

FLORIDA FREEZE DAMAGE REPORT
VEGETABLES, SUGARCANE AND CITRUS
JANUARY 14-15, 1964

January 16, 1964

Freezing and subfreezing temperatures damaged most Florida vegetables on January 14 and 15 according to the Crop Reporting Board of the United States Department of Agriculture. Minimum temperatures follow: Northern districts, 18; Central Florida, 24; Everglades, 24; Lower East Coast, 30; Dade County, 28; Southwest Coast, 31. Tender vegetables suffered extensive damage and losses were heavy in several areas, particularly in Dade County. During the next several weeks, supplies of snap beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, sweet corn, and squash will be curtailed.

SNAP BEANS: Practically all acreage in the Everglades was lost. In the Pompano area, minor leaf burn occurred. Some blooms may be lost. Both pole and bush beans in Dade County suffered serious damage. Considerable acreage will be lost and production on surviving acreage will be sharply reduced.

CABBAGE: Temperatures fell to 24 in the Hastings area causing ice to form in the heads. Ice also formed in the heads in the Sanford-Oviedo area and the Everglades. Harvest is still underway. Cabbage in all of these areas was burned to some extent and quality was reduced. Extent of losses has not been determined.

CELERY: Ice formed in celery in the Everglades and Sanford area but the damage is not considered serious. Stripping of outer ribs will be necessary. Plants in the Sarasota area were not seriously affected.

SWEET CORN: The bulk of the acreage on warm land around Lake Okeechobee came through with little damage but fields on cold land away from the Lake were seriously burned and much of this acreage has been lost. In the Pompano area, damage was confined to minor leaf burn and no acreage loss is expected. Some acreage in the Fort Myers area may be damaged and some replanting in Dade County will be necessary.

CUCUMBERS: Plants in the Pompano-Martin County area show minor leaf burn. Some bloom drop expected. Acreage in the Fort Myers-Immokalee area was heavily damaged. Acreage in Dade County was seriously damaged and some will be lost.

LETTUCE AND ESCAROLE: Acreage in the Everglades suffered relatively heavy freeze damage. Plants are wilted and some acreage will probably be lost. Ice formed in heads early the night of January 14. Growers have stopped harvest. Heavy stripping will be necessary to salvage surviving fields. In the Sanford-Oviedo-Zellwood area, damage to leaf crops also occurred.

PEPPERS: In the Pompano area, only minor damage was reported but plants will likely lose some bloom and small fruit. In the Fort Myers-Immokalee area, older fields were hurt the most but both young and old plants show foliage burn.

POTATOES: All vines in the Everglades were killed. This small acreage is being harvested. Little damage occurred in the Fort Myers-Immokalee area. Harvest will begin there in late January. Plants in Dade County were badly burned in spots. In the Hastings area, growers are still planting the spring crop. Damage to seed in recently planted fields and in fields which were eroded by recent heavy rains is undetermined.

RADISHES: In the Everglades, crops were badly burned. Supplies may be reduced but harvest will continue.

STRAWBERRIES: Harvest was underway in the Pompano-Lake Worth area where there was no damage. Fields in Dade County suffered some damage. Strawberries in the Plant City area will lose blooms and immature fruit.

SQUASH: The Pompano area suffered leaf burn but losses will not be severe. All squash in the Fort Myers-Immokalee area was heavily burned. Supplies are expected to be reduced. Considerable acreage in Dade County was completely lost.

TOMATOES: The vine ripe crop in the Pompano area escaped with only minor leaf burn. The mature green crop in Dade County was severely damaged and some acreage will be lost. Production from this area will be sharply reduced. Growers have stopped harvesting until damage can be assessed. Young plants in the Fort Myers-Immokalee area were not seriously hurt. Tomatoes in the Manatee-Ruskin-Wauchula area show considerable damage.

WATERMELONS: In the important Fort Myers-Immokalee area, damage was rather heavy in some fields. Early plantings had vines a foot long.

SUGARCANE: Temperatures were below freezing and lowest in areas away from the Lake. Some terminal buds were frozen, stopping growth. Mills unable to assess damage for a few days. Losses are not expected to be extensive. Harvest is well along--about mid-point. Considerable plant cane and stubble for 1964 crop was frozen back but will recover.

CITRUS: Generally, no damage was done to Florida's citrus fruit although temperatures dropped to freezing and below in the citrus area. Heaters and wind machines successfully raised temperatures above the danger point in many groves. In most areas, damaging temperatures prevailed for only a short time. Fruit quality was not materially affected. Fruit that may have received minor damage was mature enough to be salvageable for processing.

The most serious threat occurred during the early morning hours of January 14 when a brisk wind caused minor leaf burn in many parts of the upper interior and the west coast area. It will take a few days for other damage to show but it is thought that no serious damage should result. Some minor wood damage was inflicted in the extreme northern portions of the upper interior. No damage to fruit or trees occurred in the Indian River area.