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## Trade war averted – citrus growers cheer

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WASHINGTON — President Bush backed down Thursday from a trade war with Europe over steel imports, leaving Florida citrus growers relieved they will not bear the brunt of the squabble.

The dispute had pitted politically important states that produce steel — such as Ohio and Pennsylvania — against other crucial areas in next year's presidential campaign, such as Florida.

The European Union had threatened \$2.2 billion in retaliatory tariffs on U.S. products. The EU chose those products — including Florida citrus — for maximum political impact. Japan also had threatened \$85 million in tariffs.

Political experts predict that Florida will hold the key to the White House in 2004, with both Bush and the eventual Democratic nominee needing the state to win the election.

David F. Scott, an economist and professor of finance at the University of Central Florida, said Florida would not have been affected as much by manufacturing tariffs that had been threatened because the state has done a poor job of attracting industry.

Florida has only about half as many jobs, proportionally, in manufacturing, as the rest of the country, he said. The Orlando region lost almost 10 percent of its manufacturing jobs during the past 12 months, he said.

"Perversely enough, we were not hurt [by the threatened tariffs] because the Florida economy was already slanted to low-paying tourism and service-sector jobs and a dearth of manufacturing jobs," Scott said. "Manufacturing is more than putting another water slide on International Drive or manufacturing T-shirts."