

Iowa Crops & Weather



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Issued January 5, 2009

Vol 09-01

For the month of December 2008

WEATHER LIMITS FARM ACTIVITIES

Although the 2008 harvest season has passed, alternating periods of freezing and thawing along with above normal precipitation prevented harvest of the last few corn fields. Grain movement during December was mainly limited to delivery of contracted sales as lower cash prices discouraged additional sales.

The average depth of snow cover for the month of December was 4 inches, well below last year's 7 inch average snow cover. Frost penetration averaged 14 inches compared to last year's 9 inches. Soil moisture availability rated 5 percent short, 76 percent adequate, and 19 percent surplus. Grain movement for the state was 32 percent none, 40 percent light, 24 percent moderate, and 4 percent heavy.

Availability of hay and roughage supplies was 10 percent short, 83 percent adequate, and 7 percent surplus. Reporters rated the quality of hay and roughage supplies at 11 percent poor, 41 percent fair, and 48 percent good. Utilization of stubble fields for grazing rated 44 percent none, 20 percent limited, 30 percent moderate, and 6 percent extensive.

Hog and pig losses in December were 15 percent below average, 80 percent average, and 5 percent above average. Cattle and calf losses were 20 percent below average, 75 percent average, and 5 percent above average.

IOWA PRELIMINARY WEATHER SUMMARY December 2008

Provided by State Climatologist Harry Hillaker

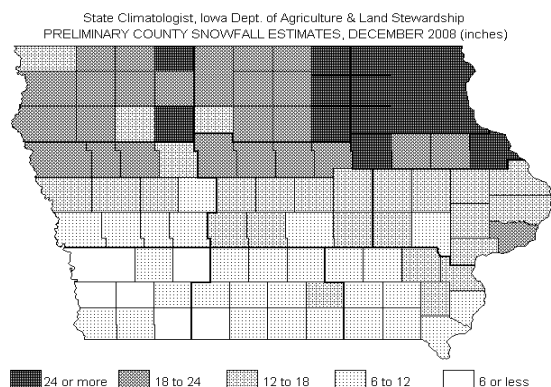
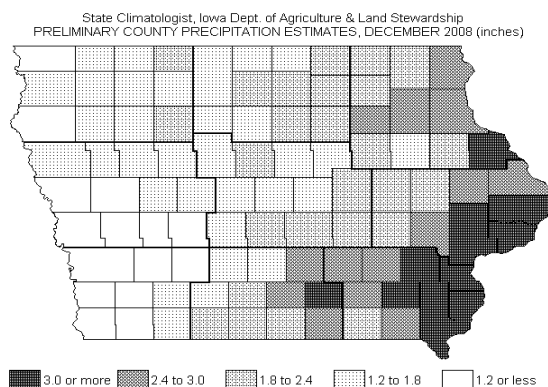
General Summary. Temperatures averaged 17.7 degrees or 4.9 degrees below normal while precipitation totaled 1.94 inches or 0.71 inches above normal. This ranks as the 17th coolest and 18th wettest December among 136 years of records. The last colder December was in 2000 while December precipitation was greater in both 2006 and 2007.

Temperatures. There were some wide and rapid temperature fluctuations during the month, unlike much of the rest of 2008 when temperature extremes were at a minimum. The most noteworthy temperature event of the year came on the 14th. Temperatures reached into the upper 30's northwest to low 60's southeast before a very strong cold front pushed through Iowa. At 3 p.m. on the 14th temperatures ranged from 0 degrees at Le Mars to 62 degrees at Burlington. The temperature fell from 59 degrees to 32 degrees at Pella between 11 a.m. and noon while Ottumwa saw readings plummet from 61 degrees at noon to a low

of zero the next morning. Wind chill readings plunged to -38 degrees at Estherville and Spencer on the morning of the 15th while actual temperatures bottomed out at -14 degrees at Sibley. Another blast of cold air brought a low temperature of -22 degrees at Cresco on the morning of the 22nd. After a frigid Christmas morning featuring a low of -17 degrees at Decorah temperatures soared in advance of a storm system on the 26th with Red Oak, Shenandoah and Sidney reaching 62 degrees. However, cold air ruled most of the month as above normal temperatures were restricted to only 8 days (8th, 13th-14th and 26th-30th).

Heating Degree Days. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 6 percent greater than last December and 11 percent more than normal. Degree day totals so far this winter season are running 8percent more than last year and 1percent more than normal.

Precipitation. Precipitation was frequent through the month. Storm systems bringing rain, freezing rain, sleet and/or snow came through the state nearly every other day through the 27th. The largest event of the month came on the 18th-19th with a statewide average of 4.7 inches of snow and 0.69 inches of precipitation. This mid-month storm brought heavy snow to northern Iowa with a band of 6 to 12 inches of snow stretching from near Sioux City east-northeastward into Wisconsin. The storm brought from one-quarter to two-thirds of an inch of freezing rain to south central and southeast Iowa. Other events brought several inches of snow on the 3rd, 8th-9th, 14th, 16th, 20th, 22nd-23rd, 24th and 27th. Freezing rain also caused travel problems, particularly in eastern Iowa, on the 8th-9th, 25th-26th and 27th. Snowfall was most frequent over northeastern Iowa where Waukon reported 34.9 inches of snow for the month. Parts of southwest Iowa recorded less snow than normal with only 3.5 inches falling at Glenwood. Monthly precipitation totals were about double normal over much of northern and eastern Iowa with Burlington reporting 4.20 inches. Overall this was the fourth snowiest December among 122 years of state snow records. A very deep and moisture-rich snow pack covered most of Iowa until very warm and humid air advanced across southern and eastern areas on the 26th and 27th. This air mass quickly melted most of the southern Iowa snow cover and broke up the ice in many rivers. The rapid snow melt, supplemented by rainfall of up to an inch, and a few ice jams, brought flooding to many rivers across southeastern Iowa. Nevertheless, anywhere from 2 to 12 inches of snow remained on the ground at year's end over the northern one-third of the state.



Snow Cover and Frost Penetration for the Month of December

Item	Districts									State	Last Month	Last Year
	NW	NC	NE	WC	C	EC	SW	SC	SE			
Snow cover	4	7	12	4	7	0	0	2	0	4	NA	7
Frost penetration	16	16	18	15	15	14	13	9	7	14	NA	9

**December Weather Summary For Iowa Agricultural Statistics Service
Prepared by AWIS, Inc.**

STATION	AIR TEMPERATURE				PRECIPITATION			HDD TOT	HDD DFN	DAYS OF 32 COLD	DAYS OF 28 COLD
	HI	LO	AVG	DFN	TOTAL	DFN	DAYS				
North West District											
Estherville	44	-16	15	-3	0.16	-0.56	4	1,541	114	31	30
Sioux Center	50	-16	16	-5	1.51	0.68	7	1,519	166	31	31
Spencer	46	-13	16	-3	0.39	-0.31	2	1,526	124	30	30
Spirit Lake	43	-18	14	-3	0.68	-0.20	4	1,561	374	31	31
North Central District											
Britt	45	-15	13	-7	1.50	0.15	10	1,602	227	31	30
Humboldt	45	-14	15	-6	1.31	0.31	8	1,547	188	31	30
Mason City	41	-13	15	-3	0.81	-0.38	10	1,537	131	30	30
Osage	42	-19	13	-7	2.36	1.13	11	1,604	258	31	30
North East District											
Decorah	46	-17	15	-6	1.75	0.56	17	1,543	209	31	31
Dubuque	50	-13	19	-3	2.46	0.53	17	1,415	105	29	29
Elkader	50	-21	15	-7	2.53	1.16	16	1,555	404	31	30
Fayette	47	-15	14	-7	1.61	0.22	12	1,578	238	31	29
Waterloo	49	-11	18	-3	1.60	0.32	14	1,464	116	30	29
West Central District											
Carroll	53	-14	18	-4	2.01	1.07	8	1,465	145	31	30
Castana	53	-14	17	-6	0.73	-0.09	7	1,465	110	31	31
Guthrie Center	55	-15	19	-4	0.63	-0.63	5	1,433	155	31	31
Harlan	56	-14	19	-6	0.92	-0.07	7	1,436	104	31	31
Jefferson	52	-15	17	-5	1.18	0.24	9	1,480	160	31	30
Logan	57	-17	19	-5	0.76	-0.30	5	1,434	157	31	31
Rockwell City	48	-12	16	-7	1.29	0.38	5	1,522	223	31	31
Sac City	47	-17	15	-5	1.55	0.42	6	1,536	185	31	31
Sioux City	54	-19	19	-3	0.91	0.14	10	1,424	122	31	29
Central District											
Boone	51	-18	17	-5	1.71	0.39	10	1,487	180	31	30
Des Moines	59	-5	23	-2	1.98	0.68	11	1,280	54	30	25
Grundy Center	47	-12	15	-6	1.49	0.22	11	1,554	200	31	30
Marshalltown	49	-12	18	-4	0.66	-0.61	7	1,447	151	30	29
Newton	53	-8	18	-6	1.62	0.51	12	1,455	197	31	29
Perry	52	-11	18	-5	1.16	0.11	6	1,447	158	31	30
Toledo	50	-11	16	-7	1.65	0.42	11	1,514	213	30	29
East Central District											
Cedar Rapids	55	-9	19	-4	1.75	0.18	13	1,405	131	29	28
Davenport	55	-7	23	-4	3.70	1.80	15	1,310	123	27	25
Iowa City	57	-6	22	-4	2.09	0.55	15	1,319	140	28	28
Lowden	56	-10	18	-6	3.32	1.24	15	1,460	196	29	29
Maquoketa	53	-11	17	-6	2.94	1.17	16	1,476	207	31	29
Muscatine	58	-8	22	-5	3.60	1.65	16	1,340	-12	29	28
South West District											
Atlantic	56	-11	22	-1	1.22	0.14	9	1,342	58	31	28
Clarinda	59	-11	21	-4	1.02	-0.14	8	1,358	141	31	31
Glenwood	61	-9	20	-5	0.86	-0.30	6	1,373	173	31	31
Red Oak	62	-10	22	-4	0.99	-0.20	9	1,331	142	31	30
Sidney	62	-7	23	-3	1.12	-0.02	4	1,303	112	31	31
South Central District											
Allerton	57	-8	21	-4	0.81	-0.48	4	1,354	-85	30	30
Beaconsfield	56	-10	20	-5	2.09	1.00	9	1,374	157	30	30
Chariton	58	-11	21	-4	3.39	2.06	13	1,355	125	30	30
Indianola	55	-10	20	-5	1.60	0.23	9	1,396	168	31	30
Leon	60	-11	22	-3	1.87	0.52	10	1,339	124	30	29
South East District											
Bloomfield	59	-6	22	-6	2.40	0.86	15	1,337	202	29	29
Burlington	62	0	29	4	3.43	1.47	11	1,096	-58	25	22
Ottumwa	61	-5	23	-3	2.22	0.81	13	1,281	99	29	27
Washington	58	-8	20	-7	3.27	1.59	15	1,384	52	29	29

Precipitation (rain, melted snow or ice) in inches. Precipitation Days = Days with precipitation of 0.01 inch or more. Air Temperatures in Degrees Fahrenheit. Copyright 2009: AWIS, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

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AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE, IOWA FIELD OFFICE, 210 WALNUT
ST. RM 833, DES MOINES IA 50309. POSTMASTER, SEND ADDRESS CHANGES
TO IA CROPS & WEATHER, C/O SD AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS, PO BOX
5068 SIOUX FALLS SD 57117