

IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – APRIL 2008

General Summary. April temperatures averaged 45.7° or 2.8° below normal while precipitation totaled 5.88 inches or 2.55 inches above normal. This ranks as the 28th coldest and 2nd wettest April among 136 years of state records. The only wetter April was recorded in 1999 with 6.25 inches of precipitation. The last colder April was in 1997.

Temperature. The first two weeks of the month were persistently cool. Cresco and Elkader recorded the month's lowest temperatures with 17° readings on the morning of the 2nd. The temperature failed to reach 70° anywhere in the state until the 15th when Sioux City climbed to 78°. A period of warm weather prevailed from the 20th through the 24th. Temperatures reached 80° at Keosauqua and Mount Pleasant on the 21st; at Keosauqua and Donnellson on the 22nd and again at Lake Park, Little Sioux, Mount Pleasant on the 23rd. Much colder weather returned for most of the rest of the month. A freeze affected nearly all of the state on the morning of the 29th with Mason City the cold spot at 22°. Sibley also reached 22° on the previous morning. Warmer weather returned for the final day of the month with Glenwood and Shenandoah reaching 80°. The temperature has failed to exceed 80° by the end of April somewhere in Iowa only three times in the 119 years that daily maximum temperature data are readily available statewide. Those other years were 1993 (first 80+ day on May 5); 1973 (May 8) and 1944 (May 1). The first four months of the year have averaged 4.0° colder than normal and mark the coldest start to the year in Iowa since 1982 (but only 19th coldest among 136 years of records).

Heating Degree Day Totals. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 2% more than last April and 15% more than normal. Degree day totals for the season (since July 1, 2007) are running 8% more than last year at this time and 4% more than normal.

Precipitation. The big weather news of the month was precipitation. Rainfall was frequent during the month with three storm systems each dropping an average of over an inch of rain statewide on the 10th-11th, 17th-18th and 23rd-25th. Heaviest rains with each of these storms was centered on central and northeast Iowa. Major flooding followed the final, and largest, storm of the series. Monthly precipitation totals varied from 1.73 inches at Alton to 11.98 inches at Fayette. Record maximum April precipitation totals were recorded at several locations including:

City	Apr 2008 Total	Old April Record	Length of Record
Fayette	11.98	8.02 inches in 1909	119 years
Grundy Center	11.75	8.02 inches in 1991	117 years
Waukon	11.09	8.55 inches in 1981	86 years
Elkader	10.87	7.80 inches in 1909	113 years
Waterloo	10.79	8.53 inches in 1991	126 years
Eldora	10.25	7.22 inches in 1976	66 years

These totals fell just shy of the April single-station record of 12.52 inches set at Strawberry Point in 1951. The frequent rainfall allowed only 3% of the state's corn to be planted by April 27. This slow planting pace is similar to what was recorded in 1998 and 1999. The 2007-2008 snowfall season slowly came to a close during April. A few areas saw accumulations of 1 to 3 inches on the 3rd and 8th with a dusting in northern areas as late as the 28th. The statewide average snowfall for the season was 45.1 inches, 12.7 inches greater than normal. This was the snowiest season since 2000-2001 and ties for 10th snowiest winter among 121 years of records. Several eastern Iowa locations reported record seasonal snow totals while some western areas actually had less snow than normal. Seasonal totals varied from 15.4 inches at Logan to 87.6 inches at Dubuque Lock & Dam 11.

Severe Weather. The season's first severe weather outbreak came on the evening of the 10th with severe weather reported from 18 central and eastern Iowa counties. Other events came on the 22nd (9 southwestern counties) and 24th-25th (29 counties).

Harry J. Hillaker, State Climatologist
Iowa Dept. of Agriculture & Land Stewardship
Wallace State Office Bldg.; Des Moines, IA 50319
Telephone: (515) 281-8981; E-Mail: Harry.Hillaker@IowaAgriculture.gov