

IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – APRIL 2007

General Summary. Iowa temperatures averaged 46.5° or 2.0° below normal while precipitation totaled 4.66 inches or 1.33 inches more than normal. This ranks as the 31st coolest and 14th wettest April among 135 years of state records. This was Iowa's wettest April since 1999 and coolest since 1997.

Temperatures. April began unusually cold and ended unusually warm. The first one-half of the month averaged 9.7° colder than normal with only the 1st and 2nd averaging warmer than usual. The last one-half of April then averaged 5.7° warmer than normal with only the 25th and 26th averaging cooler than usual. Overnight low temperatures fell into the teens in many areas each morning from the 4th through the 9th. Even daytime high temperatures were below freezing in some areas on the 4th and the 6th. These frequent and prolonged freezes raised concerns for many horticultural crops which were further along in development than is typical for so early in the season thanks to a very mild period of weather in late March. The 10 day period of March 22-31 was the 2nd warmest on record for those dates while the 10 days of April 4-13 were the coldest ever for that period. Sanborn reported the lowest temperature in the state with an 11° reading on the morning of the 7th. The second half of the month was a much different story. There were no freezing temperatures after the 19th. The last two days of April saw temperatures climb into the 90's over portions of northwest Iowa. Sheldon reported a high of 96° on the 29th which was Iowa's highest April reading since Sioux City recorded 96° on April 15, 2002 (the state record is 100° on April 22, 1980 at Fort Dodge and Waterloo).

Heating Degree Day Totals. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 12% more than normal and 62% greater than last April. Heating requirements so far this season (since July 1, 2006) are running 4% less than normal but 9% more than last season at this time.

Precipitation. There were two periods of noteworthy precipitation during the month. Snow fell nearly statewide on the 10th and 11th with up to 10.5 inches in Dickinson County while an inch or more accumulated over about the northeastern two-thirds of the state. The other event was a period of prolonged rainfall from the 22nd through the 26th. An average of 2.85 inches of rain fell across the state during this five day period. Only a small area of far northwest Iowa failed to receive at least an inch or rain while Guthrie Center reported the most with 7.28 inches. Heaviest rains were centered across central and west central Iowa with minor to moderate flooding resulting in these areas and points downstream (to the south and southeast) for the remainder of the month. Monthly precipitation totals varied from 1.62 inches at Spirit Lake to 9.24 inches at Guthrie Center. The Guthrie Center total was a new April record for that location (old record 8.72 inches in 1984 among 108 years of records). Precipitation has been above normal for each of the past five months. Total precipitation for the December 2006 to April 2007 period has been 12.60 inches or 3.90 inches more than normal. Only three seasons (1950-51, 1972-73 and 1990-91) have brought more precipitation during this time period.

Severe Weather. Despite the variety of temperatures and abundance of precipitation, April was a quiet month for severe weather. The night of April 2nd brought the only significant severe weather event of the month when large hail and/or high winds were reported from 26 counties.

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