

## Farm and Weather Summary

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### Farm Comments

*Developments.* A farm Web site has been established and can be found on the Internet at: <http://mirdf.ag.iastate.edu/>. It is hoped the Web site will make farm activities and the objective, research-based, information generated at the farm more accessible to a greater audience. Also, it is an excellent medium for posting information not suited to formal annual reports such as this publication. For example, on the Web site, we have posted full-color pictures of each ornamental corn cultivar tested in our 2008 trial. The Web site will be an on-going project so check it frequently.

*Field Days and Tours.* The annual meeting of the Muscatine Island Research Farm Association was held on March 11, 2008, at the Elms Restaurant, Muscatine, IA. Association business, including election of board of directors, was conducted and an update of research farm activities was presented. The Home Demonstration Garden Tour was held on a Monday evening, August 4. The tour focused on garden herbs, heirloom tomatoes, cut flowers, and watermelons. The Muscatine Garden Club visited the farm on August 11 to tour home gardening projects. On September 5 the ISU Ag Extension Team visited the farm and held their annual meeting. On September 25 a special educational program introducing sugar beets as a potential crop for SE Iowa was held with 60 visitors attending.

*New Projects.* A sugar beet demonstration planting was established to explore production feasibility and help determine crop potential as a feedstock for local ethanol production. Two projects that will help maintain quality sweet corn production in Iowa were initiated

in 2008. The first was a corn earworm control study designed to evaluate new technologies and insecticides. Another study was initiated to measure carryover injury potential of three postemergence sweet corn herbicides on subsequent vegetable plantings.

### Weather Comments

Overall, the 2008 season could be described as cool and wet. Rainfall was 9.9 in. above normal for the season (Table 1), and monthly average temperatures were below normal each month. However, temperatures were warm enough to have a 182-day frost-free growing season from April 29 through October 28.

*Spring.* Cool and wet conditions hindered but only slightly delayed field work and planting.

*Summer.* Mild temperatures continued through the summer months reducing heat stress but slowing crop growth. June was a wet month with total accumulation of 7.4 in. of rainfall. We did get enough sunshine and heat to harvest a good melon crop during July and August.

*Fall.* September was another cool wet month with an average temperature of 3.2 degrees below normal and 6.59 in. of rainfall. However, our first killing freeze did not occur until October 28 (25°F), about 18 days later than our average first fall freeze date. Corn and soybean crops, although delayed in maturity, were good.

### Acknowledgements

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