

Citrus from the Ridge to the Valley

CENTRAL FLORIDA CITRUS EXTENSION

October 2020

Fall has arrived, but you certainly wouldn't notice it other than rainfall is getting a little less frequent. Temperatures are still relatively hot for this time of the year. The official citrus crop estimate has the crop pegged at 57 million boxes of oranges, 4.5 million grapefruit, and 1.1 million tangerines and tangelos. These numbers reflect a 15% decrease from last season for oranges, a 7% decrease for grapefruit, and an increase of 8% for tangerines and tangelos.

Interestingly, fruit size measurements for non-valencia oranges done last month revealed an increase in the percentage of larger fruit than the previous year (https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Florida/Publications/Citrus/Citrus_Forecast/2020-1/cit1020a.pdf page 6). Using the eyeballing method and calculating this difference from last year with non-valencia round oranges, 58% of the crop was less than 2-1/4" in diameter. This year that number is about 45% or 13% decrease in 2-1/4" and smaller fruit.

Horticulturally, lighter crop loads typically relate to having larger fruit. We know that fruit's propensity to drop is correlated to fruit size and the visual severity of HLB canopy symptoms. Studies (<https://citrusindustry.net/2018/09/12/fruit-drop-and-hlb/>) have demonstrated in valencias that small diameter fruit on HLB-affected trees were more likely to drop (held less tightly) compared to the larger fruit. Although the forecast represents non-valencia fruit size in the cited report, it would be interesting to see if this observation holds for non-valencia oranges resulting in less fruit drop this season. Time will tell.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the newsletter and as always, if you have any questions or comments, please pass them along to Ajia or myself.



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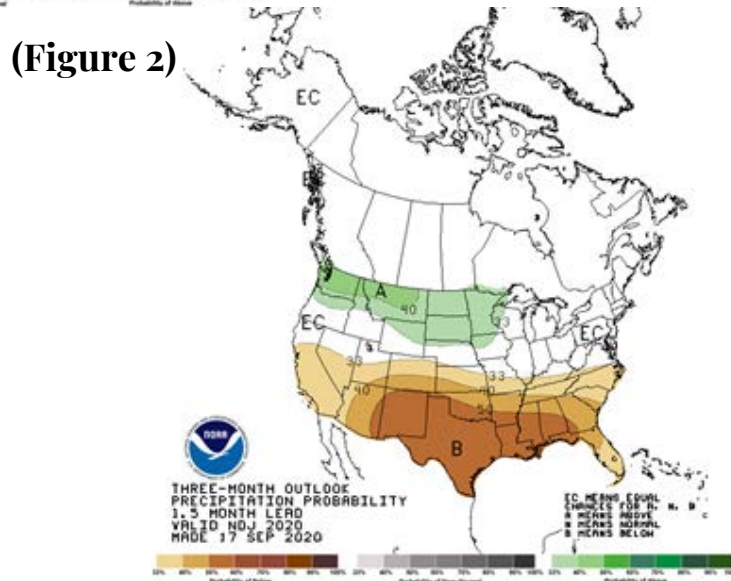
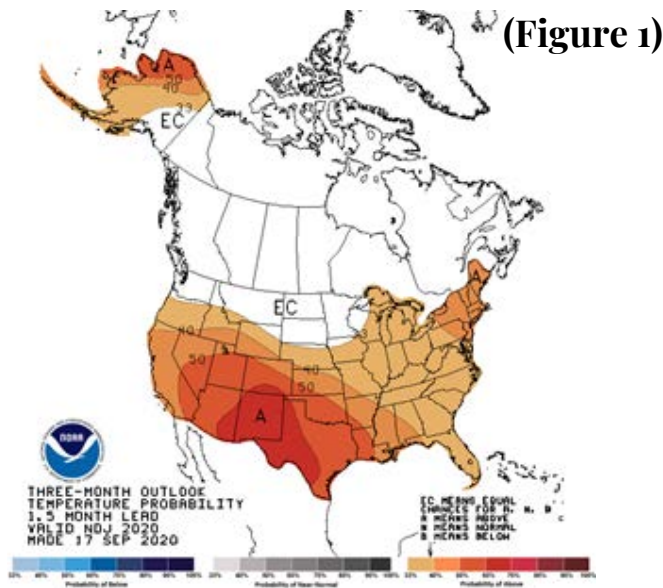


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Fall/Winter Weather Outlook

We are looking forward to the fall/winter weather outlook and the 2020 hurricane season's conclusion on November 30. It is worth mentioning that (as of mid-October), we are currently in an El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO)-La Niña condition. The current ENSO forecast models predict La Niña conditions continuing through the winter. The current forecast is for an 85% chance of La Niña continuing through the 2020-21 winter, with a 60% chance of La Niña continuing during February through April 2021. Under La Niña conditions in Florida during the period from November to January are dry and slightly warm.

The current November/December/January, fall/winter weather forecast calls for a significant increase probability (33 to 40%) for above-normal temperatures (Figure 1). On the other hand, the rainfall forecast is for a 33 to 40% chance of having below normal rainfall for the period (Figure 2).



Annual Citrus Employee Safety Training

BY CHRIS OSWALT

The current situation of COVID and under guidance from the University of Florida, the holding of face-to-face educational events, is significantly limited. This limitation severely hampers our ability to hold a live training event along with the annual tractor rodeo. What we have done under the direction of the Polk County Extension Citrus Advisory Committee is to develop an approximate 2-hour virtual safety training program. The program includes several recorded presentations on grove safety, tractor, and equipment safety, symptoms of heat-related stress, the worker protection standard (WPS) handler training, and citrus canker decontamination. The program will be available in both English and Spanish. We want to do this by having one individual register for a company, group, or individual. Once we have this, we will provide you with a program schedule and WPS record form that will help you document the employees in attendance and a training link for the program. Remember to provide WPS handler training, the trainer must be a certified trained trainer or hold a restricted use pesticide license. You must also be available to answer any questions that may come up during the WPS training. This virtual training will also allow you to do training in small or larger groups at your location and convenience. Suppose you and your employees were WPS handler trained at last years' Citrus Employee Safety Training Program on November 7, 2019. In that case, you or they will have until the end of November 2020 to complete WPS handler training to remain in compliance. The annual WPS certification training expires after one year and on the last day of the month trained. To keep on cycle for next November, we will make this program available after November 1, 2020. This way, when we provide WPS handler training next year in November, we stay within the annual training requirements. To register for the program, please email or call Gail Crawford at dorothy@c@ufl.edu or 863-519-1042. You can also contact Gail for more information or if you have additional questions.





WASHINGTON, Oct. 9, 2020

– The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced Friday, Oct. 30, 2020, as the deadline to submit applications for the Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program – Plus (WHIP+) for 2018 and 2019 losses. USDA did not originally specify a deadline when the program was announced.

“The physical and financial loss experienced by farmers and ranchers impacted by natural disaster events in 2018 and 2019 was widespread and catastrophic,” said Richard Fordyce, Administrator of USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA). “Fortunately, in addition to our already extensive suite of disaster assistance programs for crop and livestock producers, we were able to provide additional support through WHIP+. If you have not yet submitted your application for assistance, please don’t miss your chance.”

WHIP+ compensates producers for losses due to hurricanes, floods, snowstorms, tornadoes, typhoons, volcanic activity, drought, excessive moisture, and wildfires occurring in calendar years 2018 and 2019. Drought and excessive moisture were added as eligible losses for the program in March 2020. To date, FSA has received more than 133,000 applications for WHIP+ disaster assistance and paid out nearly \$1.4 billion in WHIP+ benefits.

Next week, FSA will launch a new tool on the [farmers.gov WHIP+ webpage](#) to help producers understand eligibility for the program and whether they had possible losses in 2018 and 2019. The tool will also allow producers an opportunity to provide information for FSA staff to reach out to them.

FSA will announce soon the details for producers who experienced quality loss from 2018 and 2019 natural disaster events authorized in appropriations legislation. There will be a separate signup period for producers reporting quality loss.

For more information or application assistance, visit [farmers.gov WHIP+ webpage](#), or contact your local USDA Service Center. To locate your local FSA office, visit [farmers.gov/service-center-locator](#).

All USDA Service Centers are open for business, including some that are open to visitors to conduct business in person by appointment only. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency should call ahead and schedule an appointment. Service Centers that are open for appointments will pre-screen visitors based on health concerns or recent travel, and visitors must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Visitors are required to wear a face covering during their appointment. Field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. Our program delivery staff will be in the office, and they will be working with our producers in office, by phone, and using online tools. More information can be found at [farmers.gov/coronavirus](#).

Remote - Produce Safety Alliance Grower Trainings

BY CHRIS OSWALT

A virtual course for fruit and vegetable growers and packers who fall under the FSMA Produce Safety Rule.

Online training Information Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this training is being offered temporarily via remote delivery. In order to participate, individuals must have video and audio capability, and will be required to have both operating during the entire training. It is a Produce Safety Alliance requirement that participants are monitored in order to verify participants' attendance and engagement. Participants will only be eligible for the PSA/AFDO Certificate of Course Completion if they are present for all modules of the course. The training will take place via Zoom, which does not require special software. Zoom does have system requirements, which can be found here: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362023-System-Requirements-for-PC-Mac-and-Linux> Please make sure that your system meets the requirements for Zoom meetings.

Important Notes for registration

The Produce Safety Rule Grower Training Manual v1.2 will be mailed to registrants prior to the training - please be sure that the shipping address you provide at the time of registration is current (especially if working from home or remotely) and capable of receiving packages. Please use an email address that you can be reached at, as evaluations and a Zoom link for the training will be sent in a confirmation email prior to the training date.

Questions

For general registration questions, contact Sarah McCoy at sarahmccoy@ufl.edu. For questions about the training, contact Taylor Langford at taylorlangford@ufl.edu.

Dates and registration links

November 4th- 6th , daily from 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm

<https://psa110420.eventbrite.com>

December 1st- 3rd, daily from 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm

<https://psa120120.eventbrite.com>



Syngenta Citrus Internships - Summer 2021

Syngenta is a leading agriculture company helping to improve global food security by enabling millions of farmers to make better use of available resources.

Program overview

When you are a citrus intern with Syngenta, you will gain hands-on experience in the ag industry. This is a paid internship that also provides a vehicle for work use. You will be assigned to a mentor and a territory for your summer project. You will gain experience with territory management along with pest and disease identification. The internship presents opportunities to gain sales and marketing experience, exposure to the citrus industry as well as opportunities within Syngenta Crop Protection.

Intern Focus:

Pest scouting support

- Minecto Pro, Voliam Flexi, & Agri-Flex (miticide/insecticide)

Soil sampling support

- Ridomil & Orondis (fungicide)

Qualifications

- Seeking future employment in the Florida Agriculture Industry. Basic familiarity with production agriculture.
- Basic familiarity with pest, disease, and weed control.
- Basic computer skills.
- Willingness to work outdoors.
- Self motivated, detail oriented, honest, and personable.
- Ability to relocate to or originally from one of the following counties; Polk, Highlands, Hardee, Desoto, Hendry, Collier, Lee, Okeechobee, Martin, Osceola, St. Lucie, or Indian River.
- Sophomore or Junior level (Seniors will be considered).
- Satisfactory results of a pre-employment background check, drug test, and driving record evaluation.

To apply please contact:

Zach Langford, Florida Citrus Internship Coordinator & Sales Retail Rep, 407-212-5631,

zach.langford@syngenta.com or Chad Warrick, Syngenta Retail Rep, 830-832-5269, chad.warrick@syngenta.com.



Or follow the QR code to apply



2020 Preliminary Commercial Citrus Inventory

The preliminary commercial citrus inventory report is out. Statewide citrus acreage dropped by 3 percent from 2019. The following table presents the latest county acreage data from our area and the change from 2019. The total acreage in our area comprises 59% of the 419,452 citrus acreage in Florida, according to the 2020 preliminary numbers. Our percentage acreage loss from last year was 1.8%.

You can view the entire report at:

https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Florida/Publications/Citrus/Commercial_Citrus_Inventory/Commercial_Citrus_Inventory_Prelim/ccipr20b.pdf

| County | Acreage | | |
|--------------|---------|---------|--------|
| | 2020 | 2019 | Change |
| DeSoto | 67,406 | 67,604 | -198 |
| Polk | 64,379 | 66,969 | -2,590 |
| Highlands | 57,351 | 57,964 | -613 |
| Hardee | 43,492 | 43,761 | -269 |
| Manatee | 13,205 | 13,392 | -187 |
| Hillsborough | 1,835 | 2,518 | -683 |
| Total | 247,668 | 252,208 | -4,540 |



Coronavirous Food Assistance Program 2

BY AJIA PAOLILLO

The USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Round 2 is now open for applications until December 11, 2020. Growers can apply for funding through this program if their operation has faced marketing disruptions and associated costs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Growers can apply online or by submitting their application to their local USDA FSA office. This can be done through mail, email, or by appointment, if the offices are open to the public. Information collected during the application process includes inventory and sales information, adjusted gross income, and other business information. Some growers may need to provide documentation, but this will be determined by the FSA office. Citrus fruit are considered an eligible commodity and are categorized by type (ex. grapefruit, lemons, oranges, etc.). You can find more information on this program by visiting <https://www.farmers.gov/cfap> or by calling the USDA call center at 1-877-508-8364 for one-on-one assistance. On this website, you will find instructions for completing an application manually or electronically. There are many resources listed on this page including a link to Frequently Asked Questions.

Steps to Obtaining a Voucher for Restricted Use Pesticide Exams

BY AJIA PAOLILLO

Many people in our industry hold a Chapter 487, Agricultural Restricted Use Pesticide (RUP) license, which enables you to legally purchase and apply pesticides. RUP licenses are valid for 4 years and can be renewed either through earning CEUs or by taking the exams again. If you need to add a new category to your license, you must also take the corresponding exam. The registration process for new or existing licenses is done completely online. One must first obtain a voucher number from FDACS and then schedule an exam at a UF/IFAS Extension county office. Below you will find the steps to register for an exam along with scheduling your exam time.

Go to the FDACS website <https://aesecomm.freshfromflorida.com/Default.aspx?type=RUP>

For new licenses, renewal through exam, or to add a category:

- Click on Exam Signup (obtain a new license) or Exam Signup (Add a category or recertify for renewal)
- Select your license type: Private, Public, or Commercial applicator. (If you are unsure of which license you need, click on the “Which license type do I choose?” link below the options.)
- Enter all of your information in the required fields. Hit the Next button
- Verify your information, select the small checkbox, and click Submit
- Choose your category/categories *Note: if you chose the Private applicator license, you will not choose any other categories*
- Review your information and select the small checkbox under “Acknowledgment”
- The next screen will provide you with a voucher number. **This is very important, as it identifies you when you come in to take the exams.** You should print this page and bring it with you. We cannot look up your voucher number at any time.
- Below the buttons to print or email your voucher confirmation will be a link to the UF/IFAS website to schedule your exam. Follow the instructions to schedule your exams at one of the UF/IFAS Extension offices listed. When you select an office location, the schedule will show the available time slots. If no schedule is visible, call the Extension office at the number listed.

RUP exams are administered online using laptops provided at the UF/IFAS Extension offices. Some offices are not offering testing at this time. In our area, the testing schedule for each county is as follows:

DeSoto: No online testing available. Please contact Ajia Paolillo for more information.

Hardee: Monday - Thursday, morning and afternoon slots available

Highlands: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9am-3pm

Hillsborough: Tuesday and Wednesday (some restrictions apply)

Manatee: Every 2 weeks on Wednesday from 8:30am-3:30 pm

Polk: The first business Monday of each month from 9am-2pm

Irrigation Maintenance – Clogged, broken, and blocked emitters and poly tubing

BY AJIA PAOLILLO

To keep your irrigation system running efficiently, it is important to perform routine maintenance throughout the year. There are many types of issues that can affect your irrigation system, causing it to run poorly. Poly tubing and emitters can become clogged, emitters can be blocked by weeds, or broken through normal wear and tear. When this happens, trees receive inadequate amounts of water, leading to tree stress, poor tree health and ultimately reduced fruit quality and yield. Emitters and poly tubing should be inspected routinely for clogging issues, and any line breaks, which should be repaired immediately. Broken or missing emitters waste water and do not apply water evenly to the root zone.

What factors can lead to irrigation system clogging? Irrigation water with a high pH or containing high levels of minerals such as calcium, magnesium and iron, can clog emitters when combined with some fertigated liquid fertilizers. Growers with clogging issues can test their water sources for pH and mineral concentration to determine if acidification would result in a decrease in incidence of clogging. Solids such as soil particles, bacteria, and algae from poorly filtered water sources can also contribute to clogged systems. There are different types of filters used to eliminate these types of obstructions from the water before it moves through the lines. Choose filters that are appropriate for your operation's needs and remember to clean filters on a regular basis to keep water flowing efficiently. Ants and most recently snails, are known to clog irrigation lines by entering the tubing and blocking emitters when high populations are present. Evidence of clogged lines and emitters can be wilted trees. Also due to a blocked or partially blocked emitter, the wetted area is smaller than normal which could trigger false readings in moisture sensors and can result in dry spots.

Three methods used for clearing irrigation lines are acidification, chlorination, and flushing (Kadyampakeni and Schumann, 2020). Acidification will aid in lowering the pH of the irrigation water to prevent clogging from mineral deposits. Chlorination will help clear living organisms such as bacteria and algae from the lines. Flushing will physically force deposits, solids, insects and snail shells from the lines. Be sure to routinely inspect your irrigation system to keep it running properly. For more information on irrigation maintenance please refer to [“How to keep your irrigation system properly maintained”, by Dr. Davie Kadyampakeni and Dr. Arnold Schumann, May 2020, Citrus Industry Magazine.](#)



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UF/IFAS Extension Highlands County Program Sponsor 2020-2021

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