

## IOWA WEATHER SUMMARY – APRIL 2012

General Summary. Iowa temperatures averaged 52.1° or 3.2° above normal while precipitation totaled 4.01 inches or 0.50 inches above normal. This ranks as the 26<sup>th</sup> warmest and 31<sup>st</sup> wettest April among 140 years of records.

Temperatures. The very mild weather pattern that has characterized Iowa's weather for the past several months continued into early April. The first two days of the month were especially warm with Sioux City reaching 93° on the 1<sup>st</sup> and Sioux City and Little Sioux climbing to 92° on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. The reading on the 1<sup>st</sup> is the highest recorded in Iowa for so early in the season (old record 92° set at Clarinda on March 22, 1910). The exceptionally mild weather of March and early April pushed the development of trees and plants as much as one month ahead of schedule. This set the stage for severe freeze damage for some forms of vegetation when colder weather finally returned. A hard freeze occurred over parts of northeast Iowa on the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> when Cresco reported a 23° low. Scattered freezing conditions occurred statewide on the 8<sup>th</sup> and over most of northern Iowa on the 9<sup>th</sup>. However, the coldest weather arrived on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> when all but a very few locations in the state recorded a freeze. Sibley reported the lowest temperature with a 15° minimum on the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup>. One last hard freeze impacted parts of eastern Iowa on the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup>. Much more variable temperatures, which is typical for Iowa in the spring, was the rule for the remainder of April. There were occasional light freezes later in the month as well as one very warm day on the 25<sup>th</sup> when Red Oak reached 92°. April 2012 averaged cooler than March 2012 at most eastern Iowa locations. At Dubuque March was 1.3 degrees warmer than April. This was the first time that has occurred among 162 years of records at that location. On a statewide averaged basis April 2012 averaged 1.0° warmer than March while in a typical year April is 13 degrees warmer than March.

Heating Degree Days. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 26% less than last April and 21% less than normal. Degree day totals thus far this season (since July 1, 2011) are running 20% less than one year ago and 18% less than normal.

Precipitation. Rainfall was relatively evenly distributed across the state and throughout the month. The month's largest event came on the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> and brought a statewide average of 1.52 inches of rain with heavy rain in portions of southwest Iowa where Red Oak reported 5.65 inches. Other widespread events came on the 19<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. Mostly dry weather from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> allowed a great amount of planting progress to be made with Iowa Agricultural Statistics reporting that at least 41% of the corn and 3% of the state's soybeans were planted during the period. Monthly precipitation totals varied from 2.15 inches at Fairfield to 7.62 inches at Red Oak. There were only two reports of snow or sleet during the month, coming from Calmar on the 16<sup>th</sup> and at Strawberry Point on the 28<sup>th</sup>. This represents the fewest snow/sleet reports in April since 1890. Amazingly these are the only snow reports anywhere in Iowa since March 8 when just a few extreme northeast Iowa locations reported flurries. Without these two isolated

April reports 2012 would have had by far the earliest end to the snow season since statewide records began in 1888 (current record March 30, 1889).

Severe Weather. There was an unusually small total of only three days (14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>) with severe thunderstorms reported in Iowa during April. However, the event of the 14<sup>th</sup> was a major one with severe storms reported from 28 southern Iowa counties and included very destructive EF-2 tornadoes at Thurman and Creston.

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