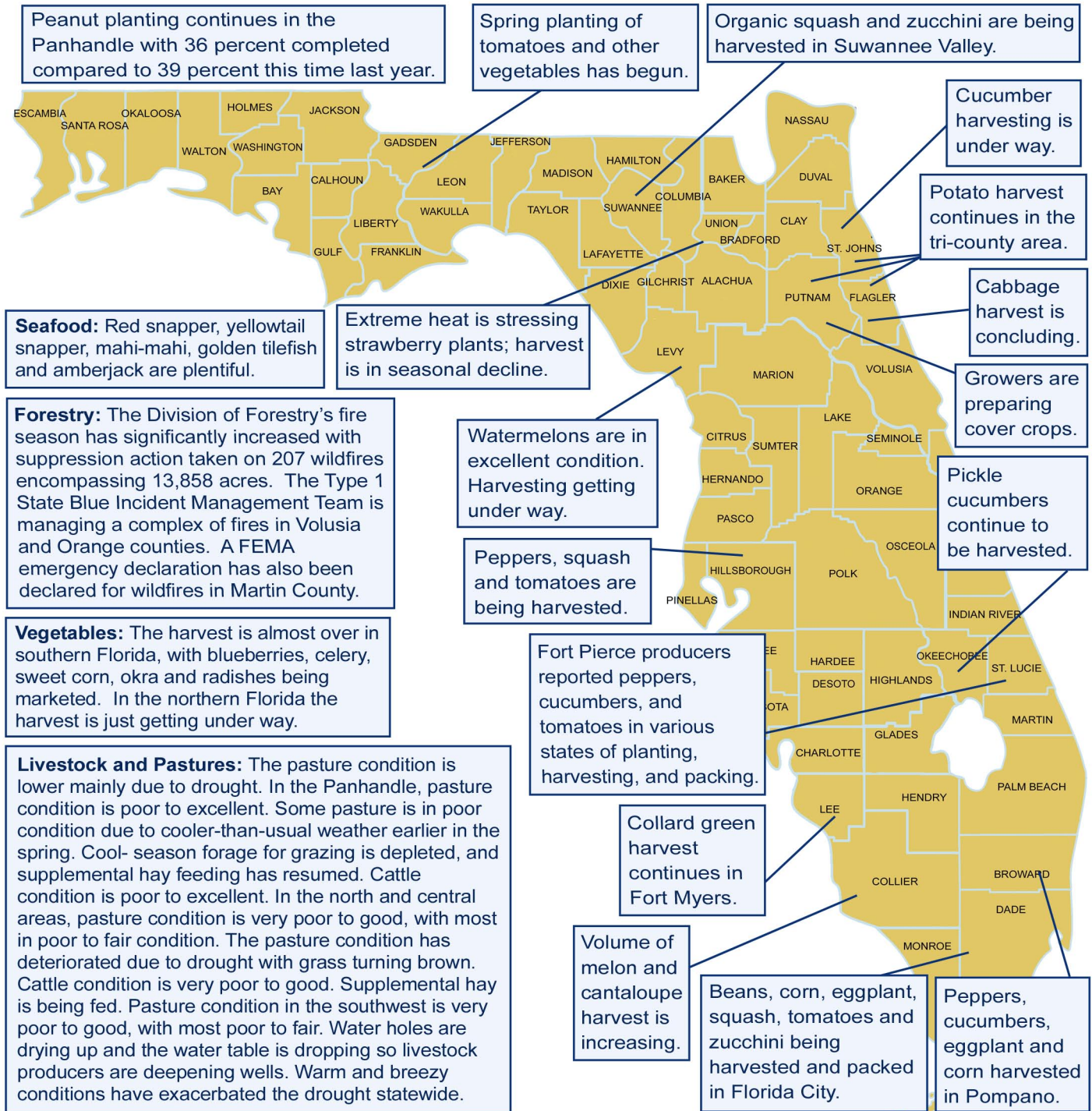


The Week in Florida Agriculture

May 4-10, 2009



Peanut planting continues in the Panhandle with 36 percent completed compared to 39 percent this time last year.

Spring planting of tomatoes and other vegetables has begun.

Organic squash and zucchini are being harvested in Suwannee Valley.

Cucumber harvesting is under way.

Potato harvest continues in the tri-county area.

Cabbage harvest is concluding.

Growers are preparing cover crops.

Pickle cucumbers continue to be harvested.

Seafood: Red snapper, yellowtail snapper, mahi-mahi, golden tilefish and amberjack are plentiful.

Extreme heat is stressing strawberry plants; harvest is in seasonal decline.

Watermelons are in excellent condition. Harvesting getting under way.

Peppers, squash and tomatoes are being harvested.

Fort Pierce producers reported peppers, cucumbers, and tomatoes in various states of planting, harvesting, and packing.

Collard green harvest continues in Fort Myers.

Volume of melon and cantaloupe harvest is increasing.

Beans, corn, eggplant, squash, tomatoes and zucchini being harvested and packed in Florida City.

Peppers, cucumbers, eggplant and corn harvested in Pompano.

Forestry: The Division of Forestry's fire season has significantly increased with suppression action taken on 207 wildfires encompassing 13,858 acres. The Type 1 State Blue Incident Management Team is managing a complex of fires in Volusia and Orange counties. A FEMA emergency declaration has also been declared for wildfires in Martin County.

Vegetables: The harvest is almost over in southern Florida, with blueberries, celery, sweet corn, okra and radishes being marketed. In the northern Florida the harvest is just getting under way.

Livestock and Pastures: The pasture condition is lower mainly due to drought. In the Panhandle, pasture condition is poor to excellent. Some pasture is in poor condition due to cooler-than-usual weather earlier in the spring. Cool-season forage for grazing is depleted, and supplemental hay feeding has resumed. Cattle condition is poor to excellent. In the north and central areas, pasture condition is very poor to good, with most in poor to fair condition. The pasture condition has deteriorated due to drought with grass turning brown. Cattle condition is very poor to good. Supplemental hay is being fed. Pasture condition in the southwest is very poor to good, with most poor to fair. Water holes are drying up and the water table is dropping so livestock producers are deepening wells. Warm and breezy conditions have exacerbated the drought statewide.

Citrus: A high pressure system brought high temperatures to the peninsula with no significant rainfall. Frostproof, Fort Pierce, Immokalee, Kenansville, Palmdale, Sebring, and Umatilla all reported temperatures in the high 90s during the day and the low 70s at night. East and west coastal sea breezes in the late afternoon brought showers to isolated areas. Rainfall totals are well below normal. Drought conditions continue with dry air and low humidity causing many brush fires. Immokalee reported the most precipitation of any citrus area with just over half an inch. Citrus trees are showing wilt during the heat of the day due to lack of rainfall. With adequate use of supplemental grove irrigation systems, citrus trees are in good condition. Some stages of grove water restrictions are being reported. Next year's fruit is maturing at a good pace for both the early and late varieties of oranges. Caretakers are irrigating and using limited production practices. The harvest of Valencia oranges for processing continues to remain very active with almost 6.5 million boxes picked. Grapefruit harvest has slowed to approximately 147,000 boxes. Packinghouses report no Honey tangerines, Temples, or early-midseason oranges harvested.