

1988, through first seven months, is Driest year in record books

The hot dry weather has been a subject of debate at every elevator, farm implement store, coffee shop, restaurant, etc., for the past three months.

"It's dry, but nothing like 1936", we've heard some old timers comment. Or, "It's drier than any time I can remember," or "It's dry and hot, but at least we don't have the chinch bugs like in '34".

The dry weather has even spawned a number of jokes, undoubtedly playing on people's "dry sense of humor". For example, we've heard reports that the bullfrogs have been lining up for swimming lessons.

Well, then, to settle all the debate, just how dry has it been?

According to the Iowa State Climatologist, the first seven months of 1988 have been the driest, based on statewide averages, since state records were begun in 1873.

In the period January through July, 1988, the average precipitation received over the state is 9.79 inches, or approximately 50 percent of the 1951-80 norm.

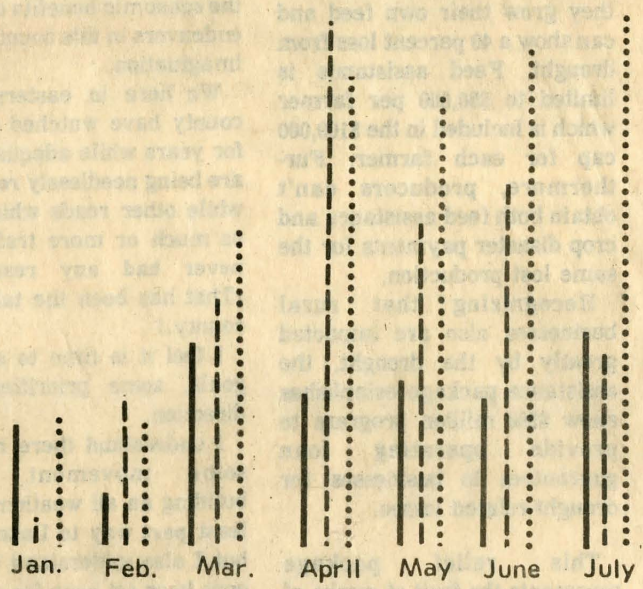
The driest seven months, prior to this year, was 1910, when the state average was 10.88 inches.

The pattern has been exceedingly variable from locality to locality, however. For example, Primghar, in northwest Iowa, has received precipitation totalling 95 percent of normal, while Belle Plaine, in east central Iowa, has received only 26 percent of normal.

Belle Plaine has received only 5.71 inches of precipitation through July 31. Their normal total for the first seven months of the year is 21.63 inches. The driest first seven months of the year in Belle Plaine, prior to

5.00
4.50
4.00
3.50
3.00
2.50
2.00
1.50
1.00
.50

Month by month rainfall for 1988, 1983, and 30 yr. norm.



1988 1983
Norm

this year, was in 1879, when they received 10.01 inches. This year's total, then, is barely half of that received in 1879.

How has Louisa County fared during the same period? This area has suffered from the same malady as other portions of the state (in fact, most of the eastern cornbelt has experienced similar rainfall patterns). What rainfall the county has received has been of the spotty variety.

However, official rainfall totals in Wapello paint an interesting picture of just how dry it's been.

Normal rainfall in Wapello should have totalled 21.36 inches for the first seven months of the year. In 1983, a year many of us remember as a year of heat, drought, and reduced corn and bean yields, Wapello received 15.49 inches of precip

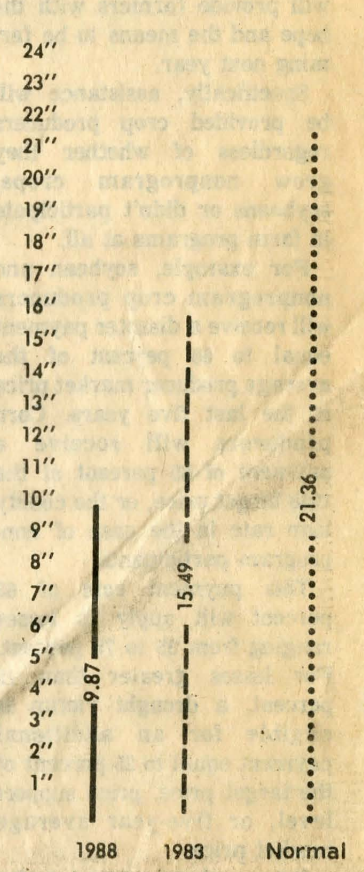
during that period.

In 1988, official weather observer Mike Hodges has recorded 9.87 inches of rainfall—or approximately 46 percent of normal, and almost six inches less than that received during the same period in 1983.

Precipitation for the month of July, which featured several 100 degree days, varied from .34 inch at Ft. Madison to 9.90 inches at Carroll. Wapello recorded 1.96 inches during that month.

In 1983, the year turned wet in September and the total for the year was 31.50 inches—only some three inches less than the 34.91 norm. Who can tell when the dry spell will be broken, and whether the rainfall pattern that has, thus far, pegged 1988 as the driest year on record will continue?

Rainfall for first seven months of year, 1988, 1983, 30 year norm.



L Bar M Rodeo

August 19 and 20

The L Bar M Rodeo in Conesville, Iowa, will celebrate 25 years of professional rodeo August 19 and 20 at the L Bar M Rodeo Grounds, between Columbus Junction and Conesville.

The silver anniversary Conesville rodeo will be cosanctioned by the IPRA and the URA. The H Bar C Rodeo Co. of Salem, Iowa, will return as rodeo producer.