

IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – AUGUST 2003

General Summary. August temperatures averaged 74.4° or 3.1° above normal while precipitation averaged 1.05 inches or 3.14 inches less than normal. This was the second driest August on record (just 0.01 inch more than in August 1984) and 17th hottest August among 131 years of state records (hottest August since 1995).

Temperatures. Mild weather prevailed early in August with temperatures averaging below normal for the first 13 days of the month. Only a handful of Iowa locations managed to reach 90° during the first two weeks of August. However, temperatures reached 90° or higher somewhere in the state on every day from the 15th through the 29th. The month's highest temperatures were 104° readings from Glenwood and Lamoni on the 18th and at Osceola on the 25th. Triple digit temperatures were recorded over much of the southwest one-half of Iowa during the month. At a few southern Iowa locations temperatures have not been so high since the drought years of 1983 and 1988. Temperatures finally fell back below normal for the last two days of the month. Estherville, Lake Park, Milford, Rock Rapids, Sheldon, and Sibley reported the month's lowest temperature with 47° readings on the morning of the 30th.

Cooling Degree Day Totals. Home air conditioning requirements, as estimated by cooling degree day totals, averaged 44% greater than last August and 33% greater than normal. However, degree day totals so far this year are running 19% less than last year and 6% less than normal thanks to a cool start to the summer season.

Precipitation. Monthly precipitation totals were far below normal across most of Iowa. Monthly rain totals varied from 0.08 inches at Waterloo to 3.79 inches at Fort Madison (the only reporting point with above normal precipitation). Rainfall was also far below normal over the last three weeks of July (0.98 inches or 1.90 inches less than normal). Thus while the state was running 0.56 inches above average for the year-to-date rainfall on July 10 it is now down to 4.48 inches less than normal. This is Iowa's lowest year-to-date precipitation total since 1989.

Record low August precipitation totals were established at the following locations:

Station	August 2003 total	Previous August Record	Number of Years of Record
Waterloo	0.08	0.30 in 1886	121
Oakland	0.09	0.71 in 1976	83
Independence	0.10	0.44 in 1969	142
Newton	0.11	0.19 in 1984	88
Ankeny	0.20	0.58 in 1967	53
Harlan	0.21	0.44 in 1976	104
Belle Plaine	0.26	0.43 in 1949	104
Logan	0.31	0.77 in 1901	138
Iowa Falls	0.40	0.87 in 1914	121
Tripoli	0.42	0.45 in 1971	54
Red Oak	0.48	0.92 in 1983	72
Le Claire	0.51	0.57 in 1971	62
Osage	0.51	0.51 in 1969	115
Charles City	0.74	0.76 in 1897	123

Summer Summary. Iowa temperatures during the 3 summer months of June, July and August averaged 71.7° or 0.1° above normal while precipitation totaled 9.87 inches or 3.20 inches less than normal. This ranks as the 57th coolest and 23rd driest summer among 131 years of records. This has been the driest summer since 1991.

Harry J. Hillaker, State Climatologist
Iowa Dept. of Agriculture & Land Stewardship
Wallace State Office Bldg., Des Moines, IA 50319
Phone: (515) 281-8981; E-mail: harry.hillaker@idals.state.ia.us