. Cattle condition is mostly poor to fair. Pasture condition in the southwest is very poor to good. Cattle condition is mainly fair to good. Supplemental hay is being fed. Statewide, cattle condition was very poor to excellent.

**Citrus:** Warm, seasonal temperatures were reported across the state. Widely scattered showers brought almost a half inch of rain to Highlands and Hardee counties. The Fort Pierce area recorded almost two inches of precipitation. The natural start of the new crop is evidenced by widespread spring citrus bloom and reports of new growth flush with full open bloom on many citrus trees. Well-tended groves are in excellent condition. Fertilizer and pesticide are being applied with some irrigation to help support the fruit set. Harvesting has increased significantly for the late Valencia crop. Packinghouses are still accepting small quantities of the early and midseason varieties. The Honey tangerine harvest has decreased slightly while the white and colored grapefruit remains at a good pace with many boxes still left for harvesting.