



2023-2024 AIR QUALITY UPDATE
Another Year of Excellent Air Quality



Air Quality Data Confirmed by American Lung Association Analysis Shows Glades Air Remains Consistently “Good”

The people of U.S. Sugar are committed to keeping our community informed about local air quality. Expert analysis of the latest monitoring data during the annual harvest season collected by national, state and industry sources confirms that air quality in the Glades farming communities once again is consistently in the **“Good”** category, the best possible category specified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

EPA has National Ambient Air Quality Standards for six major pollutants, **including particulate matter of 2.5 ug/m³** (the concentration of particles of 2.5 microns or less per cubic meter of air). It has two categories: the **Primary Standards** for “sensitive” populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly and the Secondary Standards for the public at large.

U.S. Sugar applies the stricter **“Sensitive” populations standard** in analyzing Glades air quality.

For the majority of the 2023-24 harvest season, the primary standard to have “Good” air was up to **12ug/m³** over the course of a year, and **35ug/m³** for a 24-hour period. Data showed the daily average in the Glades well below both at 6.8ug/m³. For comparison, the American Lung Association and other independent studies show the Florida state average is **7.4**. There were zero days in the “Unhealthy,” “Very Unhealthy” or “Hazardous” groups.

In mid-2024, the EPA announced a new, tightened standard for what is considered “Good” quality air. After May 2024, ambient air must have no more than 9 micrograms per cubic meter on an annual basis, 25% lower than the previous standard. Even under this new, tougher standard, Glades air quality still ranks solidly in the “Good” category.



HIGHLIGHTS

- ◇ Recent data analysis confirms air quality consistently falls within the “Good” category set by EPA standards.
- ◇ The American Lung Association shows Palm Beach County has the best grade in the state for air quality.
- ◇ During the 2023–24 harvest season, Glades air quality averaged 6.8ug/m³ of PM2.5, well below both primary (12ug/m³) and secondary (35ug/m³) standards.
- ◇ Florida’s state average PM2.5 is slightly higher at 7.4ug/m³.
- ◇ Effective May 2024, EPA tightened the “Good” air quality standard to 9ug/m³, which Glades air quality still meets comfortably.
- ◇ Sources of PM2.5 include road and construction debris, vehicle exhaust, field dust, fires (prescribed and wildfires), and Sahara Dust in South Florida.
- ◇ Tuskegee University and Florida A&M University are conducting independent air quality and economic impact research for Glades communities.

EPA AIR QUALITY INDEX STANDARDS BELLE GLADE AIR QUALITY MEASUREMENTS OCTOBER 2023 THROUGH APRIL 2024 (209 TEST DAYS)

Standard	EPA Established Particulate Count Range	Number of Days
Good	0.0 to 12.0	200
Moderate	12.1 to 35.4	9
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	35.5 to 55.4	0
Unhealthy	55.5 to 150.4	0
Very Unhealthy	150.5 to 250.4	0
Hazardous	250.5+	0

95.7 PERCENT OF DAILY AVERAGES ARE IN THE TOP “GOOD” RANGE



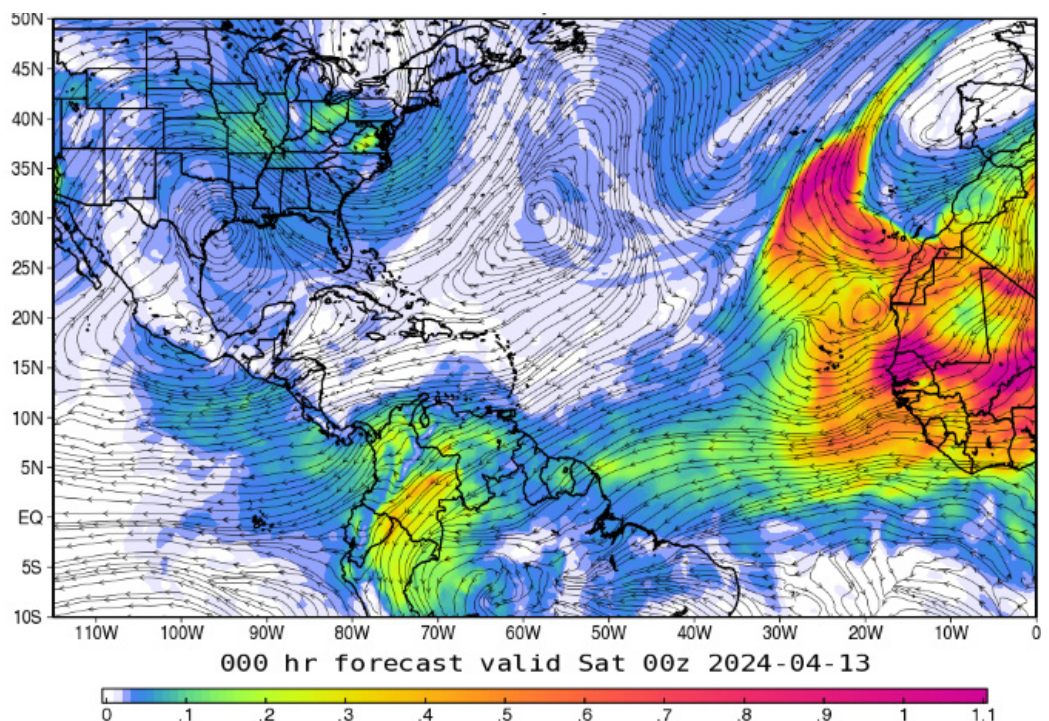
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Following EPA protocols, data from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the Florida Department of Health showed that air quality in the Glades during the 2023-2024 harvest was consistently in the **Good** category – **200 “Good” days and 9 “Moderate” days**. Moderate readings included several days in March/April where readings were affected by volcanic ash, extremely dry local soil conditions and Sahara dust as winds blew sand particles into Florida from the Sahara Desert

State air quality monitoring stations in Belle Glade, Royal Palm Beach and Delray Beach all tell the same story: An overwhelming number of “Good” air days. Private, professional-grade monitors throughout the region continue to confirm the FDEP data.

AVERAGE DAILY PM _{2.5} PARTICLE READINGS			
	Belle Glade	Royal Palm Beach	Delray Beach
2021-2022 Harvest Season	6.4	5.6	6.4
2022-2023 Harvest Season	7.4	7.4	7.4
2023-2024 Harvest Season	6.8	6.5	6.0

PM2.5 particulates come from sources like construction and field debris, car and truck exhausts, dirt roads, fallow fields, prescribed burns, wildfires, BBQs, sand particles and fireworks. Sahara Dust is also a proven source of PM2.5 in South Florida.

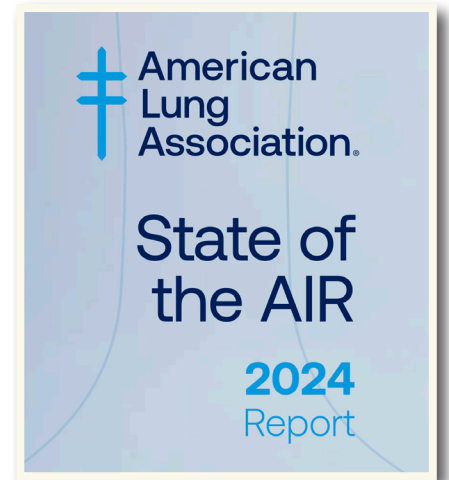


NASA/GEOS forecast on 4-13-2024 of Sahara dust over Florida.



American Lung Association Report

In May, the American Lung Association again released its annual State of the Air 2024 report, showing air quality throughout the United States.



Palm Beach County (including the farming region) was rated in the best possible category throughout and leads the state of Florida with the lowest annual average for particulate matter. It received the highest grade: "A" with ZERO days of high particle pollution (PM2.5) or ozone content over the three- year period. This put Palm Beach County in the American Lung Association's list of the cleanest counties in Florida for both particles and ozone.

Partnership with Tuskegee University and Florida A&M University

Tuskegee University and Florida A&M University have partnered with U.S. Sugar and the Glades communities for a comprehensive environmental study to assess the impacts of sustainable farming practices, including air quality and sugarcane-burning practices, throughout the region.

The project incorporates local perspectives and addresses true community concerns. One goal is to foster a partnership that is inclusive and understanding of the stated needs of the local community while striving for a sustainable and prosperous agricultural future. In addition to the environmental study, the universities also will undertake an economic analysis focusing on the agricultural sector's contributions to the surrounding communities.



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