

PRELIMINARY IOWA WEATHER SUMMARY – OCTOBER 2013

General Summary. Temperatures averaged 50.6° or 0.2° below normal while precipitation totaled 2.79 inches or 0.18 inches above normal. This ranks as the 56th coolest and 54th wettest October among 141 years of records.

Temperatures. The first 15 days of the month averaged 5.0° warmer than normal with temperatures reaching 80° somewhere in the state on eight of the first eleven days of the month. However, the last 16 days of October averaged 4.9° below normal with hard freezes occurring nearly every night somewhere in Iowa from the 17th through the 27th. Temperatures did not exceed 70° anywhere after the 11th. Temperature extremes varied from highs of 88° at Sioux City on the 2nd and at Donnellson, Fort Madison and Keokuk on the 4th to lows of 18° at Mount Ayr and Stanley on the morning of the 25th. A few southeast Iowa locations did not record their first freeze of the season until the 25th.

Heating Degree Days. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 9% greater than last October but 2% less than normal. At this early point in the heating season heating requirements are running 7% less than normal and 18% less than last season through the end of October.

Precipitation. Rain was widespread across Iowa from the 2nd through the 4th with locally heavy rain over the west and far north. Additional heavy rain fell over far western areas on the 13th-14th. The season's first accumulating snow fell on the 22nd along a relatively narrow band from the northwest corner of the state east-southeastward to the Quad Cities area. The greatest snowfall of two to three inches was in the Davenport area but melted by the next morning. Finally, rain was widespread on the 29th to the 31st with amounts of two to three inches falling over the southeast one-quarter of the state on the 30th. Monthly precipitation totals varied from 1.35 inches at Hampton to 6.04 inches near Colwell just one county to the northeast. The statewide average precipitation was above normal for the first time since June. Nevertheless a warm and relatively dry first one-half of fall (up to mid-October) helped push along crop maturity and dry-down allowing the soybean harvest to proceed at a near normal pace despite a very late start to the growing season.

Severe Weather. A large severe weather outbreak on the afternoon and evening of the 4th across brought at least six confirmed tornadoes to northwest Iowa with a storm reaching EF-4 intensity near Pierson in Woodbury County. This was the strongest storm for so late in the year in Iowa since an EF-5 at Belmont on October 14, 1966 while these were the greatest number of tornadoes for so late in the year in Iowa since twelve touched down on November 12, 2005. Nevertheless, the 2013 season has still produced only about one-half of the typical number of tornadoes for the year in Iowa.

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