Foggy mornings and unseasonably high temperatures have characterized the weather across south Florida production areas over the past two weeks. Temperatures have ranged from 6 – 13 degrees above normal with the highs many days approaching record levels. Daytime highs have ranged in the mid to low 80’s with most nights dropping into the 50’s and 60’s. Widespread heavy fog has blanked the region most mornings often until late in the morning.

Precipitation for the period has been negligible with only a trace of rain being recorded in some locales.

<table>
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<th>Rainfall (Inches)</th>
<th>Hours Below Certain Temperature</th>
<th>(hours)</th>
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Warm weather has accelerated crop growth and reports indicate that many plantings are ahead of schedule.

Crops across the area are in mostly fair to good condition. Growers continue to plant spring crops in addition to conducting cultural operation such as staking, pruning, tying and spraying as needed. Potato harvest is increasing seasonally. Reports indicate that rain and cold weather early in January has affected the quality and quantity of some vegetables around Immokalee with some fruit not meeting grade standards. Vegetables available include tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, celery, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, parsley, potato, radishes, snap beans, squash, sweet corn, strawberries and specialty vegetables.
The short term forecast from the National Weather Service in Miami calls partly cloudy skies today becoming mostly cloudy over the weekend with a 20 percent chance of showers over the next few days as a week cold front drops down across south Florida. Daytime high should moderate reaching the mid to upper 70’s with lows in the upper 50’s to low 60’s. We should see scattered showers again toward the middle of the week with a further drop in temperatures to more seasonable levels. For additional information, visit the National Weather Service in Miami website at http://www.srh.noaa.gov/mia/newpage/cgi-bin/master.pl?suite=home

Reports from around southwest Florida, indicate that leafminer pressure is variable with many growers indicating that they are spraying every 7 – 14 days depending on pressure to achieve control. In new tomato plantings respondents indicate that most fields require treatment within a week or two of planting. Growers also report some problems with leafminers in range of crops including tomato, potato, pepper, cucurbits and beans.

On the east coast, leafminer pressure is low to moderate and has dropped off compared to the higher pressure reported in mid-December.

Growers have obtained good results with abamectin (Agri-Mek), cyromazine (Tri-gard) - peppers, spinosad (Spintor) and azadirachtin (Neemix). These materials are relatively soft on beneficials. Although there are a number of other labeled materials that will give good control, growers should avoid the use of harsh chemicals to control other insects if possible to help preserve beneficial populations.

Natural enemies, primarily parasitic wasps, will often help control leafminers. If these parasites are killed by pesticides leafminer outbreaks may become more severe.

As always, growers are advised to practice resistance management and avoid repeated back-to-back applications of all pesticides. Attention to sanitation and destruction of old fields is also important as leafminer populations can build in abandoned fields.

Reports indicate that silverleaf whitefly numbers are picking up with scattered hotspots where whiteflies appear to be moving in from old crops including pepper.

Around Palm Beach County, reports indicate that significant populations of silverleaf whitefly are being found on plantings adjacent to older plantings that are being taken out of production. However, in younger plantings, there has been no report of buildup of SLWF nymphs. Squash producers report that whitefly induced silver leaf is starting to show in some plantings. In some cases, silvering has affected fruit quality causing the fruit of yellow squash to turn light green.

In the Immokalee area, scouts indicate counts of 2-3 up to 10 whiteflies per plants in some fields. In some cases, growers have felt that pressure from migrating adults has been high enough to warrant foliar sprays on young plants to knock down the adults. Some growers and scouts have observed that whiteflies populations seem to be higher and more widespread than usual for this time possibly due to the unseasonable warm weather.

In older fields, growers are encouraged to monitor whitefly populations more closely as crops begin to mature and initial control from imidacloprid and thiamethoxam has begun to dissipate. As control with soil-applied nicotinoids diminishes growers should begin to use other products of other chemical classes for control. Choices would include products such as Thiodan, soaps or the insect growth regulators Knack® or Applaud. With Knack® or Applaud, growers will need to work around the 14 and 7 day PHI’s where treatment is needed at harvest.

Growers are also reminded of the importance of sanitation and rapid destruction of crop residues once harvest is complete.
Worms are reportedly rebounding somewhat following the cold weather in early January although pressure remains mostly light. Scouts around southwest Florida report finding mostly southern armyworms with an occasional looper or fruitworm being seen. Respondents from Palm Beach County also report that worm pressure is mostly low although some southern armyworms have been found hatching out along with a few beet armyworms.

Pepper weevils are present at mostly low levels with some reports from southwest Florida indicating that they may be increasing in some older plantings. Growers indicate they continue to spray for weevils but indicate that they seem to be under control with few new infestations reported. The situation is similar in Palm Beach with reports of very low levels of pepper weevils are being found across the south county area. There have been no reports of new outbreaks in younger pepper.

Scattered reports of broadmites on pepper and eggplant continue to be received from respondents on both coasts who report that they continue to cause some injury. In general, broadmite pressure is down and many growers report no new problems in young fields and scouts are finding few live mites in older plantings.

Thrips populations remain low in all areas and reports indicate that nearly all findings are Florida flower thrips (*Frankliniella bispinosa*). At this time, pressure is light although possibly beginning to creep up in some areas but is generally not considered to be a problem at this time.

Scouts in southwest Florida report that there has been some increase in aphid pressure with some colony formation being reported in pepper and on oriental brassicas. Reports from Palm Beach County indicate that a few scattered aphids continue to be found along with light occurrences of aphid-transmitted viruses in pepper. Other reports indicate that aphid populations are unusually low for this time of year and there is an unusually low amount of virus on squash for this time of year.

Despite the nearly daily occurrence of dense fog across most south Florida growing areas, disease pressure remains low to moderate.

Reports from all areas indicate that bacterial leafspot remains active at low to moderate levels on tomato and pepper. Scouts in Palm Beach report that bacterial spot continues to spread on middle-aged pepper plants that are just starting to fruit. Around Immokalee reports indicate that bacteria has begun to move up into the canopy of some tomato plantings but in general is remaining low in the plant.

Growers and scouts around Immokalee report that early blight remains active in tomato and potato. Incidence and severity is low to moderate in most cases although several reports indicate that recent foggy mornings have resulted in increased disease pressure and activity.

Target spot continue to be a problem in tomato in all areas. Incidence and severity is mostly low. Grape tomatoes have been particularly hard hit due in part to their rampant vegetative growth and the fact that they have no inbred resistance to any diseases.

There have been reports of scattered problems with Rhizoctonia in tomato and potato fields around Immokalee.

Several respondents have reported outbreaks of *Phytophthora capsici* in scattered locations on both coasts where it has attacked young pepper causing wilting and stand reduction.

Powdery mildew remains active on squash. Powdery mildew is widespread in older cucurbits especially squash. Incidence and severity is generally low to moderate although some severe infections have been noted in older plantings.
Reports from Palm Beach indicate that powdery mildew remains a problem in pepper and some reports suggest that it may be increasing in severity. It is being found mostly on older plants and there have been no reports of infection on younger plants which are just beginning to fruit.

An integrated spray program that rotates products in order to prevent development of pathogen resistance is recommended. Bravo typically included in a tomato spray program contribute to powdery mildew control Quadris (azoxystrobin) and Nova (myclobutanil) provides excellent preventative and residual protection. The biofungicides AQ10 (Ecogen) - *Ampelomyces quisqualis* and Serenade (AgriQuest) – *Bacillus subtiliss* are also reported to be effective in controlling the disease. Refer to product labels for spray intervals.

The incidence of fusarium crown rot in tomato has increased dramatically in some fields around southwest Florida especially in those fields with a history of the disease.

Crown rot is often associated with cold periods during fruit maturation. The causal organism is a fungus, *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *radicis-lycopersici*. It grows best from 50°F to 68°F, which is lower than the optimum for the fungus that causes Fusarium wilt.

Control of crown rot is similar to that of Fusarium wilt (e.g., crop rotation, sanitation, increased soil pH, minimize use of ammoniacal nitrogen, and soil fumigation). Successful control of Fusarium crown rot begins with healthy transplants, and properly prepared land.

Ted Angell of BHN Seed reports that BHN has several Fusarium crown rot resistant tomato varieties. These include: BHN 273 + BHN 336, plus their new varieties BHN 585 and BHN 586.

Growers in Palm Beach County have reported problems with fusarium on pepper. Most reports involve older pepper although there are a few scattered reports of problems on younger 3 to 4 week old pepper plants, that have been found infected with Fusarium.

The primary control for Fusarium is the combined use of disease free transplants, and pre plant fumigation with a broad-spectrum fumigant (e.g., methyl bromide + chloropicrin, Telone + chloropicrin, vapam, etc). Changes of soil fertility, avoidance of plant stresses (biological and physical), and cultural manipulations can be used successfully in some situations.

Recontamination of fumigated soil with non-fumigated soil and surface water should be avoided because fumigated soil has less natural biological diversity. Soils with less microbiological diversity may allow for a rapid increase of a plant pathogen.

Dr Ken Pernezny: Plant Pathologist at the UF/IFAS Everglades Research and Education Center reports that there have been some outbreaks of rust on snap beans in the Devil's Garden area. This is early for rust at the level of severity observed, so growers should be especially vigilant in managing this disease. Ken indicates that rust is likely to get worse as the spring season progresses. He cautions that rust is tough to control, but that he has had ok results in tests with Bravo (chlorothalonil) and has also had some positive results with flowable sulfurs.

Ken also reports diagnosing Phytophthora blight of eggplant. He notes that in dense plantings, the mycelium of the fungus is evident on stems and branches.

Growers on both coasts have reported problems with sclerotinia on tomatoes. Ken Shuler reports moderate levels of *Sclerotinia* have been found in tomatoes in south Palm Beach County. The disease has been made worse by large amounts of foliage, which both harbor the disease and also make it more difficult to penetrate with fungicides. Heavy night dews and morning fogs also contributed to disease development.
Several tomato producers around Immokalee and Devils Garden have also reported a higher incidence of sclerotinia compared to past seasons.

Sclerotinia prefers cool, moist weather and can causing diseases of great intensity when temperatures range from 60 - 70°F (15 - 21°C). High humidity with dew formation supports the spread and increases the severity of infections.

**In tomato, infection typically starts at flowering.** Water-soaked spots are usually the first symptom, which is followed by invasion of the stem, girdling, and death of the upper part of the stem that turns a light gray resembling the bleached bones of a small animal.

The disease can also begin where the plant contacts the soil or infected plant debris. In this case, large portions of the field may become diseased, producing large, circular, areas of dead plants. The black pea sized sclerotia formed by the fungus are often found inside infected stems.

**In tomato, in tomato Benlate 50 W and Quadris 2.08 FL are labeled for control.** The bio-fungicide Serenade (Bacillus subtilis) is also labeled and is certified for use on organic produced crops.

Benlate, the former product of choice for Sclerotinia is no longer being manufactured and may be unavailable to growers unless they have a reserve stock on hand. Several growers report continuing problems with sclerotinia stem blight, despite an aggressive spray program of Quadris. Ken Shuler reports that he is investigating the possibility of obtaining a Section 18 for sclerotinia control. The top candidates would be Topsin and Rovral.

Growers on both coasts continue to report finding tomato yellow leaf curl virus tomato plants. Incidence is low although most reports there has been an increase in the number of infected plants.

Respondents on the east coast report that traces of TYLCV are popping up mostly in older tomato plantings through out the area with a few localized “hot spots” being found near old tomatoes, which are being taken out of production.

Growers and scouts around Immokalee indicate that TYLCV also seems to on the rise with the incidence in some spring fields at first to second tie running around 1 - 3%. Growers in southwest Florida have also noted the occurrence of some “hotspots” typically adjacent to older crops.

Growers should be prepared to use alternative whitefly control measures including IGR's as Admire begins to wear off and whitefly populations increase. Growers should rogue out infected plants as identified. It is disturbing to see some fairly large infected plants in fields that have apparently been left in place for several weeks or more. A complete IPM approach including sanitation, eradication (roguing) and chemical control of the whitefly vector is essential in controlling this disease.

To date, there have been no reports of late blight in south Florida growing areas. Review of past reports in the South Florida Pest and Disease Hotline indicate that over the past three years the disease has regularly appeared in the area around the first of February. Given the foggy weather that has been experienced over the past few weeks, growers would be wise to remain vigilant. Reports from the Ruskin area indicates that late blight is present in widely scattered location in Manatee and Hillsborough Counties.

**Up Coming Meetings**

**February 5, 2002**

**WPS Train-the-Trainer - 1-3 PM**

EREC Auditorium, Belle Glade

Contact Laura Andrews at 561-996-1655
February 12, 2002  Training in the Production and Utilization of Compost for Horticultural Cropping Systems  Southwest Florida Research and Education Center  Immokalee, Florida  For more information contact Dr Monica Ozores-Hampton at 941-658-3400

February 15-18, 2002  United 2002 Convention.  Orlando, Florida  For more information check out the convention link at United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Website at: http://www.uffva.org or see attached information.

February 20, 2002  National Watermelon Promotion Board - 12:00 noon  Quality Inn  6525 US Highway 27 N.  Sebring, Florida  Contact Diana Musto, Research Associate, toll-free at (877) 599-9595.

December 8-12, 2002  Cucurbitaceae 2002  Naples Beach and Golf Club, Naples, Florida  Contact Don Maynard at 941-751-7636 ext 239 or dnma@mail.ifas.ufl.edu.

Make plans to attend Florida Day at the United 2002 Annual Business Conference & Expo in Orlando!

On Sunday, February 17, Florida Day at United will welcome the Florida Produce industry to a day featuring a presentation by Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, along with an exposition featuring the latest in new technology and innovative new product development and research.

Florida Day can be yours for the low price of $100! You can register on site at the Orlando Convention Center or contact United’s Convention Center at 703-836-3410.

Call for Presentations
The Handling and Processing section of the Florida State Horticulture Society meeting would like to invite research papers on vegetables, or state-of-the-art papers on handling and processing, or history of handling and processing. This year’s meeting will be held in Marco Island so it would be nice to see some presentations from Immokalee-based vegetable handling and processing concerns.

The format is for 15-minute presentations to the Handling and Processing Section at the 2002 annual meeting, which will be held June 2-5 meeting on Marco Island. Abstracts must be sent to Bob Hagenmaier, Citrus and Subtropical Products Laboratory, 600 Ave S, NW, Winter Haven, FL 33881 by March 1 or online BobHagmr@aol.com.

Abstracts are also being sought in other areas. For more information and for information on the format for abstracts go to the Society web page: http://lal.ufl.edu/fshs/index.html.

Following the meeting, presentations will be published in the Proceedings of the Florida State Horticultural Society. Manuscripts may be peer-reviewed at your option. The Proceedings of the Society are included in the journals covered by Food Science and Technology Abstracts and also by Agricola, which are two of the major services for searching the scientific literature.

Ag News

New Central Hotline for U.S. Poison Control Centers

Americans for the first time can use a single toll-free telephone number to reach a poison control center anywhere in the nation, officials announced Wednesday.

Officials launched the national hotline, 1-800-222-1222, and applauded it as an overdue coordination of the country's 65 separately run poison centers. Callers dialing the number will be automatically linked to the closest poison center.

The nation's first poison center opened in 1953, and subsequent centers have opened on an independent basis. "Until now...nationwide poison prevention education was hindered by the very structure by which poison centers evolved," said Dr. Alan D. Woolf, the president of the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

This country's 65 centers had more than 130 individual and separate telephone numbers," he said.

The new number is part of a $21.2 million federal effort to update poison control centers across the country. Centers field calls on approximately 2.2 million suspected poisonings per year, mostly involving young children. About 75% of all poisonings can be safely handled at home with the help of a poison center aide, though 700 to 800 calls to centers per year-end in fatalities, Woolf said.

Rep. Edolphus Towns (D-NY) said that the new national hotline would "help save lives and prevent costly trips to emergency rooms." Towns crafted the House legislation that led to congressional approval of the centers' new money.

Half of all calls to poison centers involve preschool-age children, though calls involving adults or elderly persons tend to be more serious. Officials said that they would accompany their new national phone number with a print and radio-based education campaign urging children to avoid household poisons and urging parents to post poison control numbers near their phones.

Household cleaners and chemicals make up the bulk of poisonous substances in homes, though perfumes, medications, and spider and animal bites can also lead to poisoning.
stickers, magnets, and other promotional materials by calling the toll-free number, Woolf said.

WASHINGTON (Reuters Health)

**National Watermelon Promotion Board Holds February 20 Convention to Nominate Producers and Handlers to Serve as District 1 Directors**

The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) will hold a lunchtime nomination convention February 20, 2002 at 12:00 noon at the Quality Inn, 6525 US Highway 27 N. Sebring, Florida to nominate four qualified watermelon producers and four watermelon handlers to serve as directors for District 1 of the Board. Lunch will be provided from the menu.

District 1 is comprised of the Florida counties of Brevard, Broward, Collier, Dade, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Indian River, Lee, Martin, Monroe, Okeechobee, Osceola, Palm Beach, Polk and St. Lucie

The NWPB works to increase consumer demand for watermelon and to expand domestic and foreign markets for watermelon through its marketing, consumer public relations and education programs. The NWPB encourages all women, minorities and persons with disabilities who qualify as watermelon producers and handlers to attend the meeting and seek nomination to serve on the Board.

All watermelon producers and handlers in District 1 are encouraged to attend and vote to nominate their representative to the NWPB. Nominations are submitted to USDA Secretary Ann Veneman who makes the appointments to the Board. Terms for the new directors begin January 1, 2003 and end December 31, 2005.

Directors oversee Board operations, which includes setting Board policies and deciding how the Board's budget is invested in research, education and promotion programs. The Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service monitors the board's operations. The Board works with its staff, led by Executive Director William Watson to execute its research, education and promotion programs.

All Directors are required to attend two meetings each year to become familiar with and develop the Board's variety of marketing, research and education programs.

About 2,500 commercial producers, handlers and importers make up the membership of the NWPB and finance all of the Board's programs through assessments on watermelons as authorized by the Congressional Watermelon Research and Promotion Act. The 32-member Board is currently comprised of 14 producers, 14 handlers, 2 importers, an ex officio member and a member who represents the public.

To be eligible for nomination, producers must grow 10 or more acres of watermelon. Producers and handlers must also be in compliance with the requirements of the Watermelon Research and Promotion Plan.

The NWPB will allow proxy voting for Board nominees. Individuals wishing to vote by proxy should prepare signed, dated statements, including the proxy voter's printed name, address, identity as a producer or handler, and the name of the individual authorized to cast the proxy vote. Statements should be submitted to the NWPB by the individual authorized to cast the proxy vote no later than February 6, 2002.

The two producers and two handlers appointed to the Board will be representing their district industry members at meetings and other forums, and should be dedicated to supporting the Board's programs.

Additional information regarding the elections and nomination procedures may be obtained by contacting Diana Musto, Research Associate, toll-free at (877) 599-9595.
PARwin – A New Pesticide Record-keeping Program for Windows

PARwin is a user-friendly very efficient computer program for recording, reporting and keeping track of your pesticide spray applications.

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Downloading or installing the CD will give the user 20 sessions to try the product, after which it must be registered at a cost of $149.95 for unlimited use. Try PARwin, you'll like it and find out how easy it is to do the spray records!

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                 Miami FL 33186
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                 Internet: www.spraytec.com

Websites

Cost of Production for Florida Vegetables, 1999-2000 – This UF/IFAS web page provides links to individual cost of production budgets and summary cost tables for major Florida vegetables. A complete copy of the 1999-2000 Cost of Production for Selected Florida Vegetables in PDF Format is also available. Go to http://www.agbuscenter.ifas.ufl.edu/cost/Cop99-00/htmlfiles/tableofcontents.html

SafePesticideUse.com – The mission of this FL DACS site is to promote safe pesticide use and compliance with state and federal pesticide laws and regulations in the State of Florida. Searchable databases provide verification of license status for licensed pest control companies, licensed pesticide dealers, certified/licensed pesticide applicators, registered service technicians, and authorized purchasing agents of licensed restricted use pesticide applicators. http://www.safepesticideuse.com/safety/default.htm

The Compost Resource Page - This site is intended to serve as a hub of information for anyone interested in the various aspects of composting. Go to http://www.oldgrowth.org/compost/

The Lighter Side

Run that by me again …?

A farmer died and left his 17 mules to three sons. His will stated that his oldest son would get half of the mules, the middle one would get one-third and the youngest would get one-ninth. They wracked their brains to figure out how to do it, but couldn't decide how to satisfy the requirements of the will.

Hearing about this problem, their minister came to solace them in their grief and help them solve their predicament. He added his mule to the estate making 18 mules total. The oldest got half, or 9, the middle son got one-third, or 6, and the youngest boy inherited his one-ninth, or 2.

Then the minister took the remaining mule for himself and rode home.

Quotable Quotes

Nostalgia is like a grammar lesson: You always find the present tense, and the past perfect.
An economist is a man who states the obvious in terms of the incomprehensible.

We hang the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to public office. – Aesop

Tact is the ability to describe others as they see themselves. -- Abraham Lincoln

**Contributors** include: Joel Allingham/AgriCare, Inc, Karen Armbrester/SWFREC, Jim Connor/SWFREC, Bruce Corbitt/West Coast Tomato Growers, Fred Heald/Farmers Supply, Sarah Hornsby/AgCropCon, Cecil Howell/H&R Farm, Bruce Johnson/General Crop Management, Leon Lucas/Glades Crop Care, Gene McAvoy/Hendry County Extension, Alice McGhee/Thomas Produce, Jimmy Morales/Pro Source One, Tim Nychk/Nychk Bros. Farm, Chuck Obern/C+B Farm, Dr Ken Pernezny/EREC, Dr. Pam Roberts/SWFREC, Nancy Roe/Farming Systems Research, Wes Roan/6 L's, Kevin Seitzinger/Gargiulo, Jay Shivler/ F& F Farm, Ken Shuler/Palm Beach County Extension, Ben Stanaland/Pacific Tomato Growers, John Stanford/LNA Farm, Mike Stanford/MED Farms, Dr. Phil Stansly/SWFREC, Eugene Tolar/Red Star Farms, Dr.Charlie Vavrina/SWFREC, Donna Verbeck/GulfCoast Ag. and Mark Verbeck/Bayer Crop Protection.

The **South Florida Pest and Disease Hotline** is compiled by **Gene McAvoy** and is issued on a biweekly basis by the **Hendry County Cooperative Extension Office** as a service to the vegetable industry.

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