



Iowa Crops & Weather

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COLD & SNOWY DECEMBER

Most Iowans probably wish to forget what was a very cold last month of the year. Deep snow received during the second week of December kept a few corn fields from being harvested. However, Iowa farmers harvested a larger percentage of their corn crop than many other Midwestern States. The below-average temperatures also delayed post-harvest field work which will most likely be completed in the spring. Livestock producers continue the winter struggles of keeping feed and water available for cattle in snow-covered pastures.

The average depth of snow cover for the month of December was 15 inches, above last year's average of 10 inches. Frost penetration averaged 11 inches compared to last year's 10 inches. Soil moisture availability rated 0 percent very short, 2 percent short, 77 percent adequate, and 21 percent surplus. Grain movement for the state was 37 percent none, 44 percent light, 17 percent moderate, and 2 percent heavy.

Availability of hay and roughage supplies was 12 percent short, 80 percent adequate, and 8 percent surplus. Quality of hay and roughage supplies was 9 percent poor, 56 percent fair, and 35 percent good. Utilization of stubble fields for grazing rated 52 percent none, 35 percent light, 12 percent moderate, and 1 percent heavy.

Hog and pig losses in December were 4 percent below average, 92 percent average, and 4 percent above average. Cattle and calf losses were 7 percent below average, 87 percent average, and 6 percent above average.

IOWA PRELIMINARY WEATHER SUMMARY

Provided by Harry Hillaker, State Climatologist

General Summary. Iowa temperatures averaged 19.8 degrees or 2.8 degrees below normal while precipitation totaled 2.70 inches or 1.47 inches above normal. This ranks as the 31st coolest and 2nd wettest December among 137 years of records. Only 1982 brought more December precipitation with 3.43 inches.

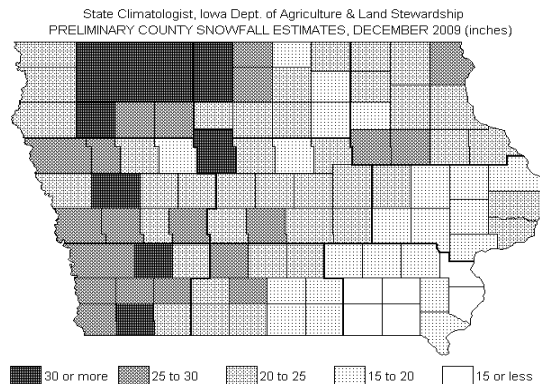
Temperatures. The very mild weather pattern of November continued briefly into December. Daytime highs on the 1st reached into the 50's and 60's statewide with Ankeny, Des Moines, Red Oak and Shenandoah the warmest at 62 degrees. However, only two of the next 16 days managed to reach normal. The first single digit minimum temperatures of the season were recorded on the morning of the 4th with readings down to 2 degrees at Estherville and Swea City. This was followed by the first subzero readings on the morning of the 9th with -1 degrees at Sibley. However, much colder weather was not far behind with Little Sioux falling to -19 degrees on the morning of the 10th when all but the far southeast corner of the state saw subzero readings. Temperatures finally edged above normal from the 17th through the 25th with Burlington reaching 49 degrees early Christmas morning just prior to the arrival of another Arctic blast. Late month temperatures fell as low as -18 degrees at Spencer on the morning of the 29th.

Heating Degree Day Totals. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 5 percent less than last December and 6 percent more than normal. Thus far this season (since July 1) heating requirements are running 3 percent less than last year at this time and 2 percent less than normal.

Precipitation. December was an exceptionally wet and snowy month thanks to two very strong storm systems. The first event, coming mostly in the form of snow, began late on the 7th, peaked on the 8th, and continued into the afternoon of the 9th. A statewide average of 0.80 inches of precipitation and 10.2 inches of snow fell in this storm. This was the largest snow event since the blizzard of January 2-4, 1971 (3rd largest statewide storm total since 1950). The heaviest snow fell from southwest, through central, and into northeast Iowa where amounts of 12 to 16 inches were common. Highest official totals were 16.2 inch totals at Corning and Osceola. Wind gusts of 50 mph or greater were common over the northern two-thirds of Iowa on the 9th with a peak gust of 61 mph at Estherville. A second major storm slowly moved into Iowa on the morning of the 23rd and finally exited the state on 27th. This storm brought snow to all of Iowa, but also an unseasonably large amount of rain to eastern sections. Statewide the second storm brought an average of 1.55 inches of precipitation and 8.2 inches of snow (8th largest statewide storm total since 1950). Heaviest snow fell over northwestern Iowa where Spencer recorded 24.0 inches of snow (new single storm record for Spencer, old record 19.0 inches February 17-18, 1962). Portions of west central and central Iowa also endured a period of freezing rain on the 23rd-24th with glazing of up to one-half inch. Winds speeds with this second blizzard were not as high as with the first storm with the higher winds being confined to far western Iowa where Sioux City recorded gusts to 51 mph. Thanks in large part to these two major events, Spencer set a state record for maximum December snowfall with a total of 40.0 inches (old record 39.6 inches at Britt in December 2000). Record calendar month snowfalls included:

City	Dec. 2009	Old monthly record	Period of Record
Spencer	40.0	39.0 in February 1962	100 years
Sioux City	34.0	29.1 in January 1982	120 years
Denison	31.0	26.5 in January 1932	117 years

Overall the December 2009 statewide average snowfall was 23.3 inches. Normal for December is only 7.3 inches. This is the second highest statewide average for any calendar month (behind only December 2000's 25.5 inch average). Despite the second least snow of record in November the season-to-date statewide average snowfall through the end of December is also the second highest of record at 23.9 inches. Normal snowfall through the end of December is 11.2 inches while the record total for this period is 28.0 inches set in 2000.



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	25	20	11	19	19	7	18	10	7	15	NA	10
Frost penetration	12	16	8	13	15	7	9	8	8	11	NA	10

**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	51	-12	16	-3	1.50	0.77	8	1,525	57	31	29
Sioux Center	52	-12	17	-4	1.71	0.87	10	1,485	93	31	31
Spencer	53	-18	16	-3	1.77	1.06	7	1,507	65	31	29
Spirit Lake	49	-11	16	-2	1.28	0.39	10	1,524	304	31	30
North Central District											
Britt	53	-10	16	-4	2.78	1.42	15	1,523	109	31	31
Humboldt	54	-9	17	-4	2.89	1.88	14	1,480	82	31	30
Mason City	50	-7	18	0	1.41	0.20	11	1,440	-6	31	29
Osage	51	-9	17	-3	3.14	1.89	10	1,484	100	31	30
North East District											
Decorah	51	-12	20	-2	3.07	1.86	13	1,394	22	31	30
Dubuque	55	-6	23	3	3.01	1.05	14	1,280	-67	30	24
Elkader	55	-16	18	-4	3.85	2.45	15	1,434	251	30	29
Fayette	52	-10	19	-3	2.95	1.54	12	1,426	48	31	30
Waterloo	55	-12	21	1	2.43	1.13	13	1,360	-26	30	26
West Central District											
Carroll	55	-8	18	-4	2.35	1.39	11	1,451	93	31	29
Castana	55	-8	18	-6	2.05	1.22	8	1,446	53	31	31
Guthrie Center	59	-15	19	-4	2.28	1.00	10	1,419	105	31	28
Harlan	54	-12	18	-6	3.01	2.00	9	1,443	73	31	30
Jefferson	54	-8	18	-4	2.78	1.82	11	1,454	96	31	30
Logan	56	-17	18	-6	2.63	1.56	9	1,460	147	31	31
Rockwell City	55	-9	17	-6	1.76	0.83	11	1,486	150	31	30
Sac City	55	-13	16	-5	1.21	0.07	6	1,506	116	31	30
Sioux City	58	-13	20	-3	3.33	2.55	11	1,395	56	31	30
Central District											
Boone	55	-11	19	-4	3.28	1.94	16	1,432	88	31	29
Des Moines	62	-6	25	0	2.05	0.73	12	1,249	-11	27	26
Grundy Center	58	-10	19	-2	2.65	1.36	10	1,409	17	30	28
Marshalltown	59	-7	22	-1	2.18	0.89	12	1,341	8	29	25
Newton	59	-6	21	-3	2.16	1.03	11	1,367	74	31	28
Perry	60	-8	19	-4	2.42	1.36	13	1,407	82	31	29
Toledo	59	-7	20	-3	1.82	0.57	13	1,392	54	31	28
East Central District											
Cedar Rapids	58	-6	23	0	1.80	0.21	11	1,295	-15	29	24
Davenport	58	-4	25	0	3.01	1.09	11	1,219	-1	26	23
Iowa City	59	-7	25	-1	2.04	0.48	10	1,227	15	26	24
Lowden	59	-6	23	-1	3.86	1.75	15	1,308	8	30	26
Maquoketa	56	-6	22	-2	3.51	1.71	12	1,317	12	30	26
Muscatine	58	-3	25	-2	3.16	1.19	15	1,226	-164	27	25
South West District											
Atlantic	60	-11	19	-4	3.58	2.49	11	1,420	99	31	29
Clarinda	60	-17	19	-6	2.74	1.56	10	1,410	158	31	29
Glenwood	60	-13	20	-5	2.20	1.02	8	1,394	160	31	30
Red Oak	62	-13	21	-5	2.69	1.48	10	1,364	141	31	29
Sidney	61	-6	21	-5	2.74	1.58	6	1,348	123	31	29
South Central District											
Allerton	59	-10	22	-4	2.23	0.92	7	1,322	-158	31	27
Beaconsfield	59	-9	21	-5	2.49	1.38	7	1,364	112	31	29
Chariton	59	-8	22	-3	2.30	0.94	8	1,324	59	31	29
Indianola	59	-11	21	-5	3.92	2.54	11	1,368	105	31	28
Leon	60	-9	22	-3	1.96	0.60	8	1,322	73	31	28
South East District											
Bloomfield	59	-4	24	-4	2.46	0.90	12	1,258	91	30	26
Burlington	59	2	30	3	2.26	0.28	9	1,088	-98	23	19
Ottumwa	59	-3	25	-1	1.93	0.50	11	1,220	5	28	24
Washington	60	-4	24	-3	2.17	0.48	13	1,256	-114	29	25

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 2010: AWIS, Inc. All Rights Reserved.