

2010 Weather Review

With Arizona's diverse topography, the State's temperatures range from the wintertime cold in the higher mountain areas to the searing summertime heat of the desert areas. Arizona's wide spectrum of climate and terrain support a remarkable agricultural diversity. Virtually all crops in Arizona are irrigated, meaning yield variability is less influenced by rainfall here than in the rain-dependent agricultural states. Weather conditions are still important to crop farmers in making planting and harvesting decisions. The highest recorded temperature in 2010 was 121 degrees at Bullhead City on July 16. Bellemont, Blue Ridge and Bright Angel recorded the lowest temperature of 21 degrees below zero on December 31st.

January: Temperatures across the State were mostly above normal. Large amounts of precipitation in the form of rain or snow had fallen in the second half of the month. Range and pasture conditions ranged from very poor to fair across the State.

February: Temperatures across the State were varied with above normal temperatures the first and third weeks. Precipitation in the form of rain or snow had fallen throughout the month. Crop conditions improved slightly for February. Durum wheat and barley emergence occurred on at least three quarters of the acreage. Range and pasture conditions stayed mostly very poor to poor across the State. Alfalfa, winter vegetable, and citrus harvesting continued.

March: Temperatures across the State were mostly below normal for the month of March. Precipitation fell throughout the month. Alfalfa condition remained mostly good to excellent. Small grain emergence was just over three-quarters complete by the end of the month. Cotton planting was underway. Range and pasture conditions got better as the month progressed, starting out mostly very poor to poor and ending mostly fair to good. Alfalfa harvesting continued for Arizona. The winter vegetable harvest continued throughout March along with the citrus harvest.

April: Precipitation was above normal at all but two of the reporting stations by the end of the month. Temperatures started out as a mixture of above and below normal but finished the month mostly below normal ranging from a high of 97 degrees to a low of 13 degrees. Cotton planting was almost 70 percent complete by the final week of the month and over 90 percent of the small grain acreage had headed. The winter vegetable harvest was wrapping up.

May: Range and pasture conditions ranged from poor to excellent. Small grain (barley and durum wheat) harvest began the third week. Miscellaneous melons, potatoes, cabbage, cilantro, and lettuce were harvested. Temperatures were mostly below normal hitting a high of 101 and a low of 20. By the end of the month all the reporting stations except three had below normal precipitation levels for the year to date. Yuma had nearly four times the amount of precipitation as it normally did by the end of May.

June: Cotton squaring had occurred on 50 percent of the acreage and bolls had set on about fifteen percent by the end of the month. Potato and melon harvesting continued. Temperatures were mostly above normal except for the third week of the month. Precipitation continued to be significantly above normal for most stations even though only a few weather stations recorded precipitation in June.

July: Small grain (barley and durum wheat) harvest was virtually complete by mid July. Cotton bolls had been set on 75 percent of the acreage by August 1. Melon harvest continued throughout July. Temperatures started out above normal for the first few weeks but turned below normal by the end of the month. By the end of the month only four weather stations had received below normal precipitation.

August: The cotton season was just a few points behind the five-year averages by the end of the month. Melon harvesting remained active throughout the month. Temperatures were mostly below normal to start the month but by the end of the month turned above normal. Temperatures were as high as 116 in Paloma and Yuma during the last week.

September: Cotton harvesting started in the Yuma area during the first week and was just under 20 percent complete State wide by month's end. Melon harvesting continued active in a few areas. Temperatures started out as a mixture of above and below normal temperatures but turned to only above normal temperatures by the middle of the month. Temperatures hit at least 10 degrees above normal in eight out of the twenty-two weather stations during the last week of the month.

October: Temperatures were mixed during October with a high of 103 degrees in Yuma and a low of 20 degrees in Grand Canyon. Precipitation occurred during the first and third weeks of the month at nearly every weather station but eight of the twenty-two weather stations had below average precipitation by the end of the month. Virtually all cotton bolls had opened by the start of the month and harvesting was just over 40 percent complete by month's end

November: Weekly temperatures alternated with mostly above normal and mostly below normal throughout the month. The high was 96 degrees in Yuma and the low was 5 degrees at Grand Canyon. Little to no rain fell during November. By the end of the month ten of the twenty-two weather stations had below normal rain to date. Sheeping off occurred in the alfalfa regions around the State. Cotton harvest was about two-thirds complete by the end of the month. The winter vegetable and citrus harvest began in early November.

December: By the end of the month, cotton harvest was nearing completion. The winter vegetable and citrus harvest continued in the desert southwest part of the State. Sheeping off was also active. Temperatures were mostly above normal throughout the month.