

## PRELIMINARY IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – MAY 2009

General Summary. Iowa temperatures averaged 60.4° or 0.2° above normal while precipitation totaled 3.57 inches or 0.66 inches less than normal. This ranks as the 61<sup>st</sup> warmest and 57<sup>th</sup> driest May among 137 years of records.

Temperatures. As has been the case for most of the period since November 2008, Iowa saw wide swings in temperature during May with no prolonged periods of unusually warm or cool weather. The month's temperature extremes came only two days apart. Cresco and Decorah reported the lowest temperatures with 29° minimums on the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> while Sioux City was the hot spot for the month with a 97° maximum on the afternoon of the 19<sup>th</sup>. Overall Sioux City reported four days with maximums in the 90's, however, ninety degree weather was not widespread across Iowa except over the northwest on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. Isolated frost was reported on the mornings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> with the most widespread frost centered upon northeast Iowa on the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup>. Diurnal swings in temperature of more than 30 degrees were quite common with Sioux City recording 11 days with more than a 30 degree warm up from morning low to afternoon high. Spencer Airport saw a 46 degree change from a morning low of 43° to an afternoon high of 89° on the 31<sup>st</sup>. These rapid daily changes are indicative of relatively dry conditions in place over western Iowa.

Heating Degree Day Totals. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 30% less than last May and 21% less than normal. Degree day totals so far this season (since July 1, 2008) are running 4% less than last season and the same as normal.

Precipitation. Rainfall was fairly evenly distributed through out the month but totaled much less than usual over northwestern and west central sections. Greatest rainfall came on the 26<sup>th</sup> and was centered upon central and north central Iowa. Ames reported 5.06 inches of rain between the evening of the 25<sup>th</sup> and morning of the 27<sup>th</sup>. However, relatively dry weather prior to this rain event prevented widespread flooding from this late month storm. Preliminary monthly precipitation totals vary from only 0.77 inches at Hawarden to 8.76 inches at Charles City. The Charles City total is more than double their monthly normal of 4.08 inches and the fourth highest May total among 127 years of records while Hawarden recorded their driest May since 1966.

Spring Summary. Spring temperatures averaged 48.6° or 0.4° above normal while precipitation totaled 10.28 inches or 0.51 inches above normal. This ranks as the 57<sup>th</sup> warmest and 41<sup>st</sup> wettest spring among 137 years of record. Fieldwork has progressed at a typical pace with corn 99% planted as of May 31 while 91% of soybeans are in the ground.

Severe Weather. May typically ranks just behind June as the most active month for severe weather in Iowa. However the past month has been unusually quiet. Severe storms have been reported on only five days this month (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>). The most active day was the 8<sup>th</sup> when severe weather was reported from 7 counties including

the only tornado of the month (Clay County). The typical May brings 13 tornadoes to the state. In recent years only 2006 (0), 1990 (1) and 1984 (1) have seen as few tornadoes in May. 2006 continued to be a very quiet season but 1984 and 1990 both turned extremely active in June.

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