

IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – OCTOBER 2010

General Summary. October temperatures averaged 53.9° or 3.0° above normal while precipitation totaled 0.98 inches or 1.54 inches below normal. This ranks as the 41st warmest and 16th driest October among 138 years of records.

Temperatures. October was the seventh of the past eight months with above normal temperatures in Iowa. Temperatures reached 80 degrees or higher somewhere in the state on ten of the first 16 days of the month. This was in major contrast to last fall when no place in the state reached 80 degrees after September 27. Sioux City was the hot spot with a daily record high of 93° on the 8th. The season's first freeze came to most of the northwest two-thirds of the state on the 3rd and/or 4th with Atlantic reporting a low of 23° on the 3rd. Hard freezes also were reported on the 21st and 22nd but much of south central and southeast Iowa didn't experience a hard freeze until the morning of the 29th. Elkader, New Hampton and Stanley reported the month's lowest temperatures with 18° readings on the 29th.

Heating Degree Day Totals. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 44% less than last October (which had been the coldest October since 1924) and 22% less than normal. Season-to-date (since July 1) degree day totals are running 39% less than one year ago and 26% less than normal.

Precipitation. A very dry period of weather that began on September 26 continued through October 22. Many areas of Iowa received no rain during this 27 day period while the statewide average precipitation was only 0.04 inches compared to a normal for the period of 2.24 inches. The warm and dry weather, combined with a very mature crop, allowed harvest to proceed at a very rapid pace with nearly all of the soybeans and 97% of the corn harvested at month's end. This is a huge change from last season when the harvest pace was the slowest since 1951 with only 18% of the corn and 54% of the soybeans in the bin at month's end owing to a record wet October and a crop that was slow to reach maturity thanks to the third coolest summer of record. Locally heavy rain fell across a small area of northwest Iowa on the 23rd with Sheldon reporting 4.32 inches. However, very windy conditions prevailing over several days following this rain allowed fields to dry very quickly. Monthly precipitation totals varied from only 0.18 inches at Carroll and Jefferson to 4.87 inches at Sheldon. Overall this was Iowa's driest October since 2005 and driest calendar month since February 2009. Nevertheless, the year-to-date precipitation total already ranks ninth highest among 138 years of records and only normal precipitation for the final two months of the year would be sufficient to push the 2010 annual total to the second highest of record.

Severe Weather. The only severe weather event of consequence during the month was a windstorm on the 26th and 27th when a strong low pressure system generated wind gusts in excess of 50 mph over much of central and northern Iowa. The highest official wind gusts were 60 mph recorded at Dubuque on the 26th and at Perry on the 27th. There were scattered power outages reported as well as at least two reports of injuries from trucks being blown over from the high winds. Sea level pressure fell to 28.79 inches at Mason

City on the morning of the 26th. While quite low this reading was far from the Iowa record low of 28.55 inches set on November 10, 1998. However, the low pressure area continued to deepen rapidly as it moved into Minnesota resulting in what is believed to be an upper Midwest record low sea level pressure of 28.21 inches at Bigfork, Minnesota set during the evening of October 26.

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