

## IOWA PRELIMINARY MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – NOVEMBER 2009

General Summary. Temperatures averaged 43.7° or 8.1° above normal while precipitation totaled 1.24 inches or 0.90 inches less than normal. This ranks as the fourth warmest and 52<sup>nd</sup> driest November among 137 years of records.

Temperatures. Iowa made a welcome transition from the third coldest October of record to the fourth warmest November. Only two days (3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>) averaged cooler than normal during the past month. Daytime highs climbed into the 70's (four dates) nearly as often as overnight lows fell into the teens (5 dates). Donnellson reported the month's highest temperature with a 77° reading on the 8<sup>th</sup>. This was the highest temperature recorded in the state since September 27. A statewide record for 'least' extreme daily temperature was set for the third consecutive month. September (86°) and October (74°) both set records for lowest statewide maximum temperature for those months. In November a record for highest statewide minimum temperature was set. Atlantic reported the lowest temperature of the month with a morning low of 17° on the 30<sup>th</sup>. The previous 'highest' November minimum temperature was 14° set at Sheldon (Nov. 20, 2001) and at Hawarden (Nov. 29, 2001).

Heating Degree Days. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 24% less than last November and 28% less than normal. Thus far this heating season degree day totals are running 1% less than last year at this time and 10% less than normal.

Precipitation. The very wet weather pattern that plagued Iowa throughout October made a very welcome retreat from the state in November. A statewide average of only 0.04 inches of rain fell during the first one-half of November. The second half of the month brought more seasonal precipitation totals with heaviest rains over south central and southeast Iowa on the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>. Widespread rain also fell on the 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>. All but the extreme southern part of the state recorded less rain than usual for November. Monthly totals varied from 0.27 inches at Hampton to 2.91 inches at Keokuk. Snow has been conspicuously absent from the state since the series of unseasonably early snow events during the second week of October. Rain mixed with snow was fairly common on the night of Nov. 25 but only two locations (Calmar & Stanley) reported a brief accumulation. The statewide average snowfall was just a trace. This November joins those of 1912, 1914, 1939, 1960 and 1963 with a statewide average of only a trace. Among those other five Novembers only in 1939 was snow less prevalent than in 2009.

Harvest 2009. The percentage of both corn (18%) and soybean (54%) acres harvested by the beginning of November was the lowest since 1951. However, much more favorable weather allowed the soybean harvest to be nearly complete by the end of November. According to Iowa Agricultural Statistics 13% of the corn crop was still in the field as of Nov. 28. This is the largest unharvested acreage for late November since 1992.

Outlook. An El Niño event, periodic warming of the tropical Pacific Ocean, is ongoing. Iowa very frequently enjoys warmer than normal winters (December through February)

during El Niño events. All of the past nine El Niño events have brought a warmer than normal mid winter to Iowa as well as 14 of the past 18 events. However, even a warmer than normal winter in Iowa is still cold by most standards thus we must be prepared for wintry weather, though hopefully such weather will be less frequent than usual. Typically, two of the three mid winter months will be warmer than normal with El Niño. There is a slight tendency for El Niño winters to be drier than usual in Iowa.

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