

2005 Iowa Crop Summary

The 2005 crop season began with unseasonably mild weather. Despite the trend of milder weather, the month of April still saw the typical variation in temperature and spring storms. The warmer than usual weather early in the month caused Iowa to see the onset of fieldwork for farmers. Rain storms later in the month slowed planting progress so that by the end of April, 92 percent of oats had been planted, as well as, 17 percent of corn.

May began with cooler than normal conditions predominating. A hard frost occurred in the second week of the month possibly doing damage to emerged crops. The middle through the end of the month saw greatly fluctuating conditions in different areas of the state. Some areas were too wet and planting was slowed, while other areas of the state were in need of rain. At the end of May, 87 percent of soybeans had been planted and 49 percent had emerged. Corn planting was finished and was 93 percent emerged. Also, the first alfalfa hay cutting was 23 percent complete.

The beginning of June saw typical early summer weather as farmers in the state wrapped up the planting season. The second week of the month saw wet windy conditions that hindered fieldwork throughout most of the state. Hot weather prevailed by the end of June. This initially improved crop conditions and growth rates. As the month came to an end, rainfall levels varied widely, leaving crops in the eastern portion of the state in need of rain. The first cutting of alfalfa was 99 percent complete. Oat acreage headed was 95 percent. The majority of corn, soybeans, oats, and hay were all considered to be in good or excellent condition.

The beginning of July saw hot, dry conditions across most of Iowa. These conditions persisted until the last week in July when a cold front moved through the area, bringing much needed rain to most of the state. The lack of precipitation early in the month caused the deterioration of crop conditions, most significantly in east central Iowa. Crop conditions were listed as fair to good as a result of this weather pattern. At months end, 95 percent of soybeans were blooming and 67 percent were setting pods. The corn crop development was ahead of normal as 99 percent of corn had tasseled and 93 percent had silked. The oat harvest was 89 percent complete and the second alfalfa harvest was 98 percent complete.

The weather trend in August was above normal temperatures and below normal rainfall across the state. In the third week of August there were thunderstorms across much of the state. Northeast Iowa saw rainfall totals in excess of four inches as a result of these storms. At the end of the month the lack of rain continued in other areas of the state. Reports were received about creeks beginning to dry up and pastures browning. Pod setting was 99 percent complete, equal to the 5-year average. Soybean yellowing and leaf drop was 12 percent complete, slightly ahead of the 5-year average. Corn development was ahead of normal and the condition of both corn and soybeans remained about the same as July.

September continued the trend of above normal temperatures and below normal rainfall for the state. The month began with the driest week seen in six months with only 0.16 inches of rainfall. This allowed area farmers to make fieldwork progress nearly every day of the week. Severe weather was reported in 23 counties in the second week of the month, and several counties in northern Iowa reported hail. These storms caused a brief pause in fieldwork, but by weeks end harvest had begun. The month ended with the wettest week in six weeks with parts of Iowa seeing four plus inches of rainfall. Corn harvest was 7 percent complete, soybean harvest was 27 percent complete, and the fourth cutting of alfalfa had begun.

The month of October saw widely varying temperatures across the state. Much of the state saw rain showers throughout the month, but totals still remained low. The drier weather lead to lower drying costs for farmers. This continued dry weather has also lead to aflatoxin concerns in southeastern and east central Iowa as well as concerns of soil moisture conditions for the future. By the end of the month 80 percent of corn had been harvested and about 99 percent of soybeans had been harvested.

As November began, the 2005 harvest was coming to a close. The shortage of grain storage on- and off-farm was still a problem. Corn harvest was nearly complete and fall fertilizer application was 66 percent complete. Temperatures varied widely as the month began, but began to approach seasonal norms in the third week of the month. As November came to a close the first snowfall was seen as 1 to 2 inches blanketed much of the state.