

IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – AUGUST 2009

General Summary. Iowa temperatures averaged 68.5 degrees or 2.8 degrees below normal while precipitation averaged 5.90 inches or 1.71 inches above normal. This ranks as the 10th coolest and 14th wettest August among 137 years of state records.

Temperatures. It was another cooler than normal month. Above normal temperatures were restricted to only nine days during August with only one day (8th) averaging more than five degrees above normal. Ankeny reported the highest temperature of the month with a temperature of 97 degrees on the 8th. Meanwhile temperatures averaged more than five degrees below normal on ten days with no ninety degree weather after the 14th. This was Iowa's earliest end to 90° weather on record (previous record was August 19, 1902). Sibley reported a low of 37 degrees on the 30th while Spencer Airport had 36 degrees on the 31st.

Cooling Degree Days. Home air conditioning requirements, as estimated by cooling degree day totals, averaged 36% less than normal and 16% less than last August. Thus far this heating season cooling degree day totals are running 39% less than normal and 22% less than one year ago.

Precipitation. As has been the case for much of this year, precipitation was above normal across the southeast and below normal over the northwest. Very heavy rain fell from the 25 to 27th over southeastern Iowa, resulting in widespread flooding. Widespread rain also fell on the 7th, 9th, 16th and 19th. Monthly precipitation totals varied from only 1.41 inches at Spencer to 14.34 inches at the Cedar Rapids Airport. The Cedar Rapids total broke their previous August record of 13.09 inches set in 1993. While southeastern Iowa is saturated parts of northwest and north central Iowa are on the verge of drought conditions. Streamflows are below normal over some parts of the northwest but this summer's cool weather has prevented significant crop impacts in that area.

Severe Weather. As has been the case all year, severe weather was less frequent than usual during August. However, a hail storm on the morning of the 9th caused major damage along the US Highway 20 corridor, especially near Eldora. Severe storms were also reported from 11 counties on the afternoon and evening of the 19th with the season's last tornadoes reported from northeastern Iowa. According to National Weather Service statistics there were 25 tornadoes in Iowa in 2009. This was the smallest annual total since 1997 (24) and a huge contrast from last year's total of 105.

Summer Summary. Temperatures for the three summer months averaged 68.5 degrees or 3.1 degrees below normal while precipitation totaled 15.90 inches or 2.83 inches above normal. This ranks as the fourth coolest and 13th wettest summer among 137 years of records. The only cooler summers were 1915 (66.6), 1992 (67.6) and 2004 (68.1).

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