

IOWA WEATHER SUMMARY – SEPTEMBER 2011

General Summary. Iowa temperatures averaged 60.2° or 3.0° below normal while precipitation totaled 1.67 inches or 1.71 inches less than normal. This ranks as the 18th coolest and 18th driest September among 139 years of records. A cooler September was last recorded in 2006 and a drier one in 1990.

Temperatures. September got off to a hot start with temperatures far above normal on the 1st and 2nd. Keokuk was the hot spot on both days with a high of 102° on the 1st and 101° on the 2nd. The 102° on the 1st was Iowa's highest September temperature since Glenwood reached 104° on September 2, 2000. However, temperatures reached 90 degrees only twice more during the month (3rd and 12th). The season's first freeze impacted 48% of the state on the morning of the 15th. This freeze was not as widespread as an event on the same date in 2008 but at Jefferson and Cedar Rapids this tied for the earliest freeze on record. Mason City was the cold spot with a 26° minimum, Iowa's lowest temperature for so early in the fall since Sibley recorded a 23° low on September 11, 1955. A freeze also was recorded somewhere in the state on the 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th and 30th.

Cooling Degree Day Totals. Home air conditioning requirements, as estimated by cooling degree day totals, averaged the same as last September and 24% less than normal. Cooling degree day totals thus far this season are running 2% less than last year at this time but 19% more than normal.

Precipitation. Rainfall totals were far less than normal over all but portions of northeast Iowa. Monthly totals of under one inch were common over western and south central Iowa. A little more than one-half of September's rain fell during the first three days of the month. Rain totals varied from 0.31 inch at Sioux City to 4.43 inches at Fayette. At Sioux City this was the driest September since 1950. The dry weather has been great for corn and soybean dry-down and harvest but detrimental to pasture conditions. Iowa Agricultural Statistics reported as of October 2 that only 28% of the state's pastures were in good to excellent condition. This is the lowest percentage reported since early August 2006. Streamflow has become quite low in some areas, especially across southeastern Iowa.

Severe Weather. Severe thunderstorm activity was limited to only the 2nd and 3rd of the month with large hail and/or high winds reported from 24 mostly northwestern counties. However, the most significant severe weather event of the month came on the 29th when a strong low pressure system brought wind gusts of 40 to 50 mph or more to most of Iowa. Mason City reported the highest wind with a gust to 59 mph. Numerous field fires were rapidly spread by the winds.

Harry J. Hillaker, State Climatologist
Iowa Dept. of Agriculture & Land Stewardship
Wallace State Office Bldg.
Des Moines, IA 50319

Telephone: (515) 281-8981
E-mail: Climatology@IowaAgriculture.gov