

Freeze Does Extensive Damage, 1934

Fact Sheet

Event: Freeze of 1934

Event severity: Brooksville, FL 20°F

Event severity: Plant City, FL 21°F

Event severity: Saint Leo, FL 22°F

Event severity: Tampa, FL 27°F

Crop loss: ~14 million boxes



Figure 1. Fat lighters stacked in an orange grove in anticipation of the freeze.

Summary of event:

A brutal December cold front brought freezing temperatures to much of Florida, including a reading of 20°F in Brooksville, FL. Several other locations saw temperatures in the low 20's causing severe damage to crops across the state. Many farmers experienced such severe damage that newspapers headlined, "Many Farmers Are Ruined." It was estimated that 14 million boxes of citrus fruit were lost in the worst freeze since 1895. This freeze was so severe that it led to the creation of the Federal-State Frost Warning Service.



FLORIDA CITRUS CROP CUT.

**Drought and Freeze Are Blamed
for 11,500,000-Box Decline.**

Drought during the early growing season and freezing weather Dec. 12 and 13 were blamed by the Federal Bureau of Agricultural Economics here today with reducing the Florida citrus crop for 1934-35 from 26,000,000 to 24,500,000 boxes.

COLDEST SINCE 1895

Worst Freeze Since 1895.

LAKELAND, Fla., Jan. 10.—Citrus growers of Florida have ample cause to subscribe to the platitude that farming is a hazardous business, for the freezing weather of December has left in its wake bleak evidence of heavy losses that already have had direct effect upon the general economic status of this area.

CITRUS CROP HURT BY FLORIDA FREEZE

It is a little too early for specific figures as to the extent of the losses, but already it is tragically obvious that they will tell anything but a happy story. A general estimate in which many have concurred indicates a loss of 14,000,000 boxes of fruit. While some growers escaped with light loss, others lost a heavy percentage of their fruit, and still others lost practically all of theirs where there was wide-open exposure.

**Fourteen Million Boxes of
Fruit Believed Lost and
Federal Aid Sought.**

**Vegetable Crops Also Damaged
and Many Farmers Are
Ruined.**

Figure 2. Newspaper headlines and various clippings

Links for more information:

[http://www.fshs.org/Proceedings/Password%20Protected/1940%20Vol.%2053/115-120%20\(ELLISON\).pdf](http://www.fshs.org/Proceedings/Password%20Protected/1940%20Vol.%2053/115-120%20(ELLISON).pdf) http://www.flcitrusmutual.com/industry-issues/weather/freeze_timeline.aspx.

Acknowledgments: The New York Times, January 13, 1935. Florida Photographic Collection.