

The Week in Florida Agriculture

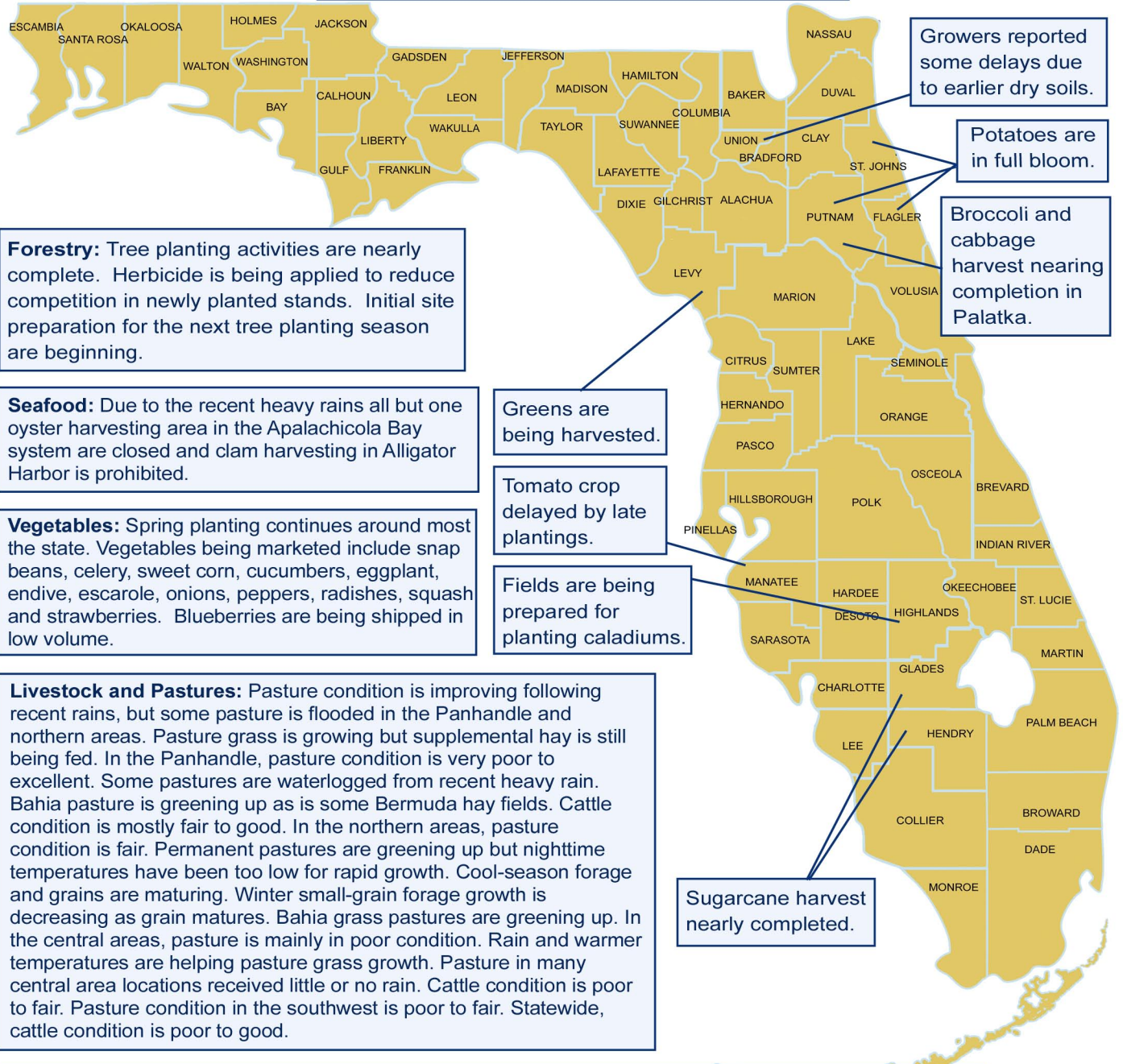
March 30 - April 5, 2009

Heavy rains in the northern region have delayed field work. Many fields that were prepared for planting corn and peanuts became flooded with some field erosion.

Growers reported some delays due to earlier dry soils.

Potatoes are in full bloom.

Broccoli and cabbage harvest nearing completion in Palatka.



Forestry: Tree planting activities are nearly complete. Herbicide is being applied to reduce competition in newly planted stands. Initial site preparation for the next tree planting season are beginning.

Seafood: Due to the recent heavy rains all but one oyster harvesting area in the Apalachicola Bay system are closed and clam harvesting in Alligator Harbor is prohibited.

Vegetables: Spring planting continues around most the state. Vegetables being marketed include snap beans, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, onions, peppers, radishes, squash and strawberries. Blueberries are being shipped in low volume.

Greens are being harvested.

Tomato crop delayed by late plantings.

Fields are being prepared for planting caladiums.

Livestock and Pastures: Pasture condition is improving following recent rains, but some pasture is flooded in the Panhandle and northern areas. Pasture grass is growing but supplemental hay is still being fed. In the Panhandle, pasture condition is very poor to excellent. Some pastures are waterlogged from recent heavy rain. Bahia pasture is greening up as is some Bermuda hay fields. Cattle condition is mostly fair to good. In the northern areas, pasture condition is fair. Permanent pastures are greening up but nighttime temperatures have been too low for rapid growth. Cool-season forage and grains are maturing. Winter small-grain forage growth is decreasing as grain matures. Bahia grass pastures are greening up. In the central areas, pasture is mainly in poor condition. Rain and warmer temperatures are helping pasture grass growth. Pasture in many central area locations received little or no rain. Cattle condition is poor to fair. Pasture condition in the southwest is poor to fair. Statewide, cattle condition is poor to good.

Sugarcane harvest nearly completed.

Citrus: Temperatures ranged from early-morning lows in the 50s to late-afternoon highs in the 80s across the citrus region. A few widely scattered showers fell in various citrus-producing areas. Fort Pierce had the most rainfall at one-third of an inch. Windy conditions, combined with warm temperatures caused some dryness to citrus trees, increasing the need for irrigation. The drought intensity is moderate to severe due to the lack of precipitation in all citrus areas. A heavy citrus bloom continues to be observed on all varieties. Fertilizer and pesticide applications are limited to avoid disturbing the bloom. Harvesting has increased slightly and remains strong for the Valencia crop with over 5 million boxes picked this week. Packinghouses are still accepting very small quantities of the early and midseason varieties and should be finished soon. The Honey tangerine harvest has decreased significantly while the white and colored grapefruit remains steady with many boxes still left for harvesting.