A dry beginning

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Abstract
This week finds Iowa just slightly above the seasonal average in degree day accumulations. The lack of rainfall in many parts of Iowa has been a recent topic of discussion. Posted here are the precipitation deficits by crop reporting district from May 1 through June 11. With the exception of northeast and east central Iowa, it has been a dry start to the growing season. The question, "how critical are the current deficits to the growing crop?" is best answered, "it depends."

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Degree Days

A dry beginning

by Rich Pope, Department of Entomology

This week finds Iowa just slightly above the seasonal average in degree day accumulations. The lack of rainfall in many parts of Iowa has been a recent topic of discussion.

Posted here are the precipitation deficits by crop reporting district from May 1 through June 11. With the exception of northeast and east central Iowa, it has been a dry start to the growing season. The question, “how critical are the current deficits to the growing crop?” is best answered, “it depends.” Row crop performance is not driven so much by precipitation alone, but by moisture available to roots. For much of the state, we entered the season with pretty good subsoil moisture. However, the longer we stay dry, the more demand on those moisture reserves. And remember, June is our wettest month, and June deficits make it more difficult to make up lost ground in mid- to late summer. So, although we aren’t in horrible shape now, the situation does bear monitoring.

Rich Pope is an extension program specialist in entomology with responsibilities in integrated pest management.