

IOWA PRELIMINARY WEATHER SUMMARY – APRIL 2006

General Summary. April temperatures averaged 53.6° or 5.1° above normal while precipitation totaled 4.38 inches or 1.05 inches greater than normal. This ranks as the 14th warmest and 24th wettest April among 134 years of state records. This was the warmest April since 1987 and wettest since 1999.

Temperatures. Warm weather was the rule through nearly all of the month. Below normal temperatures were confined to only the 8th, 25th, 26th and 27th. Temperatures reached into the 80's on 7 days during the month; however, there were no 80° readings after the 15th. Temperature extremes varied from highs of 91° at Glenwood, Little Sioux, Onawa, Shenandoah, Sioux Center and Sioux City on the 13th to lows of 22° at Elkader, Mason City, Northwood, Waterloo and Waukon on the 8th. Temperatures also dipped as low as 26° on the 26th with a freeze recorded across much of the northern two-thirds of the state. This last cold snap was not particularly unusual for late April but did raise concern for the state's fruit trees which had blossomed earlier than normal.

Heating Degree Day Totals. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 31% less than normal and 4% less than last year. Thus far this heating season (since July 1, 2005) degree day totals are running 12% less than normal and 1% less than last year.

Precipitation. Rainfall was fairly evenly distributed through the month with the largest precipitation events coming on the 2nd, 15th-16th and 28th-30th. Rain fell statewide on the 2nd with Gilman (Marshall Co.) reporting the most with 3.25 inches. The event at mid month brought the greatest amounts to the northeast with 3.52 inches near Lansing. The month's last and largest event brought an inch or more of rain throughout the state with 3.03 inches at Holstein being the most reported. Monthly precipitation totals varied from 2.50 inches at Walford to 7.47 inches at Sibley. Sibley's total was only 0.01 inch shy of their April record set in 2001. The month's only reported snowfall came on the 26th when slushy snow accumulated in the area just west of Des Moines with three inches reported at Adair. The preliminary statewide average snowfall for the 2005-2006 season is 26.3 inches or 6.1 inches less than normal. This ranks as the 43rd lowest seasonal total among 119 years of state snow records.

Severe Weather. The month got off to an active start with widespread severe weather reported on the 2nd, 11th and 13th. The evening of the 13th brought the most intense storms with severe weather reported from 23 central and east central counties. At least 12 tornadoes touched down with greatest damage coming in Iowa City while there was one fatality in Muscatine County.

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