



# Iowa Crop Progress & Condition

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Cooperating with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

For the month of March, 2015  
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Favorable conditions in March prompted farmers to spread manure, complete some spring tillage, and seed oats and alfalfa according to the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service. Although soil temperatures in parts of northern Iowa were still too cold, operators in the southern two-thirds of the State have been able to begin anhydrous applications.

As March came to a close, topsoil moisture levels rated 2 percent very short, 19 percent short, 77 percent adequate, and 2 percent surplus. North Central Iowa reported the highest moisture levels with 89 percent in adequate to surplus.

The State saw an increase in grain movement from February, with March grain movement rated 26 percent none, 41 percent light, 28 percent moderate, and 5 percent heavy. Reports ranged from having lines waiting at the elevator to little grain movement due to soft yards and poor prices. With the Mississippi River open, grain is moving from farm to elevator to barge.

Availability of hay and roughage supplies was 1 percent very short, 8 percent short, 82 percent adequate, and 9 percent surplus. Livestock conditions were described as good for the month of March with the mostly dry weather aiding calving conditions.

## Post-Harvest Conditions as of March 31, 2015

Item	None	Light	Moderate	Heavy
	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)
Grain movement....	26	41	28	5

## Hay/Roughage Supplies as of March 31, 2015

Item	Very Short	Short	Adequate	Surplus
	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)
Hay/Roughage.....	1	8	82	9

## Soil Moisture Condition as of March 31, 2015

Item	Districts									State	Last Month	Last Year
	NW	NC	NE	WC	C	EC	SW	SC	SE			
	(percent)	(percent)										
Topsoil moisture												
Very short .....	4.0	1.0	1.0	5.0	0.0	4.0	5.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	15.0
Short .....	20.0	10.0	16.0	25.0	16.0	18.0	28.0	25.0	21.0	19.0	9.0	41.0
Adequate .....	75.0	88.0	78.0	69.0	80.0	77.0	62.0	68.0	69.0	77.0	85.0	43.0
Surplus .....	1.0	1.0	5.0	1.0	4.0	1.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	2.0	5.0	1.0

## IOWA PRELIMINARY WEATHER SUMMARY Provided by Harry Hillaker, State Climatologist Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship

**General Summary.** Iowa temperatures averaged 36.8° or 0.9° above normal while precipitation totaled 0.59 inches or 1.56 inches below normal. This ranks as the 53<sup>rd</sup> warmest and 7<sup>th</sup> driest March among 143 years of records. A drier March and a drier first one-quarter year was last recorded in 1994.

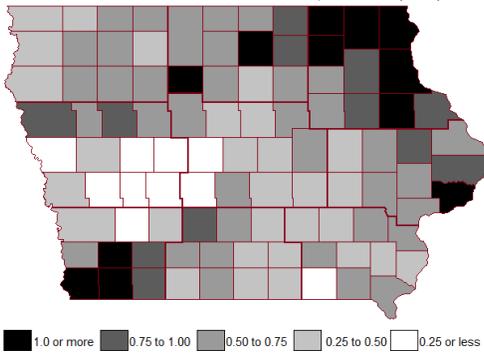
**Temperatures.** The very cold weather pattern that dominated most of February continued into the first six days of March. The coldest day in many areas was the 5<sup>th</sup> with morning lows down to -17° at Stanley in Buchanan County while Maquoketa, Oelwein, Stanley and Postville recorded daytime highs of only 9°. An extended period of warmer and drier than normal weather prevailed from the 7<sup>th</sup> through the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The year's first 70 degree readings were recorded over much of southwestern Iowa on the 10<sup>th</sup> while Sioux City and Little Sioux were the first Iowa locations to exceed 80 with 81° maximums on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Temperature soared higher still with Sioux City reaching 90° on the 16<sup>th</sup>. This reading came six days earlier in the year than any previous 90° temperature in Iowa (old record 92° at Clarinda on March 22, 1910). Another spell of cold weather prevailed from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> with Cresco reporting a low of 8° on the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup>. Finally, mild weather returned for the end of the month with Little Sioux reaching 81° on the 30<sup>th</sup> and 80° on the 31<sup>st</sup>. A larger range in monthly temperature extremes from -17 to +90 has been recorded only three times during March (1943, 1959 and 1962). There was also a fairly strong gradient in temperatures across Iowa during March with the month averaging about 5 degrees warmer than normal over the far northwest to about 2 degrees below normal along the Mississippi River.

**Heating Degree Days.** Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 4% less than normal and 22% less than last March. Degree day totals for the heating season (since July 1, 2014) are running 3% more than normal but 10% less than last season though the end of March.

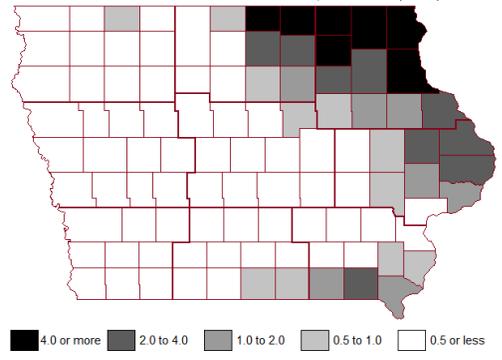
**Precipitation.** Most of Iowa has been unusually dry since the major snow storm of January 31-February 1. There has been a statewide average of only 0.88 inches from February 2 through the end of March compared to a normal total for the period of 3.14 inches. A particularly dry period occurred from March 4<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup> when a statewide average of only 0.01 inches of precipitation fell during this 18-day period. Most of March's precipitation came in two events during the fourth week of the month. Heavy snow fell across far northeast Iowa on the night of the 22<sup>nd</sup> with a foot of wet snow reported at McGregor. The largest event came on the 24<sup>th</sup> when rain fell statewide. Rain totals exceeded an inch at a few western locations with a maximum total of 1.32 inches reported near New Market in Taylor County. Some of the precipitation fell in the form of freezing rain and snow over northern sections of the state. This event also brought the first thunderstorms of the year to portions of the state. Monthly precipitation totals varied from 0.03 inches at Guthrie Center to 1.77 inches at Monona. No measurable snow fell over much of western and central Iowa during the month while 12.5 inches was reported eight miles east-northeast of Decorah. The statewide average snowfall was 0.9 inches while normal for the month is 4.7 inches. This was the lowest March statewide average snowfall since 1994 and ranks 9<sup>th</sup> lowest among 128 years of records.

**The Return of El Niño.** Indications of a new El Niño event on the way first began last spring. However, it was not until last month that conditions finally met National Weather Service criteria for an El Niño event. What does El Niño mean for Iowa? Historically there have been 22 El Niño events documented since 1950 with the last one centered over the winter season of 2009-2010. In Iowa the strongest correlation with previous El Niño events is for above normal temperatures through the initial year of the event. In regards to precipitation the historical odds just slightly favor greater than normal amounts in Iowa during the first year of the event, but strongly turn toward the drier end of the spectrum for the second year (2016 in this case). We ended the 2014 growing season with soil moisture levels well above seasonal normal over much of central, west central and southern Iowa. Nevertheless, soil moisture going into this past winter was still better in the drier northern and east central areas of Iowa than was the case in the previous three years. Much of Iowa, the upper Midwest, and the central and northern plains states have been very dry over the past five or six months. However, in Iowa just 'normal' rains in April and May should put us in a favorable moisture situation for the beginning of the 2015 growing season.

State Climatologist, Iowa Dept. of Agriculture & Land Stewardship  
PRELIMINARY COUNTY PRECIPITATION ESTIMATES, MARCH 2015 (inches)



State Climatologist, Iowa Dept. of Agriculture & Land Stewardship  
PRELIMINARY COUNTY SNOWFALL ESTIMATES, MARCH 2015 (inches)



**March 2015 Weather Summary for Iowa, Prepared by Iowa Environmental Mesonet.**

STATION	AIR TEMPERATURE				PRECIPITATION			HDD TOT	HDD DFN	DAYS OF 32 COLD	DAYS OF 28 COLD
	HI	LO	AVG	DFN	TOTAL	DFN	DAYS				
<b>North West District</b>											
Rock Rapids .....	77	-9	35	3	0.33	-1.28	2	942	-88	28	18
Sheldon .....	76	-10	35	3	0.45	-1.40	1	928	-94	29	22
Sibley .....	75	-10	34	4	0.35	-1.40	2	948	-115	29	21
Sioux Center .....	78	-8	41	6	0.53	-1.20	2	755	-201	24	15
Spirit Lake .....	74	-9	37	5	0.51	-1.20	2	878	-159	20	15
Storm Lake .....	79	-6	38	6	0.57	-1.28	2	850	-175	22	13
<b>North Central District</b>											
Algona .....	74	-9	35	3	0.72	-1.10	3	924	-93	27	14
Charles City .....	74	-12	33	0	0.91	-1.14	3	982	-4	26	16
Dakota City .....	80	-8	36	2	1.06	-0.94	2	912	-74	26	13
Hampton .....	79	-20	35	3	0.50	-1.53	3	922	-86	20	16
Mason City .....	72	-17	33	1	1.03	-0.89	3	994	-44	25	18
Osage .....	71	-12	33	1	0.91	-1.16	2	1002	-21	26	16
<b>North East District</b>											
Cresco .....	73	-16	31	1	1.42	-0.67	4	1052	-18	29	21
Decorah .....	76	-13	35	1	1.37	-0.55	4	944	-44	26	21
Dubuque .....	77	-23	32	-3	0.68	-1.42	4	1026	106	24	15
Fayette .....	79	-15	31	-1	0.60	-1.56	4	1050	38	26	15
Manchester .....	79	-22	32	-1	0.90	-1.23	5	1029	37	29	25
Tripoli .....	79	-15	34	1	0.57	-1.56	3	972	-19	28	15
<b>West Central District</b>											
Audubon .....	83	-10	37	1	0.14	-2.00	2	872	-38	28	20
Carroll .....	85	-5	37	2	0.15	-1.96	1	882	-64	23	16
Jefferson .....	85	-4	38	2	0.14	-1.92	1	845	-51	26	13
Logan .....	88	-2	39	2	0.32	-1.65	1	810	-56	29	19
Mapleton .....	86	-7	36	0	0.30	-1.67	1	893	-15	27	21
Rockwell City .....	84	-8	38	4	0.67	-1.26	1	840	-109	25	10
<b>Central District</b>											
Boone .....	84	-8	37	2	0.29	-2.01	1	874	-59	30	21
Grinnell .....	82	-11	35	0	0.38	-2.01	4	934	-15	28	18
Grundy Center .....	81	-14	34	1	0.39	-1.73	2	950	-39	28	16
Iowa Falls .....	81	-12	34	1	0.53	-1.55	1	950	-25	27	18
Marshalltown .....	82	-18	35	0	0.09	-2.22	2	928	-10	28	17
Webster City .....	84	-10	36	2	0.30	-1.57	1	910	-48	29	16
<b>East Central District</b>											
Anamosa .....	79	-15	34	-1	0.77	-1.54	4	950	22	26	17
Cedar Rapids .....	81	-5	37	0	0.85	-1.39	5	870	-6	23	14
Clinton .....	79	-5	37	0	0.86	-1.61	4	862	9	22	17
Lowden .....	80	-21	35	0	0.80	-1.68	6	917	7	30	21
Maquoketa .....	79	-21	32	-3	0.73	-1.57	4	1029	99	30	21
Vinton .....	82	-16	35	-1	0.67	-1.46	4	944	40	24	18
<b>South West District</b>											
Atlantic .....	84	-2	38	2	0.33	-1.78	2	826	-60	27	18
Clarinda .....	85	-1	40	2	1.20	-1.11	2	776	-54	27	19
Glenwood .....	86	0	41	2	0.71	-1.29	2	750	-69	25	16
Oakland .....	85	-2	39	2	0.49	-1.53	2	816	-56	22	14
Red Oak .....	86	0	40	2	1.09	-1.09	2	769	-50	27	16
Sidney .....	86	1	41	1	1.45	-0.66	2	742	-43	24	12
<b>South Central District</b>											
Allerton .....	82	3	38	0	0.29	-1.99	2	848	-1	16	9
Beaconsfield .....	82	-1	37	-1	1.11	-1.40	2	862	30	19	9
Centerville .....	83	3	39	0	0.39	-2.01	3	814	1	26	22
Indianola .....	85	-3	34	-4	0.56	-1.60	1	966	114	23	13
Lamoni .....	85	1	40	2	0.61	-1.89	3	773	-59	16	9
Osceola .....	85	-3	36	-1	0.73	-1.53	3	891	41	26	16
<b>South East District</b>											
Bloomfield .....	84	4	42	3	0.21	-2.17	2	719	-92	14	10
Donnellson .....	82	2	39	-1	0.46	-2.22	7	802	21	17	13
Fairfield .....	82	0	36	-3	0.36	-2.09	4	897	86	22	15
Keosauqua .....	73	1	33	-7	0.60	-1.99	3	1000	227	26	20
Washington .....	82	-9	36	-2	0.51	-1.89	4	893	64	28	18