



# Panhandle Agriculture

## Solutions For Your Farm!

Provided By Your County Extension Agents in Northwest Florida

September - October, Volume 2, Issue 5



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"Climate is what we expect, weather is what we get."

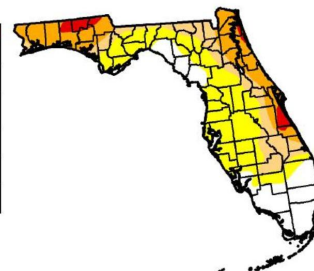
Mark Twain

Remember the weather last year? The fall and winter of 2009 was one of the *rainiest* on record and had serious impacts on winter crops. Well as is now painfully evident, the fall and winter of 2010 is gearing up to be quite dry as another La Nina weather pattern is forming. The current drought is a serious cause for concern prompting tough decisions as agricultural producers head into the winter season. In this issue of Panhandle Agriculture read more about the predicted drought and pasture management considerations for the months ahead. Also in this issue are articles on testing for nematodes, the 2010 Outstanding Farm Families of the Year, an innovative agricultural marketing tool, forestry management, and more. Thank you for taking time in your busy day to look through this newsletter. If there is one thing we wish you take from the following pages, it is the address and phone of your local County Extension Agent. University of Florida IFAS Extension Agents can help you find answers to questions on almost any topic.

## U.S. Drought Monitor Florida

October 26, 2010  
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	21.2	78.8	41.7	24.0	3.9	0.0
Last Week (10/19/2010 map)	33.0	67.0	32.7	20.8	2.0	0.0
3 Months Ago (08/03/2010 map)	88.1	11.9	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Start of Calendar Year (01/01/2010 map)	97.3	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Start of Water Year (10/01/2009 map)	55.1	44.9	25.4	6.0	0.0	0.0
One Year Ago (10/27/2009 map)	66.6	33.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0



Intensity:

D0 Abnormally Dry    D3 Drought - Extreme  
D1 Drought - Moderate    D4 Drought - Exceptional  
D2 Drought - Severe

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.



Released Thursday, October 28, 2010  
Author: Eric Luebbehusen, U.S. Department of Agriculture

<http://drought.unl.edu/dm>

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## La Niña May Impact your Winter Pasture



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Drought conditions are a frequent occurrence in the Southeast and can create a pasture and hay shortage throughout the region, greatly impacting farm finances and profit. Mild to moderate drought conditions have expanded over the past month in areas across Georgia, Alabama, and north Florida. Dryness is expected to increase unless the region receives beneficial rains from one or more tropical disturbances, such as a tropical storm or hurricane.

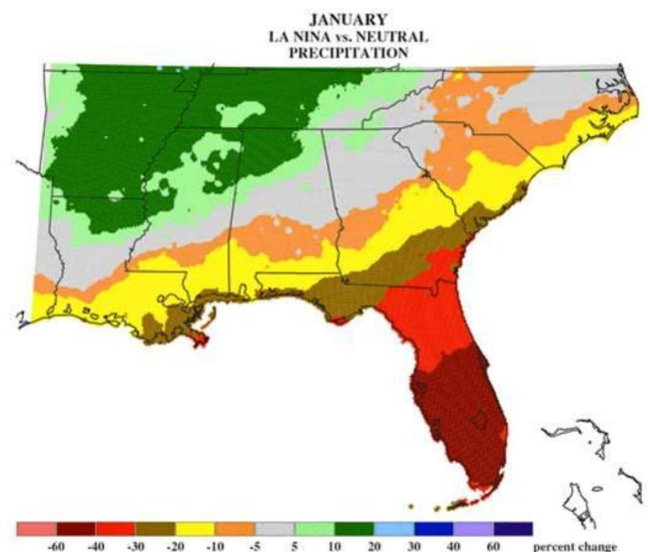
The recent establishment of La Niña conditions in the equatorial Pacific Ocean may result in drier conditions persisting through the winter months. The El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomenon is the biggest player in the game of year-to-year climate variability. El Niño and La Niña events tend to develop during April-June and tend to reach maximum strength during December-February. Typically they persist for 9 to 12 months. Ocean temperatures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean have cooled very quickly in the last 3 months and have now reached thresholds consistent with the **La Niña phase** (Sea surface temperatures more than 0.5 °C colder than normal). By the end of August sea surface temperatures were at least 1°C colder than normal, and climatologists predict that La Niña conditions will continue at

least through early 2011.

La Niña conditions usually bring **warmer and drier winter and spring seasons** (November through March) to Florida, central and lower Alabama and central and southern Georgia.

La Niña events in 1999 and 2000 and in early 2006 were associated with an increase in forest fires across Florida and Georgia.

Success of winter pastures depends on rainfall. This is especially true when overseeding. In central and south peninsular Florida where the effects of El Niño/La Niña are stronger, overseeding of cool-season annuals into an established grass sod often fails due to insufficient soil moisture. This practice is generally not recommended unless irrigation is available as dry conditions can be exacerbated during La Niña seasons. Different growing conditions caused by climate variability result in different growth rates, forage accumulation and carrying capacity. Given the higher chances of a drier winter it is important to be prepared for balancing stocking rates with the amount of forage available and purchase additional feed supplement if necessary.



Rainfall in the Southeast is on average 10-40% lower than normal during La Niña winters.

Based on the current dry conditions across parts of the

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Southeast and the probability of a dry winter, the following considerations should be made in regard to winter pastures:

- Soil moisture at planting will be an important factor for success, postpone planting if the soil is dry;
- Plant in prepared seedbeds where chances of success are higher, avoid overseeding;
- Plant in best fields that typically hold moisture in the winter;
- Don't invest only in winter forage, save some dollars for feed purchase;
- Be prepared to reduce stocking rates and number of grazing days with the expected reduced rainfall.

For more information about the potential effects of La Niña events on rainfall and temperature patterns in your county, visit *AgroClimate* at <http://www.agroclimate.org>

## Congratulate Our Local 2010 Outstanding Farm Families of the Year!



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Our careers as University of Florida, County Extension Agents, are diverse, and one of the rewarding things many of us do is assist in the selection of north Florida's Outstanding Farm Family of the Year. The Florida Panhandle has a rich farming history, and many counties have been presenting this award to local families for over 50 years. Each year, Farm Families are honored by the North Florida Fair, and locally, by their communities, counties, Florida Farm Bureaus, and UF/IFAS Extension Offices. The Outstanding Farm Family of the

Year Award is given to a family whose pride, dedication, and commitment to farming, is a way of life. These qualities are also reflected every day by their interactions with family, community, and colleagues. Agricultural producers who grow our food and fiber are more than farmers; they are also by default, meteorologists, economists, inventors, veterinarians, mechanics, ecologists, botanists, and biologists. Conducting the business of farming is not easy. Join us in congratulating your local 2010 Outstanding Farm Family of the Year!



One of our local Farm Families busy digging peanuts.  
Photo Credits: Judy Ludlow

County	2010 Outstanding Farm Family
Bay	The Marie Waller Lee Properties Family
Calhoun	The Baggett Family
Escambia	The Robert E. Godwin Family
Gadsden	The Jerry Poppell Family
Gulf	The James Rish Family
Holmes	The Luke Langford Family
Jackson	The R.A. Griffin Family
Jefferson	The Golden Family
Leon	The Ed & Carol Jacobsen Family
Okaloosa	The Nick Marshall Family
Santa Rosa	The John Salter Family
Wakulla	The D.R. Vause Family
Washington	The Philip & Jennifer Adkison Family
Walton	The Bill & Missy Bolen Family

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## Time to Sample for Nematodes



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The end of the growing season is when “weak” areas are usually most evident in crop fields. Affected areas are often stunted, appear chlorotic, and perhaps “cut-out” or “dry down” prematurely. These symptoms may be caused by various factors including poor fertility.

However, in many cases the symptoms are associated with nematode damage. Symptoms of nematode damage are often overlooked until they become widespread in a field. Accurate diagnosis of nematode populations usually requires laboratory soil analysis. Soil tests can determine the specific types and numbers of nematodes present to help develop management strategies.

The best time to sample for nematodes is just before, or just after, harvest when populations are at their peak in the soil. Nematode populations decline in late winter through early spring and may not be detected during that time. It is often useful to pull separate samples from both problem and healthy areas of the same field to compare the size of nematode populations. A nematode sample should be prepared from a mixture of 10 to 20 “cores” of soil. Collect cores 8 to 10 inches deep in a regular pattern over the area. Cores can be taken with a soil sampling tube, trowel, or shovel. For best results, a sample should represent no more than 10 acres. Thoroughly mix the soil cores and pour about one pint into a sealed plastic bag. Include 1 to 2 cups of roots taken from plants in each core area if possible. Seal the bag to prevent the soil from drying out. Avoid sampling soil that is very dry or soggy wet. Do not allow the sample to overheat or freeze before mailing. If you are storing the sample for more than a day it is best to keep it refrigerated, but not frozen. Remember, nematodes are living

animals so soil samples must be handled carefully to have an accurate analysis.

Nematode sample mailing kits for the Florida Nematode Assay Lab are available at County Extension Offices. Cost per sample is \$20.00 for each sample from Florida and \$25 for each sample from outside Florida. Assay results are returned to the client within 10 working days of receiving the sample. Agents also receive a copy of results so we can discuss them with you if you need assistance on management options.



Cotton field with severe infestation of reniform nematodes.

Photo Credits: Mike Donahoe

### References

Crow, W.T. 2007. Nematode Assay Form. University of Florida/IFAS Extension. RFSR023.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/sr023>

Crow, W. T. and F. E. Woods. 2007. Nematode Assay Laboratory. University of Florida/IFAS Extension.

ENY-027. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/sr011>

# Panhandle Agriculture

## Agricultural Marketing Using the new Market Maker System



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Panhandle farmers and ranchers are noted for their production expertise. If a crop can be grown here, it is grown here. Even if a crop has no historic base in north Florida, local growers are testing production opportunities and in many cases succeeding.

Marketing that novel or common crop can be a problem. Contemporary sales venues have replaced the time tested auction barns and farmers' wholesale markets. Time and distance from a transaction site can make some commodities economically impractical in smaller volumes.

Finding the right buyer or a new customer is challenging. Even in the best of times, getting a customer willing to pay the right price requires effort and more effort. The current economy has ramped up the exertion requirement.

The changing landscape of agricultural marketing options intrigued Dr. Al Wysocki, Interim Associate Dean & Associate Professor, UF/IFAS College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

"Surely," he reasoned, "there must be a way for Florida producers large and small, irrespective of the crop, to utilize current technology to reach more buyers." He found his answer in MarketMaker.

MarketMaker originated at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. It is an interactive nationwide mapping system that locates businesses and markets for agricultural products, providing that all important link between producers and consumers.

The goal of MarketMaker is to make the site a resource for all businesses in the food supply chain. Its usefulness in helping a grocery store find farm-fresh produce items is an efficient way of helping a panhandle producer find a place to convert their harvest into cash in the bank.

Dr. Wysocki pursued various funding sources for the programs startup cost. Some resources came through the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), and some arrived in the form of a monetary grant through the USDA's Specialty Crop Block Grant program.



Photo Credits: <http://fl.marketmaker.uiuc.edu/index.php>

The efforts of Dr. Wysocki and some Agriculture Extension Agents is about to pay dividends. The computer based MarketMaker program is about to be launched in Florida.

Users will find MarketMaker rich with demographic and business data that the user can query. Details can be summarized on a map to show concentrations of consumer markets and strategic business partners.

Census data is also a feature of the site. For example, a producer wanting to target Hispanic consumers can request a map showing the greatest concentration of upper-income Hispanic households, then request a complete demographic profile of those locations.

Naturally, when this type of service is offered, the question that quickly comes up is, "What's it going to cost me to get access to the site?" For the Florida farmer, grower or rancher there is no charge to utilize the sites

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services.

So here is an chance to take agricultural marketing into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Take MarketMaker for a test drive. See what opportunities await.

More information is available at your local Extension Office or visit the MarketMaker site at:  
<http://fl.marketmaker.uiuc.edu/index.php>

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## Control Understory Vegetation to Enhance Pine Straw Yield



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### Control Understory Vegetation to Enhance Pine Straw Yield

For pine straw production, planted pines on old fields are preferred over plantations on previously forested sites because understory vegetation is not as limiting to raking and baling clean pine straw. Even so, in old field plantations a large part of the pine straw yield is lost due to grasses, vines, and hardwoods in the understory.

Grasses and vines make it difficult to rake straw and the leaves of hardwood saplings and shrubs make it difficult to collect clean straw. Controlling vegetation in the understory **can double pine straw yields** in weedy situations (1) and may also enhance timber production.

Backpack sprayers or ATV mounted boom-less sprayers and hand guns are often used to apply herbicides below the pine canopy to enhance pine straw production in established stands; but make sure herbicide sprays do not contact the pine canopy or damage may result.

**Vegetation management recommendations to enhance pine straw yields\*** (Table 1.) Products listed in the table below are an example, other herbicide products containing the same active ingredient (given in parenthesis)

may also be used. For a list of registered products in Florida see (2).

\* Always read and follow all pesticide label directions.



Controlling vegetation in the understory of planted pines, such as this field, can double pine straw yields.

Photo Credits: Pat Minogue

1. Minogue, P. J., H. K. Ober, and S. Rosenthal. 2007. Overview of pine straw production in north Florida: Potential revenues, fertilization practices, and vegetation management recommendations. Univ. of Florida Cooperative Extension Service Circular FOR125/FR180. 6 pp. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FR180>

2. Osiecka, A., P. Minogue, Long, A., Nowak J., and Mossler, M. 2009. Herbicides registered for pine plantation management in Florida – 2008. Univ. of Florida Cooperative Extension Service Circular CIR1475/FR158. 14 pp. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FR158>

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## AgriVine

*Items of Interest, Calendar of Events, CEU Opportunities & More*

### Understanding Your Beef Checkoff Program

The Beef Checkoff Program increases profit opportunit-

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Table 1. Vegetation management recommendations to enhance pine straw yields

Problem Vegetation	Suggested Herbicide Treatment	Timing
Grasses and broadleaf weeds in the pine understory	Apply 1-2 quarts Accord® (glyphosate) per acre, broadcast BELOW PINE FOLiage, or as a spot treatment using 1.5% Accord® in water.	Apply during periods of active growth, avoid rain.
Vines: greenbrier, trumpet creeper, Virginia creeper, etc.	Apply 2% Garlon® 4 (triclopyr ester) in water as a spot treatment.	Growing season
Sapling trees of upland species (oaks, sweetgum, persimmon, cherry, sumac, sparkleberry, etc.)	Apply 2% Accord® (glyphosate) plus 0.5% Arsenal® AC (imazapyr) as a spot treatment to the foliage of brush.	Growing season, best July - mid Oct.
Shrubs of poorly drained sites (gallberry, fetterbush, staggerbush, bays, etc.)	Apply 2% Garlon®4 (triclopyr ester) plus 1% Chopper® (imazapyr) as a directed spray to the foliage.	Late growing season, August - October

ies for producers by keeping beef top of mind with consumers and purveyors, and by working to ensure a wholesome, quality beef-eating experience every time. Congress created the Beef Promotion and Research Act, the “Beef Checkoff Program,” with passage of the 1985 Farm Bill. Producers approved making the Beef Checkoff Program mandatory in 1988, with 79 percent voting in favor of it. Producers asked that the checkoff program be built on these tenets:

- All producers and importers pay the equivalent of \$1/head each and every time a beef animal is sold throughout its lifetime.
- One-half of the money collected by state beef councils — 50 cents of every dollar — is invested through the beef council in each state.
- All national checkoff-funded programs are budgeted and evaluated by the Cattlemen’s Beef Board, a stand-alone organization of checkoff-paying producer volunteers.
- Cattlemen’s Beef Board producer members are nominated by producer organizations in their states and appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

Did you know the people responsible for making decisions about your checkoff dollars at both the state and national levels are producer volunteers? In fact, the process for representation, by law, is designed to make sure that producers — like you — are responsible for direct-

ing, reviewing and approving how, when and where your checkoff dollars are invested to help build beef demand. These checkoff dollars are invested in promotion, research, consumer information, industry information, and foreign marketing. For more information contact the Florida Beef Council, **Producer Communications Florida Beef Council**, P.O. Box 421929, Kissimmee, FL 34742-1929, Phone: (407) 846-4557, Website: [www.beef.org](http://www.beef.org) and The Beef Checkoff Program, [mybeefcheckoff.com](http://mybeefcheckoff.com)

## What is MarketMaker?

**MarketMaker** is a national marketing effort developed by University of Illinois Extension in 2004. Its goal is building an easily used electronic infrastructure to connect food producing farmers with economically viable markets. Florida has joined fourteen other states in launching this **FREE** online effort. IFAS/Extension and UF’s Office of Sustainability currently funds this program. Visit <http://fl.foodmarketmaker.com> to see how **MarketMaker** works. Contact your local Extension Service to get more information and learn how to use **MarketMaker** to expand your farm or business opportunities. **MarketMaker** is hosted, maintained and guided by a University of Illinois Extension advisory board and made up of representatives from participating partner states, including Florida. **MarketMaker** is a partnership of land grant institutions and many State Departments of Agriculture. It offers a quality-driven food supply chains supported by the most extensive collections of search-

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able food related data in the country. **MarketMaker** is a user-friendly forum for businesses from farm-to-fork. Demographic and business information is summarized on a map showing concentrations of consumer markets and strategic partners. For more information visit <http://fl.foodmarketmaker.com> and also, read the article by Les Harrison in this issue of Panhandle Agriculture.



## Laurel Wilt Disease

Laurel wilt is a deadly disease of redbay (*Persea borbonia*) and other tree species in the Laurel family (Lauraceae). The disease is caused by a fungus (*Raffaelea lauricola*) that is introduced into host trees by a non-native insect, the redbay ambrosia beetle (*Xyleborus glabratus*). Recently Laurel wilt disease and the associated exotic redbay ambrosia beetle have been confirmed by Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Plant Industry as being established in Bay County, FL. This is a significant jump in the current distribution of this devastating disease of redbay trees and other hosts in the *Lauraceae* family (avocado, camphor, pondspice, sassafras and spicebush). For more information please see:

[http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/pi/enpp/pathology/laurel\\_wilt\\_disease.html](http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/pi/enpp/pathology/laurel_wilt_disease.html) and for the current US distribution map: [http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/foresthealth/laurelwilt/dist\\_map.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/foresthealth/laurelwilt/dist_map.shtml)

## USDA/FSA County Committee Elections Schedule 2010

FSA Counts on You! Please Vote!

- June 15, 2010, Nomination period begins. Forms are available from your local FSA Office and online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

- August 2, 2010, Last day to file nomination forms at the local FSA Office
- November 5, 2010, Ballots mailed to eligible voters
- December 6, 2010, Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA Office
- January 1, 2011, Elected committee members and alternates take office

*USDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.*

## The University of Florida IFAS Extension Needs You!

The University of Florida IFAS Extension works towards agricultural, environmental, and economic sustainability in our rapidly growing state and communities.

We accomplish this through research-based educational programs, publications, and opportunities provided to you locally.

Please consider donating to the UF IFAS County Extension office in your county. Your monetary gift is greatly appreciated, and will be used to continue our efforts at providing information and education you want and need.

To find out more about making donations and endowments to University of Florida IFAS Extension, please contact your County Extension Agents listed below, or Joe Mandernach, IFAS Development Office, at 352-392-5457, [jmandern@ufl.edu](mailto:jmandern@ufl.edu).

**Thank You!**

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# University of Florida IFAS Extension Panhandle Agriculture

*Solutions For Your Farm!*

*Information Provided By Your County Extension Agents in Northwest Florida*

