

## Rains Ease Drought Woes During October

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September brought Oklahomans relief from the heat and October did its part with a bit of drought relief. The drought conditions remain quite severe across the state despite the rain, however. The statewide average rainfall total was 2.89 inches, about a half of an inch below normal and the 52<sup>nd</sup> wettest October since 1895. The month was also a bit on the warm side at more than a half a degree above normal. The statewide average temperature of 61.9 degrees ranks as the 53<sup>rd</sup> warmest October on record. The rains came at a very opportune time for Oklahoma's wheat crop, already in jeopardy due to the drought, and eased dangerous wildfire conditions. Combined with September, the fall's first two months fell 2.64 inches below normal to rank as the 36<sup>th</sup> driest on record. The season was also off to a cool start with a September-October statewide average of 66.4 degrees, the 46<sup>th</sup> coolest such period on record and about a half a degree below normal.

Data from the Oklahoma Mesonet show above normal rainfall amounts, substantial in some areas, from south central through central Oklahoma. Along that path, Oklahoma Mesonet stations reported 4-7 inches of rain with widespread totals of 3-4 inches radiating outward. The heaviest rains fell from Jefferson through eastern Kingfisher and western Logan counties. Unfortunately, some parts of the state remained significantly below normal after missing a couple of the month's rain chances. Much of the Panhandle had less than an inch of rain but did see a light dusting of snow during the month's last week. The Mesonet station at Ketchum Ranch near Duncan led the state with 7.08 inches of rain while Kenton came in with the least at 0.17 inches. Of the 120 Mesonet stations across the state, 61 recorded at least 3 inches of rain for the month. October's highest temperature of 96 degrees was recorded at Beaver on the third and the lowest, 23 degrees, occurred at three different northeastern locations on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

The January-October statewide average precipitation total finished at 18.84 inches, approximately 13 inches below normal. The state's driest year on record was 1910 with an average of 19.04 inches of rainfall. Regnier holds the record for lowest annual total at an individual station with a total of 6.53 inches from 1956. The Mesonet station at Hooker has recorded a total of 3.8 inches for the year thus far.

The latest U.S. Drought Monitor, issued on October 27, still had 55 percent of the state listed in the exceptional drought category, the worst designation possible. Virtually the entire state remained in severe-exceptional drought. The latest climate outlooks for November from the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center (CPC) indicate an increased chance of above normal temperatures for the entire state. Those outlooks also specify a slight increase in the odds for below normal precipitation in all but northeastern Oklahoma. The outlooks for the November-January period are much the same except the increased chance for below normal precipitation covers the entire state. November is Oklahoma's sixth driest month with a statewide average of 2.78 inches. December, January and February are the state's three driest months.