

IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – AUGUST 2008

General Summary. Temperatures averaged 70.2° or 1.1° below normal while precipitation totaled 1.98 inches or 2.21 inches less than normal. This ranks as the 32nd coolest and 13th driest August among 136 years of state records.

Temperatures. Most of August saw mild temperatures as only 11 days averaged warmer than normal. Nevertheless the warmest weather of the year came on the 3rd and 4th. Hawarden reported Iowa's highest official temperature of the year with a high of 100° on the afternoon of the 3rd while Des Moines and Ames recorded heat indices of 110° (unofficial heat indices were as high as 126°). The next day saw Bedford with an actual high of 98° and Burlington with a heat index of 112° (unofficial heat indices were again much higher with 128° reported). However, temperatures reached 90° only twice in the state after the 4th with the ninety degree readings confined to a small part of southwest Iowa. Low temperatures in the mid 40's occurred on the 11th, 24th, 25th, 26th and 29th. The state's lowest readings were 43° at Cresco and Estherville on the 25th and at Sibley on the 29th.

Cooling Degree Day Totals. Home air conditioning requirements, as estimated by cooling degree day totals, averaged 43% less than last August and 24% less than normal. So far this year cooling requirements have averaged 31% less than last year and 21% less than normal. This has been Iowa's coolest summer since 2004.

Precipitation. The very wet weather pattern that has dominated the state since April left Iowa in August. Only a tiny portion of east central Iowa recorded above normal rainfall during the month. Precipitation totals varied from 0.36 inches at Creston to 5.61 inches near Conesville in Muscatine County. This was the driest August on record at Creston among 107 years of record (old record, 0.46" in 1984). The only widespread rain event of the month came on the 27th-28th when a statewide average of 0.79 inches of rain fell. Crops were in need of rain nearly everywhere in the state, but especially in far southwest Iowa.

Severe Weather. Thanks to the dry weather there was far less severe weather activity in August than in recent months. Severe storms, mostly with large hail, were reported from 21 counties scattered over the eastern two-thirds of Iowa on the 4th-5th. Perhaps the most destructive event of the month was a hailstorm over northwestern Iowa on the afternoon and evening of the 13th. Dickinson, Clay and Buena Vista counties were hardest hit by hail that sometimes completely covered the ground.

Summer Summary. Summer temperatures averaged 71.0° or 0.6° below normal while precipitation totaled 16.90 inches or 3.83 inches more than normal. This ranks as the 42nd coolest and 6th wettest summer among 136 years of state records. Although summer temperatures averaged only slightly below normal there were far fewer extremes of temperature than normal. There was a statewide average of only four days with temperatures of 90° or higher. Only 1915 and 1992 have had fewer 90° days since 1896.

16 of the state's 141 official reporting stations never reached 90° this summer (all in the northeastern portion of the state).

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