

## IOWA WEATHER SUMMARY – MARCH 2013

General Summary. Iowa temperatures averaged 28.5° or 7.4° below normal while precipitation totaled 2.17 inches or 0.02 inches above normal. This ranks as the 17<sup>th</sup> coldest and 49<sup>th</sup> wettest March among 141 years of state records. A colder March has not been recorded since 1975.

Temperatures. Cold weather was very persistent during March with statewide temperatures being below normal on all but six days during the month (9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>). Elkader recorded the lowest temperature of the month with a -7° report on the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup> while subzero readings came as late as the 21<sup>st</sup> at Cresco (-4°). Cresco's reading was the latest subzero temperature for the winter season in Iowa since March 26, 1996. On the other extreme the temperature reached 70° at Bedford and Lamoni on the 15<sup>th</sup> and at Shenandoah on the 30<sup>th</sup>. This month was a huge contrast to the record warm March of last year with a statewide average temperature 22.6° lower than a year ago. At Ames, for example, the highest temperature recorded in March 2013 was 60°. Last March Ames recorded 23 days with highs of 60° or greater during the month.

Heating Degree Day Totals. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 153% greater than last March and 25% greater than normal. Heating requirements so far this season (since July 1, 2012) are running 21% greater than last season at this time and the same as normal.

Precipitation. Much of the month's precipitation fell during one event from late on the 8<sup>th</sup> into morning of the 11<sup>th</sup>. Rain fell statewide which transitioned to heavy snow over about the northwest one-half of the state. Sioux Rapids reported the most snow with 17.1 inches while rain totals of more than two inches occurred in southeastern Iowa with a maximum amount of 2.58 inches at Donnellson. Overall this storm brought a statewide average of 1.58 inches of precipitation for the largest storm total since mid-April 2012. There were several other snow events during the month with one on the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> bringing snow to the eastern two-thirds of Iowa with a 9.3 inch maximum at Clermont. Another storm on the 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> brought snow statewide with greatest amounts in the southeast with 6.7 inches at Donnellson. Generally precipitation for the month was well below normal over the southwest one-quarter of the state and slightly above normal elsewhere. Monthly totals varied from 0.68 inches at Shenandoah to 3.57 inches at Burlington. Snowfall totals varied from only 0.5 inches at Rock Rapids to 23.8 inches at Mason City. The statewide average snowfall was 9.7 inches or 5.0 inches above normal. This was the state's snowiest March since 1998. Soils were still frozen over most of the northern one-half of the state at month's end. Thus, little of the March precipitation would have soaked into the ground. However, abundant runoff did boost the levels of lakes and farm ponds. At Saylorville Reservoir the lake level had been below the normal conservation pool since August 26, 2012 and reached a record low of 829.26 feet (6.74 feet below normal) on March 8. However, runoff from the early month storm system quickly brought the lake back to normal levels by the 16<sup>th</sup> where they remained through the end of the month.

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: [Harry.Hillaker@IowaAgriculture.gov](mailto:Harry.Hillaker@IowaAgriculture.gov)