

WEATHER SUMMARY - 1999

Very mild temperatures the second half of **January** completely offset a very cold start to 1999 with monthly average temperatures considerably above normal. Cold temperatures during the first two weeks of January included several snow events (freezing rain, snow and sleet). The average temperature was 38 degrees across the State which was 6 degrees above normal. Precipitation totaled 6.57 inches statewide which was 3.38 inches above normal.

February temperatures remained mild averaging 42 degrees across the State which was 6 degrees above normal. Extreme high temperatures in the mid 70's on the 10th and 11th set new records. Precipitation totaled 2.70 inches statewide which was 0.83 inches below normal. Monthly snowfall totals ranged from 1 to 4 inches across the State with slightly higher amounts in the Southeast.

Unlike the first two months of 1999, **March** was drier and cooler. Temperatures averaged 42 degrees across the State which was 3 degrees below normal. Record-breaking high temperatures occurred on the 17th and were in the mid 70's. At the beginning of March, soils were well saturated statewide but the drier conditions during the month allowed field operations to start. Precipitation totaled 3.06 inches statewide which was 1.52 inches below normal.

April brought a continuance of Kentucky's roller-coaster temperatures. Average temperatures in April reversed the below normal temperatures of March with an average of 59 degrees across the State, which was 3 degrees above normal and 4 degrees warmer than 1998 with no freezes during the month. Drier than normal conditions were the rule in the State with the exception in the western section where wetter conditions occurred. The dry conditions allowed for fieldwork to become active across most of the State. Precipitation totaled 3.70 inches statewide which was 0.52 inches below normal.

Dry conditions from the previous months continued throughout **May**. With only 65 percent of normal rainfall received, May 1999 was the 22nd driest May in the past 105 years. By month's end, one climate zone was considered in the moderate drought category. Planting was postponed in portions of the State waiting for precipitation. Although mild temperatures were the rule for the first half of the month, cooler than normal temperatures during the final week of the month lowered the monthly average temperature. Temperatures averaged 66 degrees across the State which was near normal. Rainfall totaled 2.91 inches statewide which was 1.79 inches below normal.

The roller-coaster ride continued in **June** with a drought to start the month, low temperatures' mid-month and heavy rains to end the month. The dry conditions during May continued for over half of June with 2 climatic zones dipping into the moderate drought category. By mid-June crops were suffering, with yields in jeopardy. Beneficial rainfall occurred during the latter part of the month which provided timely moisture for crops in most areas of the State. Temperatures averaged 74 degrees across the State which was 1 degree above normal. Rainfall totaled 4.63 inches statewide which was 0.81 inches above normal.

July was the 6th hottest and 6th driest on record. Temperatures averaged 80 degrees across the State which was 4 degrees above normal. Most locations reported 17 plus days with high temperatures at or exceeding 90 degrees. Several locations had 10-15 days straight with highs at or exceeding 90+ degrees. Dry conditions were of concern for most of the month with all four climate zones dipping into drought categories. Precipitation for the month totaled 2.44 inches statewide which was -2.15 inches below normal.

Drought conditions deepened across Kentucky during **August**. Dry conditions and very warm temperatures with lengthy spells of hot weather dominated Kentucky's weather for August which was cooler and nearly a ½ inch drier than July. Each week had above normal temperatures and below normal rainfall. For the month as a whole, statewide temperatures averaged 76 degrees which was 2 degrees above normal. Rainfall totaled 1.92 inches statewide which was 1.93 inches below normal. This was the eighth driest August. Pasture growth ceased and crops were stressed by the drought. Farmers were forced to begin feeding livestock their winter hay supply to compensate for tight grazing conditions.

After the drought conditions in July and August, above normal temperatures and below normal rainfall in **September** made the 3-month period the driest in Kentucky this Century. Drought conditions continued making it the 13th driest this Century and placing most of the State in extreme drought conditions. Temperatures averaged 69 degrees across the State which was 2 degrees above normal. Rainfall totaled 1.35 inches statewide which was 2.19 inches below normal.

October would have been a dry month had it not been for one rainfall event in mid-month. Unseasonably cool weather in the last week caused scattered frost across the State. Temperatures averaged 57 degrees across the State which was near normal. Rainfall totaled 3.25 inches statewide which was 0.35 inches above normal.

Temperatures for *November* averaged 51 degrees across the State which was 5 degrees above normal. Temperatures were so mild that the first 28 days of the month broke records back to 1895, but as was the case all year major temperature changes were only days away. The final few days of November were very cool and lowered the average for the month, but even with the cooler temperatures the month ranked as the 13th warmest November since 1895. Drought conditions continued to plague the Bluegrass State. Rainfall totaled 2.53 inches statewide which was 1.50 inches below normal. Harvest was 2 weeks ahead of schedule for most crops due to the hot dry weather.

Drought conditions continued in the Bluegrass State during *December* as the lack of rainfall amounts for the month fell below normal. Temperatures on the other hand, were generally very mild for the majority of the month, except the final week to 10 days where very cold air dominated. Temperatures averaged 40 degrees across the State which was 4 degrees above normal. Precipitation totaled 3.49 inches statewide which was 0.73 inches below normal.

Condensed version of narrative provided by Tom Priddy, Kentucky Extension Agricultural Meteorologist, University of Kentucky Agricultural Weather Center. Additional Kentucky weather data are available on the internet at:
<http://www.wagwx.ca.uky.edu/>