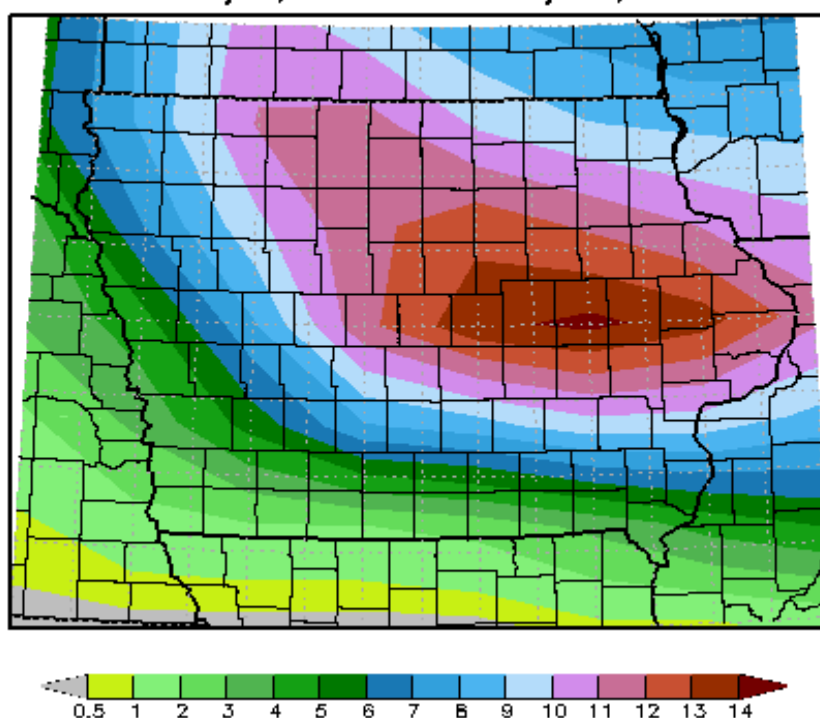


# 2009 Iowa Weather in Review

The following events were some of the top weather stories in Iowa during 2009. The information was provided by the Iowa State Climatologist, Harry Hillaker. The information is generally in chronological order and in no way represents the order of significance of the events.

**1. Frequent Snowfall** Jan. 9 to Jan 14 A series of storms brought a statewide average of 9.1 inches of snow during this period. Greatest snowfall came on the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> with heaviest snow from northwest to east central Iowa during both events.

Total Snowfall in Inches  
January 9, 2009 to January 14, 2009



**2. Very Cold Weather** Jan 13 to Jan 16 Official temperatures bottomed out at -40 degrees at Coggon on the morning of January 16 with numerous eastern Iowa locations setting all-time record lows. Wind chill readings fell as low as -52F at Cedar Rapids on the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup>. This was the state's lowest temperatures and wind chills since early February 1996. Maquoketa recorded a daytime high of only -15F on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

**3. Tornadoes** March 23 The year's first tornadoes touched down over southwestern Iowa on the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup>. A total of 5 tornadoes touched down including an EF-2 storm near Missouri Valley. However, 2009 went on to be a very quiet year for tornadoes in Iowa with a total of only 25 for the year with the Missouri Valley storm the only one to exceed EF-1 strength. This was the fewest number of Iowa tornadoes since 1997.

**4. Favorable Weather**      Late Jan to early May      The winter of 2008-2009 had been unusually cold and snowy through mid-January. However, the second one-half of the winter was much milder. Spring rains were heavy over parts of southern and eastern Iowa but temperatures were consistently higher than in the flood-plagued year of 2008. Spring planting was accomplished on a fairly timely basis thanks to a very dry period for the first three and one-half weeks of April.

**5. Hot and Humid**      June 17 to June 27      After a very cool start to June a quick transition to hot and humid weather began on June 17. Temperatures reached 90 degrees somewhere in the state throughout this period. Ankeny recorded the state's only triple digit heat of the year while heat indices maxed out at 113F at Ames on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The heat provided a welcome boost to crops but resulted in numerous deaths among livestock which were unable to adjust to the rapid onset of heat and humidity.

**6. Exceptionally Cool**      June 28 to Sep 6      Temperatures averaged above normal on only ten days during this 71 day period, and only once by more than 5 degrees. Iowa recorded its coolest July on record (68.1 degree average, old record 68.3 in 1891) and 10<sup>th</sup> coolest August among 137 years of records. There were no 90 degree temperatures recorded anywhere in the state after August 14. This was the earliest end to 90 degree weather in Iowa on record (previous earliest end was August 19, 1902).

**7. Northeast IA Hailstorm**      July 24      A series of severe thunderstorms dropped very damaging hail across several northeastern Iowa counties on the afternoon and evening of the 24<sup>th</sup> with crop damage estimated at about \$200 million.

**8. Central IA Hailstorm**      August 9      Thunderstorms dropped large hail across central Iowa on the morning of the 9<sup>th</sup>, roughly along the US Highway 20 corridor, causing an estimated \$200 million in damage.



Picture of Damage from Eldora, IA. Notice the trees behind the house were stripped bare.

**9. Cold and Wet**

October

This was Iowa's coldest October since 1925 and third coldest on record thanks to a very cold period from the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup>. Meanwhile precipitation was the second greatest on record for October, exceeded only slightly by 1881. The combination of cold and wet conditions resulted in Iowa's slowest harvest pace as of November 1<sup>st</sup> since 1951. There were several snow events during the second week of the month with that of the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> bringing the heaviest snow Iowa has seen for so early in the season since October 9, 1970. Snow accumulated over northwest and west central Iowa with a maximum of 6.7 inches reported at Underwood.

**10. Mild Weather**

November

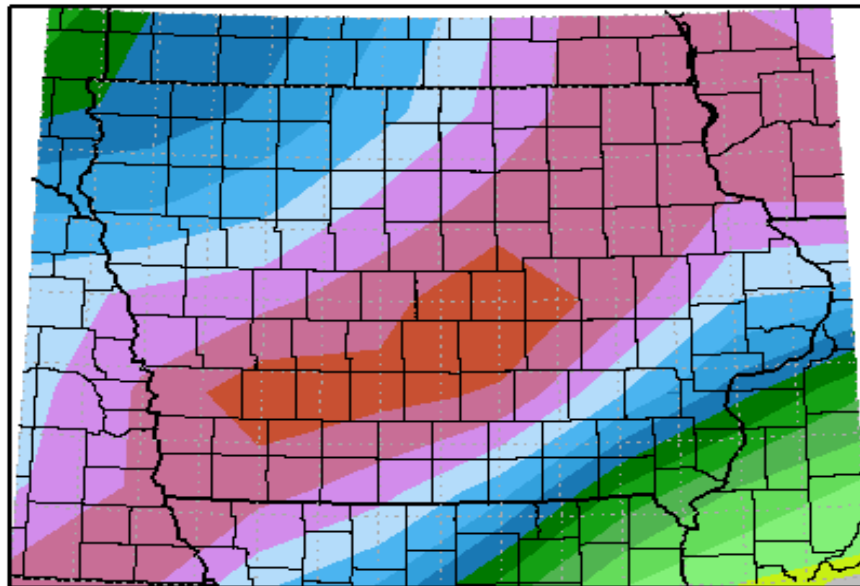
A much needed break in the weather pattern brought very dry weather across all of the state for the first one-half of November. Meanwhile, temperatures soared well above normal early in the month with Donnellson reaching 77F on the 8<sup>th</sup>, Iowa's highest temperature recorded since September 27. Snowfall was nearly absent during the month with this being the state's second least snowy November on record (only 1939 saw less snow).

**11. December Blizzard**

Dec 8 to Dec 9

Snow fell statewide with this storm while winds gusted as high as 61 mph at Estherville. Heaviest snow, of a foot or more, fell from the southwest corner of the state, through Des Moines, northeastward to the northeast corner of Iowa. A statewide average of 10.2 inches of snow fell with this storm, the largest single storm total since January 2-4, 1971. Bitter cold weather followed the blizzard with actual temperatures as low as -19F at Little Sioux on the 10<sup>th</sup> with wind chills down to -31F at Mason City on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Total Snowfall in Inches  
December 8, 2009 to December 9, 2009**



NOAA Midwestern Regional Climate Center  
Illinois State Water Survey  
Champaign, Illinois