

PRELIMINARY IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – AUGUST 2008

General Summary. Temperatures averaged 70.6° or 0.7° below normal while precipitation totaled 2.01 inches or 2.18 inches less than normal. This ranks as the 41st coolest and 14th driest August among 136 years of state records.

Temperatures. Most of August saw mild temperatures as only ten days averaged warmer than normal. Nevertheless the warmest weather of the year came on the 3rd and 4th. Shenandoah reported Iowa's highest official temperature of the year with a high of 99° on the afternoon of the 3rd while Des Moines and Ames recorded heat indices of 110° (unofficial heat indices were as high as 126°). The next day saw Bedford with an actual high of 98° and Burlington with a heat index of 112° (unofficial heat indices were again much higher with 128° reported). However, temperatures reached 90° only twice in the state after the 4th with the ninety degree readings confined to a small part of southwest Iowa. Low temperatures in the mid 40's occurred on the 11th, 24th, 25th, 26th and 29th. The state's lowest readings were 43° at Cresco and Estherville on the 25th and at Sibley on the 29th.

Cooling Degree Day Totals. Home air conditioning requirements, as estimated by cooling degree day totals, averaged 39% less than last August and 23% less than normal. So far this year cooling requirements have averaged 27% less than last year and 16% less than normal. This has been Iowa's coolest summer since 2004.

Precipitation. The very wet weather pattern that has dominated the state since April left Iowa in August. Only a very few locations recorded above normal rainfall during the month. Preliminary precipitation totals vary from 0.65 inches at Red Oak to 5.61 inches near Conesville in Muscatine County. This was the third driest August on record at Red Oak among 98 years of record (2003 with 0.48 inches and 1941 with 0.56 were drier). The only widespread rain event of the month came on the 27th-28th when a statewide average of 0.80 inches of rain fell. Crops were in need of rain nearly everywhere in the state, but especially in far southwest Iowa.

Severe Weather. Thanks to the dry weather there was far less severe weather activity in August than in recent months. Severe storms, mostly with large hail, were reported from 21 counties scattered over the eastern two-thirds of Iowa on the 4th-5th. Perhaps the most destructive event of the month was a hailstorm over northwestern Iowa on the afternoon and evening of the 13th. Dickinson, Clay and Buena Vista counties were hardest hit by hail that sometimes completely covered the ground.

Summer Summary. Summer temperatures averaged 71.4° or 0.2° below normal while precipitation totaled 16.75 inches or 3.68 inches more than normal. This ranks as the 48th coolest and 9th wettest summer among 136 years of state records.

Outlook. After a very warm and humid Labor Day a strong cold front traversed Iowa on Sep. 2. Cooler than normal air looks to dominate the state for at least the first one-half of the month. Many late planted crops need much more time for full development. This

cool pattern will not be helpful. The date of the first autumn freeze varies tremendously from year to year. However, on average the date of the first freeze ranges from around Sep. 28 in far northwest Iowa to about Oct. 15 in the far southeast. Only once (2005) in the past nine years has the first freeze come later than usual (based upon statewide averages).

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