

IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – AUGUST 2004

General Summary. August temperatures averaged 66.6° or 4.7° below normal while precipitation totaled 4.60 inches or 0.41 inches above normal. This ranks as the 3rd coldest and 32nd wettest August among 132 years of state records. Only 1915 (65.7°) and 1992 (66.2°) were cooler than this August.

Temperatures. Unseasonably cool temperatures prevailed through much of the month. Above normal temperatures were confined to the 1st-3rd, 22nd-27th and 31st. Glenwood reported the highest temperature of the month with 95° on the 3rd. Daytime highs in the 60's were far more common than highs in the 90's. Highs in the 60's were the rule over most of Iowa on the 10th, 11th, 12th and 19th while 90° readings were limited to just a handful of scattered locations with the exception of the 3rd when much of southern Iowa reached the 90° mark. Washta reported the first morning low in the 30's with a 39° reading on the morning of the 13th. The month's lowest temperatures were reported on the morning of the 21st when Cresco, Estherville, Independence, Mason City and Spencer recorded 36°. These were the lowest temperatures recorded for so early in the month in Iowa since 1964.

Cooling Degree Day Totals. Home air conditioning requirements, as estimated by cooling degree day totals, averaged 61% less than last August and 49% less than normal. So far this season air conditioning requirements are running 31% less than last year and 35% less than normal.

Precipitation. Thunderstorm activity was widespread during the first 3 days of the month with locally heavy rain on the 3rd. Mostly dry weather was the rule from the 5th through the 15th with a statewide average precipitation of only 0.09 inches through the period. Much wetter weather returned for the second half of the month, especially across southern and eastern sections of Iowa. However, a few locations in west central and northwest Iowa largely missed the August rainstorms. At Pocahontas this was their driest August since 1976 with only 0.75 inches of rain. Meanwhile, several south central Iowa locations were deluged with rain, especially late in the month. Bloomfield reported the most rain with 13.37 inches.

Severe Weather. Severe storms were much more common in August than they had been in July. There were two widespread outbreaks of severe weather. Severe storms were reported from 41 counties on the 3rd and from 35 counties on the 26th. Very large hail pounded a portion of north central Iowa on the 26th with hail up to softball size reported at Kanawha. A preliminary total of 14 tornadoes touched down during the month, bringing the annual total up to 102. This total may change significantly once final reports become available but for now ranks only behind 2001's record total of 105 confirmed tornadoes.

Summer Summary. Summer temperatures averaged 68.1° or 3.5° below normal while precipitation totaled 12.40 inches or 0.67 inches below normal. This ranks as the 3rd coolest and 60th wettest summer among 132 years of state records. Only the summers of 1915 (66.6°) and 1992 (67.6°) were colder. Fort Madison reported the summer's highest temperature with 96° on July 13. This is only the 10th year among the past 120 years that temperatures have failed to reach 100° somewhere in Iowa. Only in 1992 (94°) was the state's highest temperature lower than this year's extreme.

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