

IOWA WEATHER SUMMARY – MAY 2006

General Summary. Iowa temperatures averaged 60.8° or 0.6° above normal while precipitation totaled 2.51 inches or 1.72 inches less than normal. This ranks as the 54th warmest and ties for 19th driest May among 134 years of state records. Iowa's last drier May came in 1994.

Temperatures. The first half of the month was generally cooler than usual. A freeze was recorded across about half of the state on the morning of the 6th with 28° readings reported from Chariton, Cresco, Decorah, Elkader, Grinnell, Guthrie Center and Webster City. Much warmer weather was the rule for the second half of the month with below normal temperatures restricted to only the 18th, 21st and 22nd. The first 90° readings of the month were recorded in far western Iowa on the 19th with a 94° temperature at Shenandoah. A brief cool down brought the last freeze of the season to a few areas on the morning of the 22nd when Cresco reported a low of 30°. However, readings reached or exceeded 90° somewhere in the state on the 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 27th, 28th and 29th. Sioux City reported the month's highest temperature with a 98° reading on the 28th.

Heating Degree Day Totals. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 6% less than normal and 18% less than last May. Thus far this heating season (since July 1, 2005), degree day totals have averaged 11% less than normal 2% less than last season.

Precipitation. The relatively wet weather pattern that prevailed in March and April came to an end in May. Only a few locations, mainly in the northeast, exceeded normal for the month. Monthly precipitation totals varied from 0.68 inches at Rock Rapids and 0.79 inches at Fort Madison to 5.62 inches at Postville and 5.34 inches at Coggon. Record low May precipitation totals were reported from Kanawha (0.86 inches, old record 1.09 inches in 1988 among 65 years of records) and Emmetsburg (0.89 inches; old record 1.10 inches in 1948 among 62 years of record). A light rain on the evening of May 31st prevented Burlington Airport from setting a new record low total for May. Burlington's May total of 0.95 inches was second to only the 0.92 inch total of 1992 among 115 years of records.

Severe Weather. The very active start to Iowa's severe weather season came to an end during May. There were no reports of tornadoes during the month, marking the first time since 1978 that Iowa has escaped tornadoes during May.

Spring Summary. Iowa temperatures during the three spring months averaged 50.2° or 2.0° above normal while precipitation totaled 10.15 inches or 0.38 inches more than normal. This ranks as the 28th warmest and 40th wettest spring among 134 years of state records (among recent seasons, 2004 was both warmer and wetter than this spring).

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