

# Iowa Crops & Weather



USDA – National Agricultural Statistical Service  
Iowa Field Office

210 Walnut, Room 833 • Des Moines, Iowa 50309-2195  
515-284-4340 • 1-800-772-0825 • FAX 515-284-4342 • [nass-ia@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass-ia@nass.usda.gov)  
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Reissued April 2, 2009

Vol 09-04

For the month of March 2009

## THOUGHTS OF SPRING

Manure hauling and applications have been the predominant activities of late. However, saturated fields have limited activities in areas as farmers must wait for fields to dry out. Farmers are anxious to get into their fields and get fertilizer applied and planting underway. Calving conditions have been mostly good with some reports of mud causing problems.

Soil moisture availability rated 3 percent short, 65 percent adequate, and 32 percent surplus. Grain movement for the State was rated at 26 percent none, 38 percent light, 30 percent moderate, and 6 percent heavy.

Availability of hay and roughage supplies was rated 10 percent short, 78 percent adequate, and 12 percent surplus. Reporters rated the quality of hay and roughage supplies at 11 percent poor, 44 percent fair, and 45 percent good. Utilization of stubble fields for grazing rated 53 percent none, 28 percent limited, 15 percent moderate, and 4 percent extensive.

Hog and pig losses in March were rated at 11 percent below average, 85 percent average, and 4 percent above average. Cattle and calf losses were rated 14 percent below average, 83 percent average, and 3 percent above average.

## IOWA PRELIMINARY WEATHER SUMMARY

March 2009

Provided by State Climatologist Harry Hillaker

**General Summary.** March temperatures averaged 37.7 degrees or 1.7 degrees above normal while precipitation totaled 3.04 inches or 0.83 inches greater than normal. This ranks as the 43<sup>rd</sup> warmest and 21<sup>st</sup> wettest March among 137 years of state records.

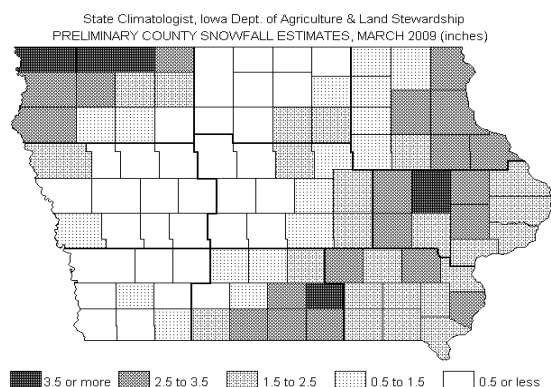
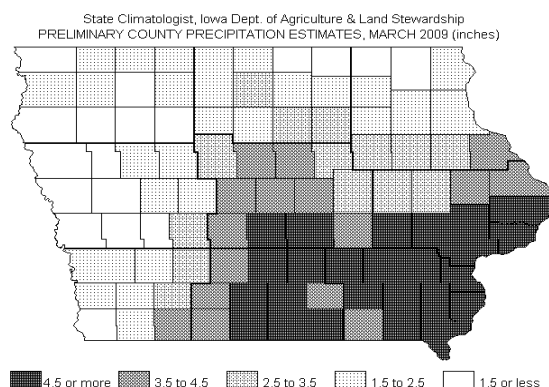
**Temperatures.** As has been the case for each of the past four months there were many wide extremes in temperature across Iowa during March. There were three periods of cold weather during the month. Temperatures were below normal from the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 3<sup>rd</sup> with lows down to -7 degrees at Little Sioux on the morning of the 1<sup>st</sup>. Cold weather also prevailed from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> with Sibley reporting a low of -7 degrees on the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup>. Finally, cold weather returned late in the month from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> with Sibley recording a low of 14 degrees on the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup>. In between these cold extremes the temperature soared to 79 degrees at Bedford and Shenandoah on afternoon of the 5<sup>th</sup>. However, Leon was the hot spot for the month with an 81 degrees maximum on the afternoon of the 17<sup>th</sup>. Temperatures failed to reach 80 degrees anywhere in Iowa until April 21 of last year.

**Heating Degree Day Totals.** Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 17 percent less than last March and 7 percent less than normal. Heating degree day totals so far this season (since July 1, 2008) are running 3 percent less than last season and the same as normal. However, prices for natural gas are considerably lower this season compared to last year, thus many consumers have seen much lower heating bills compared to one year ago.

**Precipitation.** There were two wet periods during March that accounted for most of the month's precipitation total. A pair of storm systems on the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> brought a statewide average of 1.81 inches of precipitation. Most of this precipitation fell in the form of rain with greatest amounts over southeastern Iowa where two to three inch totals were common. The second major storm system dropped an average of 1.04 inches of rain over Iowa from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup>. Heaviest rains fell over a wide band roughly along Interstate 35 through central sections of the state where one to two inch totals were common. Fortunately, these two wet episodes were preceded by an extended period of mostly dry weather. Thus, while flooding was widespread with both events impacts were mostly minor. March precipitation was the third highest of record for the south central and southeast climate districts, but was below normal over northern and western Iowa. Preliminary monthly precipitation totals vary from only 0.66 inches at Cresco to 6.18 inches at Burlington. Indianola recorded their wettest March ever among 123 years of record with 6.06 inches (old record 5.23 in 1951). A final storm system on the 28<sup>th</sup> brought the largest snow event of the month with one to two inches of snow common across the southeast one-half of the state. There were a few localized bands of heavier snowfall with 3 to 7 inches reported across Linn County. Very little snow fell during the month over northwestern Iowa. The statewide average snowfall was 1.4 inches or 3.4 inches less than normal. This was Iowa's least snowy March since 1997 and ranks 15<sup>th</sup> least snow for the month among 122 years of records.

**Severe Weather.** Large hail was reported from several far southeast Iowa locations on the 7<sup>th</sup> while severe storms were reported from 16 western Iowa counties on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The season's first five tornadoes were reported across southwestern Iowa on the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup> with an F-2 rated storm near Missouri Valley.

**Outlook.** April frequently has been a wetter than normal month across Iowa during years with a La Niña event in place, such as is the case now. Current shorter range outlooks from the National Weather Service favor a rather cold and wet first week to week and one-half of the month.



**March 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	67	-1	34	5	2.18	0.33	5	963	-122	21	17
Sioux Center	69	-3	36	2	1.46	-0.46	5	899	-64	24	18
Spencer	70	-1	35	4	1.25	-0.65	8	928	-89	23	17
Spirit Lake	65	-3	34	5	1.77	0.01	6	968	94	23	16
North Central District											
Britt	66	0	33	-1	3.17	1.33	7	998	6	25	19
Humboldt	67	2	34	0	2.03	0.00	9	946	-52	25	15
Mason City	66	0	34	4	2.00	0.00	8	943	-99	24	15
Osage	67	0	33	1	1.02	-1.08	7	995	42	26	17
North East District											
Decorah	66	0	36	4	1.45	-0.44	10	879	-104	24	21
Dubuque	72	6	37	4	3.94	1.05	11	858	-111	17	13
Elkader	69	2	34	-1	3.52	1.38	11	963	149	26	21
Fayette	67	1	34	1	2.93	0.82	9	959	-24	26	18
Waterloo	69	5	38	4	3.08	0.78	9	841	-115	19	16
West Central District											
Carroll	71	3	36	2	1.93	-0.30	7	890	-63	23	16
Castana	75	-3	35	-1	1.64	-0.49	9	907	-80	23	18
Guthrie Center	71	3	37	2	3.10	0.65	7	869	-39	25	16
Harlan	73	0	36	0	1.34	-0.77	7	877	-82	24	14
Jefferson	70	4	37	3	2.14	-0.09	8	869	-84	23	15
Logan	74	0	36	1	1.30	-0.74	6	880	-17	25	17
Rockwell City	71	2	35	0	2.19	0.30	7	912	-15	26	16
Sac City	70	0	34	2	1.28	-1.04	6	945	-47	27	18
Sioux City	76	-3	37	2	1.43	-0.53	8	852	-55	21	12
Central District											
Boone	70	4	36	2	4.10	1.79	9	878	-46	25	16
Des Moines	74	9	42	6	4.73	2.40	11	700	-160	11	10
Grundy Center	69	4	36	4	3.40	1.17	6	902	-96	25	16
Marshalltown	69	5	38	4	2.39	0.00	6	822	-119	18	13
Newton	71	6	37	1	4.29	2.06	8	863	-24	23	18
Perry	72	5	37	4	3.67	1.66	9	857	-92	22	17
Toledo	70	5	36	3	2.62	0.36	8	880	-76	25	16
East Central District											
Cedar Rapids	75	7	38	4	3.25	0.93	9	824	-92	17	15
Davenport	76	10	40	4	5.22	2.97	10	764	-110	16	13
Iowa City	77	9	40	3	4.60	2.24	10	763	-68	14	12
Lowden	78	7	36	2	5.70	3.16	10	891	-17	26	20
Maquoketa	75	6	36	2	4.58	2.30	10	905	-42	23	20
Muscatine	80	12	40	3	5.21	2.50	11	756	-245	17	13
South West District											
Atlantic	74	1	40	5	1.88	-0.41	5	764	-147	17	16
Clarinda	76	1	37	0	2.36	-0.09	7	864	-9	24	18
Glenwood	76	1	37	-1	1.71	-0.34	6	851	12	24	16
Red Oak	77	2	39	-1	1.71	-0.55	6	813	9	20	14
Sidney	78	3	38	0	1.23	-1.08	8	816	-12	20	15
South Central District											
Allerton	77	7	39	3	4.58	2.27	8	786	-294	18	13
Beaconsfield	76	3	38	2	4.59	2.36	10	831	-37	21	14
Chariton	78	8	38	2	4.70	2.38	9	818	-41	22	17
Indianola	74	7	39	2	6.06	3.87	7	801	-59	20	15
Leon	81	8	40	3	4.84	2.54	10	774	-83	19	17
South East District											
Bloomfield	76	10	40	0	4.42	1.85	9	780	-6	19	15
Burlington	77	14	43	5	5.87	3.02	12	671	-143	13	8
Ottumwa	79	9	41	4	4.44	2.16	10	722	-110	14	12
Washington	78	10	39	-1	4.74	2.40	12	802	-154	20	17

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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 TO IA CROPS & WEATHER, C/O SD AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS, PO BOX  
 5068 SIOUX FALLS SD 57117