A stalled front over Central Florida bought much needed rain to the region on March 18 and 19. The FAWN Weather Station in Immokalee reported a total accumulation of 2.14 inches for the event. Totals varied widely with many areas around LaBelle and Naples reporting just over an inch, while eastern parts of Hendry County received from 5 – 6 inches or more in a relatively short period of time. There have been some scattered reports of crop damage from flooding in these areas.

Temperatures for most of the period have averaged a few degrees above seasonal norms, which helped speed plant growth. The past few days have seen a cooling trend, which is expected to continue for the next few days. Daytime highs have ranged mostly in the mid-upper 80’s, with night temperatures in the upper 50’s to mid 60’s. Windy conditions have resulted in some reports of leaf damage and fruit scarring, particularly in sensitive crops like cucurbits.

Planting of most crops is nearly complete and harvesting is beginning to gain momentum. Most crops are in fair to good condition. Vegetables available include tomatoes, Chinese cabbage, peppers, strawberries, potatoes, snap beans, sweet corn, squash, cucumbers, eggplant, and specialty crops.

The National Weather Service in Miami forecast is calling cooler conditions over the next few days with highs in the upper 70’s to low 80’s and nighttime temperatures in the lower to mid 50’s. Skies will be clear and breezy.

A number of respondents continue to report salted related problems and salt damage in plantings. A number of growers have noted an increase in fusarium crown rot following salt injury. There have also been indications of rising salt levels in well water being pumped in coastal areas.

**Immokalee Weather Summary**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Air Temp °F</th>
<th>Rainfall (Inches)</th>
<th>Hours Below Certain Temperature (hours)</th>
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<td>2.14</td>
<td>1.4 – 14.5 – 24.8 – 43.0 – 121.8 – 188.4</td>
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SFWMD MOVES TO PHASE 3 LEVEL WATER RESTRICTIONS

The South Florida Water Management District Governing Board moved to authorize staff to move toward more severe water use cutbacks for portions of the Lower East Coast (Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe counties) and portions of the Lake Okeechobee Service Area (Lee County, Hendry and Okeechobee counties). The Governing Board vote was 7-2, with Trudi Williams and Hugh English voting against the motion.

The Board action directs staff to develop a detailed implementation plan to achieve Phase 3 level cutbacks (35-45% reductions) in water use. A public meeting is scheduled for March 21 to seek input from residents, businesses and utilities on operational and economic impacts. The details and specific locations of the tougher restrictions must be considered and approved by the Board on March 27. The new restrictions are scheduled to become effective March 28.

The District is looking for substantial cutbacks in water demand to help stretch dwindling water supplies. The District has announced that it is stepping up its compliance and enforcement efforts by targeting large water users with aerial and on-site inspections, and issuing fines for documented violations.

For homeowners, Phase 3 level restrictions limit lawn watering and car washing to one day per week. The restrictions apply to water supplied from utilities, as well as water taken from individual wells and canals, lakes or other surface water sources.

Phase 3 level restrictions also call for significant cutbacks by businesses such as golf courses, car washes and nursery/agricultural operations.

For more information regarding the water shortage and water use restrictions, visit the District's website at www.sfwmd.gov.

Reports indicate that thrips are still flying in large numbers. Florida flower thrips (Frankliniella bispinosa) are being widely reported on pepper and tomato. Populations have reached high levels in some fields. There have been a few isolated reports of melon thrips (Thrips palmae) showing up in a few places especially in older pepper.

Due to their small size thrips can be difficult to identify in the field. Adult Florida flower thrips are dark yellow with brown lined fringed wings. Larvae are similar to adults but lighter in color and wingless, both are found primarily in flowers and terminal buds.

Adult melon thrips have a clear yellow body with darker blotches and thick black body setae or hairs. Melons thrips feed on leaves and fruits. Fruits are often scarred and damaged plants display a silvered or bronzed appearance after heavy feeding. Severely damaged fields appear burned.

Although there are indications that leafminer populations are beginning to abate in some places, a number of respondents have indicated that leafminer pressure remains high. In some hotspots, pressure is severe and counts of up to 20 adults per plant are being seen.

Worm activity remains light. There have been a few reports of southern army worm, loopers and tomato fruit worms from widely scattered locations.

Pinworms are beginning to show up in traps. Respondents indicate average trap counts ranging from 0.8 to 4.2 moths per night. There have been only a few widely scattered observations of pinworms being found in crops.
Several producers have noted pickleworm activity on cucurbits. Most reports indicate low to moderate pressure, which is being kept easily under control with a variety of lepidoterean specific products. Crops affected include cucumber, squash and melons.

Low to moderate diamondback pressure is being reported in brassicas. Some respondents indicate that numbers are increasing.

Pepper weevils are widely present and all reports indicate that populations are increasing. Several growers report serious losses from weevils especially in hot pepper varieties. Some growers have terminated older plantings were weevils had become unmanageable. Several growers have indicated obtaining satisfactory results in controlling weevils with either Capture or cryolite. All currently labeled materials are difficult to work into an IPM program once plantings begin to be harvested due to the 7 day PHI in force for all of them.

Growers are advised to be alert for spider mites. Several respondents have reported problems with spider mites in eggplants and they are widespread in cucurbits as well. A number of growers report applying repeat applications of miticides aimed at spider mites.

Growers should be sure to scout stands of nightshade adjoining plantings, as this is a potential source of infestation and may help them circumvent possible problems. Recent field surveys have indicated high populations of mites on nightshade along ditch banks and field margins. Given projections for continued dry conditions, spider mites will remain a threat to a variety of crops.

Broadmites are being widely reported in pepper and to a lesser extent on eggplant.

Aphids are still around and populations are reported to be up-and-down seen in peppers and cucurbits.

Whiteflies remain at fairly low levels although some hotspots have been noted in older fields with populations reaching up to 4- 5 adults per plant accompanied by a build-up of pupae.

There have been a number of widely scattered reports of late blight on tomato around the area. Incidence is reportedly increasing by several accounts. According to all indications late blight is more widely present on tomato this season than we have seen in the past few years.

Several people have inquired about the current status of Tattoo for use on tomatoes – at this time Tattoo has been withdrawn from the market and is not labeled for use on tomato.

Downy mildew is causing serious problems in squash in several locations. There have also been a few isolated reports of downy mildew on cantaloupes and watermelon.

Although most reports indicates that the incidence of TYLCV remains low, several respondents have reported a significant increase in the incidence of tomato yellow leaf curl with some fields exhibiting 2 – 3 % infection rates. Even higher incidence of the disease has been observed in some fields that have been turned over to pin hookers. Given the potential ability of whiteflies to transmit the disease rapidly under optimal conditions to new plantings, growers should be alert for whitefly buildup and take measures to control them.

Fusarium crown rot is still causing problems on tomato in some locations. Some new infections have been reported since the recent rains.

Scattered occurrence of phytophthora has been noted on pepper in areas that received high rainfall accumulations in recent storms.

Powdery mildew is widely present on squash. Incidence is moderate in some older fields.
Several respondents indicate observing low levels of early blight and target spot in tomato.

Low levels of bacterial leaf spot continue to be reported on pepper and tomato in some places. Incidence is low and occurrence is spotty. There have been a few isolated reports of bacterial speck on tomato.

A few isolated reports of pepper mosaic have been received but seem to be confined to single plants here and there.

A number of respondents have noted moderate to serious levels of “coon blight” on watermelon. Occurrence is widespread but spotty. Several growers have reported that repeated sprays with # 6 shot have had a limited suppressive effect but were not successful in halting the blight.

Nematodes – Speaking at our March Vegetable Growers meeting, both Dr Bob McSorley and Dr Joe Noling reminded growers that the optimum time to sample fields for nematodes is just after the termination of the crop when populations are at high levels. Sampling after fields have been fallow for several months before planting often fails to provide growers with a representative indication of potential problems as populations have fallen to low levels by this time.

Web Sites

Getting Back-to-Basics - This web site is brought to you by IMC and The Potash & Phosphate Institute. It provides timely, relevant in-depth information bulletins on a variety of different topics as well as crop-specific fertilizer information. Go to http://www.back-to-basics.net/

Florida DEP has published a "Priority Rotation Water Basin Map." This map identifies FL DEP's high priority basins from the standpoint of where the BMP development process currently stands in that basin. Check it out at http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/watershed/gis/images/811names.jpg.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection Water Resource Management Web Site - To learn more about BMP’s and agricultural non-point source pollution, you will find plenty of information at this DEP site. Visit http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/slerp/nonpoint_stormwater/agsrc/agsrc.htm

EPA’s Office of Water – Watershed Protection Web site – is also a good source of information on this hot topic. Go to http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/

National Management Measures to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution from Agriculture is the EPA’s draft technical guidance and reference document for the implementation of nonpoint source pollution management programs which was published in the Federal Register on October 17, 2000. Like most government documents it is long, but this is the real deal folks – this is what is being proposed for implementation on your farm. In Maryland, where many of these provisions have been enacted, any farm over 10 acres in size or grossing more than $2,500 per annum must prepare a nutrient management plan. Check it out at http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/agmm/index.html

Up Coming Meetings:

March 27-28, 2001  Pesticide Applicator License Training and Examinations
Hendry County Extension Office
1085 Pratt Boulevard
LaBelle, FL

March 27 AM - CORE Class
March 27 PM – Private Ag or Commercial/Public Row Crop category
March 28 AM – Commercial/Public Tree Crops category
March 28 PM - – Commercial/Public Aquatic category

There will be a $5 registration fee for each day’s program.

**Earn up to 12 CEU’s for the two-day session.**
For registration information contact 863-674-4092

**April 18, 2001**
**Role of Plastic Mulches in the Methyl Bromide Alternative Technology**
Hendry County Extension Office 10:30 AM - 12 Noon
1085 Pratt Boulevard
LaBelle, FL
For information, contact 863-674-4092

**April 18, 2001**
**Water Use Efficiency in Vegetable Crop Production**
Hendry County Extension Office 12 Noon – 2 PM
1085 Pratt Boulevard
LaBelle, FL
For information, contact 863-674-4092

**April 22-26, 2001**
**85th Annual Meeting of the Potato Association of America (PAA 2001)**
St. Augustine, Florida.

Hosted by the University of Florida/IFAS Hastings Research and Education Center, the conference will provide a forum for the presentation of new scientific information, conduct business of the association and facilitate fellowship among colleagues. The conference theme is Potato Plant Health into the New Millennium. Three days of stimulating paper sessions will be kicked off with a dynamic symposium entitled, "Impact of New and Emerging Diseases and Technologies on Potato Seed Certification" co-sponsored by the Certification and Pathology Sections of the PAA. Emphasis will be on challenging soil-borne diseases.

Oral and poster abstracts are being accepted through January 10, 2001. For more information visit the conference website: http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~conferweb/paa/ or contact the University of Florida, IFAS Office of Conferences by phone (352) 392-5930 or by fax (352) 392-9734, or by Email: mmatlock@gnv.ifas.ufl.edu

**August 3, 2001**
**Florida Certified Crop Advisor Exam**
South Florida Community College
Avon Park, Florida
Call FFAA at (863) 293-4827 for registration information.

**November 8-9, 2001**
**17th Annual Tomato Disease Workshop**
West Palm Beach, Florida.

Presentations and discussions on the occurrence and management of tomato diseases. Both processing and fresh market tomato problems will be addressed. Colleagues from industry, academia, and extension are welcome.

For additional information visit: http://erec.ifas.ufl.edu/TDW.htm
Gordon Smith to retire as Editor Emeritus of Citrus & Vegetable Magazine.

Gordon has been a long time supporter of agriculture and has been a regular feature in Citrus and Vegetable Magazine over the years. **You are cordially invited to a reception honoring Gordon Smith, retiring Editor Emeritus of Citrus & Vegetable Magazine.**

**Date:** March 30, 2001  
**Location:** Citrus Research and Education Center, Lake Alfred, Florida  
**Time:** 1 - 3p.m.  
**Please RSVP** before March 28, 2001  
Contact Sandi at 800-362-1571.

Hope to see you there.

**FEDERAL RELIEF AVAILABLE FOR FARMERS**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced last Sunday that farmers in 38 Florida counties are eligible for federal aid for crop damage totaling $179 million from recent freezes and flooding. The federal financial assistance will help farmers apply for low-interest emergency loan assistance from the Farm Service Agency. The size of the loans will depend on the extent of losses, security available, repayment ability and other eligibility requirements. Farmers in all Central Florida’s counties are eligible. Governor Bush requested the declaration last month after preliminary estimates showed freeze and flooding losses of $121.3 million for Florida’s vegetable growers, $47.5 million for fern growers and $10.2 million for the tropical fish industry.

For more information, visit the State of Florida Division of Emergency Management web site, www.floridadisaster.org, or contact Joe Myers, Director at the State of Florida Division of Emergency Management office by phone, 904-413-9969, or email, Joe.Myers@dca.state.fl.us.

**RHODES RELEASES 21 COUNTIES FROM BURN BAN.**

On March 21, Florida Agriculture Commissioner Terry L. Rhodes released 21 counties from the emergency outdoor burning ban because of recent rains.

Those counties join 28 others that were not included in the February 26 "emergency drought declaration" -- and therefore not subject to the burn ban -- because conditions were not as extreme in those locations.

"Many areas, particularly in the northern and southern end of the state, have received sufficient rainfall to ease the severe wildfire threat for now," Rhodes said. "This will allow for the safe resumption of open burning for land management, hazardous fuel reduction, disease and insect control, and for recreational purposes."

The counties released from the ban are: Alachua, Broward, Citrus, Collier, Dade, Duval, Flagler, Gilchrist, Hendry, Hernando, Lake, Lee, Levy, Marion, Monroe, Palm Beach, Pasco, Putnam, St. Johns, Sumter and Volusia. Normal outdoor burning procedures may resume in all of those counties through local state forestry offices.

This action leaves 18 counties, where the drought index remains high, under the outdoor burning ban, which prohibits every kind of outdoor burning except cooking in barbecue grills in yards or in public facilities. Remaining under the ban are: Brevard, Charlotte, Desoto, Glades, Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian River, Manatee, Martin, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Pinellas, Polk, St. Lucie, Sarasota and Seminole.
Rhodes said that because Florida is only now entering what traditionally are its driest months, it is possible that counties released from the ban could again be added to the list if the coming months are exceedingly dry.

**Something to think about!**

The European Commission has just announced an agreement whereby English will be the official language of the EU rather than German which was the other possibility. As part of the negotiations, Her Majesty's Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a 5-year phase-in plan that would be known as "Euro-English".

**In the first year, "s" will replace the soft "c".** Certainly, this will make the sivil servants jump with joy. The hard "c" will be dropped in favour of the"k". This should clear up konfusion and keyboards can have 1 less letter.

**There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the sekon year, when the troublesome "ph" will be replaced with "f".** This will make words like "fotograf" 20% shorter.

**In the 3rd year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling can be ekspekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible.** Governments will enkourage the removal of double letters, which have always ben a deterent to akurate speling.

**Also, all wil agree that the horrible mes of the silent "e"s in the language is disgraceful, and they should go away.**

**By the fourth year, peopl wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing "th" with "z" and "w" with "v".** During ze fifz year, ze unesesary "o" kan be dropd from words kontaining "ou" and similar changes vud of kors be aplid to ozer kombinations of leters.

**After zis fifz yer, ve vil hav a reli sensibl riten styl.** Zer vil be no mor trubl or dificultis and evrivun vil find it ezi to understand ech ozer. Ze drem vil finali kum tru! And zen ve vil tak over ze world!

**Contributors include:** Karen Armbrester/SWFREC, Jim Connor/SWFREC, Bruce Corbitt/West Coast Tomato Growers, Fred Heald/Farmers Supply, Sarah Hornsby/AcropCon, Cecil Howell/H&R Farm, Leon Lucas/Grades Crop Care, Gene McAvoy/Hendry County Extension, Alice McGhee/Thomas Produce, Tim Nychk/Nychk Bros. Farm, Chuck 0bern/C+B Farm, Dr. Pam Roberts/SWFREC, Wes Roan/6 L's, Kevin Seitzinger/Gargiulo, Jay Shivler/ F& F Farm, Ben Stanaland/Pacific Tomato Growers, John Stanford/LNA Farm, Mike Stanford/MED Farms, Dr. Phil Stansly/SWFREC, Eugene Tolar/Red Star Farms, and Dr.Charlie Vavrina/SWFREC, Donna Verbeck/GulfCoast Ag.

The **SW 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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