

IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – APRIL 2010

General Summary. Temperatures averaged 54.9° or 6.4° above normal while precipitation averaged 3.74 inches or 0.41 inches above normal. This was 32nd wettest April and 6th warmest April among 138 years of state records. The last warmer April came in 1981.

Temperatures. Mild weather was the rule for most of April as below normal temperatures were confined to only eight days during the month. This extends the warm weather pattern that began on March 6 as only 12 of the past 56 days have been cooler than usual. The warmest weather came on the very first day of the month when Little Sioux reached 89° with every point in the state, except Sheldon, reaching the 80's for the first time since August. On the other extreme the Spencer Airport recorded the lowest temperature of the month with a reading of 21° on the morning of the 8th. A few northeastern Iowa locations had a freeze as late as April 28; however, some south central and southeast locations have not seen a freeze since March 29. This has been Iowa's warmest start to the spring season since 1987.

Heating Degree Day Totals. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 43% less than last April and 38% less than normal. Degree day totals for the entire heating season (since July 1, 2009) are running 1% less than last season and 1% more than normal.

Precipitation. Rainfall was widespread and frequent from the 2nd through the 7th. Locally heavy rain fell over northeastern Iowa on the 5th-6th with 4.14 inches at Elkader. However, a statewide average of only 0.45 inches of rain fell from the 8th through the 21st, allowing a large amount of fieldwork to take place. However, a small area from near Spencer to Mason City saw heavy rain on the 12th. The greatest rains of the month came on the 23rd, 24th and 25th with south central and southeast Iowa receiving widespread 2 to 3 inches totals. Monthly rain totals varied from 1.34 inches at Battle Creek to 6.68 inches at Elkader. Following the 7th snowiest winter on record, snow was noticeably absent in April with just a little snow briefly mixed with rain over southwestern Iowa on the 7th. There have been 28 Aprils with only a trace of snowfall for a statewide average in the past 120 years. However, only 3% of the state's reporting points saw snow this April for the lowest percentage in the month since 1890. The combination of much warmer than usual weather, and the extended streak of mostly dry weather at mid-month, allowed corn planting to proceed at the most rapid pace on record. Iowa Agricultural Statistics reported that 68% of the intended corn acres had been planted as of April 25. This is a truly amazing development considering that Iowa entered spring with super-saturated soils and deep snow cover.

Severe Weather. The first severe weather episode of the season arrived on the 2nd when high winds were reported from 14 counties from south central to northeast Iowa. The most widespread event came on the 5th when high winds or hail were reported from 20 counties. However, the most destructive storm of the month hit the Grinnell area on the

afternoon of the 6th with winds estimated to 100 mph and hail up to 1.5 inches in diameter. Severe storms were also reported on the 4th, 12th, 23rd, 24th, 29th and 30th.

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