



IOWA PRELIMINARY MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – MAY 2015

General Summary. Temperatures averaged 60.0° or 0.1° below normal while precipitation totaled 5.13 inches or 0.57 inches above normal. This ranks as the 69th warmest and 35th wettest May among 143 years of records.

Temperatures. There were two extended periods of warmer than normal weather from the 2nd through the 10th and from the 23rd through the 29th. Nevertheless, relatively brief but intense cold spells, particularly from the 18th through the 22nd, were just enough to pull the statewide average temperature barely below normal for the month as a whole. Temperature extremes varied from a high of 89° at Little Sioux on the 3rd to lows of 31° on the 1st at Elkader and Lowden. This was the first May since 1995 when temperatures failed to reach 90°, as well as the smallest range in May temperature extremes since that year.

Heating Degree Days. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day accumulations, averaged 7% less than normal and 15% less than last May. Heating degree day totals for the 2014-2015 heating season (since July 1, 2014) are running 2% greater than normal but 11% less than during the long cold season of one year ago.

Precipitation. Rainfall was very frequent during May. Measurable rainfall (0.01 inch or more) fell on an average of 16.3 days at any single location in the state, 39% more frequently than typical in May. Algona recorded 24 days with measurable rain, plus another three days with trace amounts. More frequent May rainfall has not occurred since 2001. Monthly rain totals varied from 2.58 inches at Newton to 9.21 inches at a gage five miles east of Denison. Greatest totals were generally over southwestern Iowa while below normal totals were mostly in a wide band from near Ottumwa northward to Mason City. The wettest period of this wet month came between the evening of the 23rd and morning of the 27th when a statewide average of 1.56 inches of rain fell. Despite the frequent May rainfall, year-to-date precipitation totals are below normal over most of the state with greatest deficits over the northwest and southeast corners of Iowa. Year-to-date precipitation surpluses are mostly confined to southwest and west central Iowa, roughly the same areas that were unusually wet in 2014.

Spring Summary. Temperatures over the three spring months of March, April and May averaged 49.2° or 0.9° above normal while precipitation totaled 9.11 inches or 1.11 inches below normal. This ranks as the 46th warmest and 69th wettest spring among 143 years of records. A drier year-to-date was last recorded in 2003, although this year is just a few hundredths of an inch drier than last year at this time. The relative warmth of this spring, an extended period of mostly dry weather in late April, and the lack of widespread heavy rain events have allowed most of the state (the southwest being the primary exception) to experience good planting progress despite the high frequency of rain over the past month.

Outlook. The cool and wet weather pattern that has dominated the southern plains states recently is expected to persist into the summer. Iowa is on the northeastern edge of this area where long-range projections favor cooler and wetter than normal weather for the summer of 2015.

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May 2015

WEATHER BY DISTRICTS

DISTRICT	TEMPERATURE (F)		HEATING DEGREE DAYS				PRECIPITATION (inches)				SNOWFALL May 2015 Average
	May 2015 Average	Departure*	May 2015 Average	Departure*	Since Jul., 1, 2014 Average	Departure*	May 2015 Average	Departure*	Since Jan.1, 2015 Average	Departure*	
Northwest	58.5	-0.6	212	-12	7326	-200	4.28	+0.56	8.92	-1.21	0.0
North Central	58.2	-0.4	219	-14	7690	+72	4.65	+0.18	11.56	-0.14	0.0
Northeast	59.7	+0.9	205	-22	7630	+321	4.82	+0.43	10.82	-1.36	0.0
West Central	59.1	-1.1	209	+15	6968	-16	5.57	+1.08	11.61	-0.02	0.0
Central	60.1	+0.1	173	-25	7040	+100	4.68	-0.01	10.48	-1.96	0.0
East Central	61.7	+1.0	143	-39	6989	+382	5.63	+1.29	11.16	-1.35	T
Southwest	59.8	-1.6	182	+18	6443	+76	6.24	+1.02	11.96	-0.80	0.0
South Central	60.7	+0.1	163	-18	6435	+29	5.62	+0.50	10.85	-2.34	0.0
Southeast	62.8	+0.8	121	-31	6321	+255	5.01	+0.12	10.35	-3.52	0.0
STATE	60.0	-0.1	183	-14	7018	+107	5.13	+0.57	10.82	-1.37	T

* Departures are computed from 1981-2010 normals. Monthly estimates are preliminary and are likely to change.
 The weather data in this report are based upon information collected by the U. S. Dept. of Commerce, NOAA National Weather Service.

State Climatologist, Iowa Dept. of Agriculture & Land Stewardship
PRELIMINARY COUNTY PRECIPITATION ESTIMATES, MAY 2015 (inches)

