

IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – OCTOBER 2009

General Summary. Temperatures averaged 44.8° or 6.1° below normal while precipitation totaled 6.42 inches or 3.90 inches above normal. This ranks as the 3rd coldest and ties as the wettest October among 137 years of state records. Only 1925 (40.1°) and 1917 (42.8°) were colder while 1881 (6.42”) was as wet.

Temperatures. The month began unseasonably cold with temperatures averaging below normal on all of the first 18 days of the month. Above normal temperatures were finally recorded on six of the final 13 days of the month (19th-21st and 28th-30th). The first hard freeze of the season was recorded over portions of southwest Iowa on the morning of the 4th with Atlantic, Clarinda and Onawa reporting 28°. Northwest Iowa’s first hard freeze arrived on the morning of the 9th with 24° readings at Sibley and Spencer while all but a few southeast Iowa locations recorded a hard freeze the next morning. Sibley reported the lowest temperature of the month with a 15° low on the morning of the 11th. Temperatures reached 70° on only four days during the month with Muscatine the warm spot with a 75° maximum on the 21st. Never before in the historical record has the temperature failed to exceed 75° somewhere in the state during October (old record ‘lowest’ maximum was 78° in 1985, 1959 and 1925).

Heating Degree Day Totals. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 40% greater than last October and 39% greater than normal. Heating requirements thus far this season are running 36% greater than last year at this time and 20% greater than normal.

Precipitation. October got off to a wet start with a statewide average of 1.17 inches of rain on the 1st. Frequent precipitation was the rule for the remainder of the month with most locations recording 15 to 20 days with measurable precipitation. Initially the heavier rains were centered on northwestern Iowa but major rain events of the late 20th to early 24th (2.36 inches statewide average) and 29th-30th (average of 1.37 inches) brought heaviest rainfall to eastern Iowa. Monthly precipitation totals varied from 3.68 inches at Glenwood (162% of normal) to 9.13 inches at Saint Ansgar (382% of normal). Numerous locations set records for maximum October precipitation including:

City	Oct. 2009	Old Oct. Record	Period of Record
Britt	8.17 inches	5.31 in 1941	112 years
Osage	8.14	6.61 in 1881	115 years
Guthrie Center	8.01	7.13 in 2007	110 years
Charles City	7.92	7.86 in 1881	127 years
Forest City	7.79	6.66 in 1941	117 years
Mason City	7.88	5.16 in 1970	116 years
Boone	7.72	6.02 in 1918	112 years
Fort Dodge	7.69	6.14 in 1968	118 years
Northwood	7.40	6.07 in 1941	113 years
Ames 8 WSW	7.33	6.66 in 1881	133 years

Cedar Rapids #1	7.30	6.79 in 1998	125 years
Perry	7.15	6.25 in 2007	107 years
Estherville	7.15	6.60 in 1971	113 years
Fayette	6.82	5.92 in 1997	119 years
Elkader	6.81	6.80 in 1881	114 years
Webster City	6.78	5.32 in 1947	119 years
Algona	6.77	5.50 in 2007	137 years
Jefferson	6.36	5.70 in 1918	107 years
Sac City	6.31	6.02 in 1984	129 years
Lansing	6.27	5.93 in 1984	104 years
Rockwell City	6.21	5.92 in 1918	114 years

Meanwhile, snow made several unwelcome early month appearances. One to two inches of snow fell over far northwestern Iowa on the night of the 9th while one to four inch amounts were common along the Interstate 80 corridor from Council Bluffs to Des Moines on the morning of the 10th, including a 6.7 inch total at Underwood. Another snow event on the 11th-12th brought light snow to the northwest one-third of Iowa with a few one to two inch accumulations. The last of the measurable events came on the 12th-13th when one to two inches fell over parts of northwest and north central Iowa. Significant snowfall in early October is fairly unusual in Iowa with the event of the 10th being the greatest for so early in the season since October 9, 1970.

The cold and persistently wet weather greatly delayed Iowa's fall harvest. According to Iowa Agricultural Statistics only 18% of the corn and 54% of the soybeans had been harvested as of November 1. A slower start to the harvest season has not been recorded since 1951.

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