



## CLIPPINGS a weekly column from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

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### For Immediate Release

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#### Where do I get weather information?

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I am an agronomist serving nine counties in the Northwest corner of Iowa. There are not many industries that rely on what is happening with the weather more than crop producers. This year, the regional concerns with what is happening with the weather seem to be about as high as it can get. Since I work in nine counties, knowing the weather differences of each of those counties is helpful when I am communicating with crop growers in each county. Fortunately, there is more publicly available weather data available today than we ever had in the past. I hope that you are a computer user so you, too, can access some of that information.

I think almost everyone with a smart phone has an app that will give local weather and allow you to see a radar map. Most get their data from the National Weather Service (NWS), so I often prefer to go directly to their webpage for weather information and forecasts. The NWS webpage is [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov). I usually put my zip code in the little box at the top of the page, click "go" and see their forecast for my area. I also like to see the hourly weather forecast at times, which you can find by scrolling down the page and clicking on the "hourly weather forecast" box near the bottom righthand side. You can get hourly rainfall chances and predicted amounts, wind speed and direction, temperatures and more for up to six days.

In the spring and fall, I get many questions about soil temperatures. The ISU Soil Moisture Network (<http://mesonet.agron.iastate.edu/agclimate/#tmpf>) has soil temperature and moisture sensors at 4", 12", 24" and 50" depths below the soil surface. Not many weather stations do that! There are about six stations in Northwest Iowa that report this data, along with other weather information. I often just do a web search for the website's name, and when there I select what types of information I want to review. To track crop growth through the year I often choose the "plot time series" tab on the left-hand side, and when I get to that page I select the dates I want to review and the weather station whose data I wish to see. Do not be afraid to experiment!

The Iowa Environmental Mesonet (<https://mesonet.agron.iastate.edu/>) almost has too much information. This website has connections to nearly every weather station in Iowa. I use this link, <http://mesonet.agron.iastate.edu/climodat/monitor.php>, select a weather station from each county I serve, enter the current (or past year) growing season dates, and review the data for rainfall, temperature, growing degree days, and stress degree days that could negatively affect crops. This website reported 2018 weather station rainfall totals of over 50 inches near Sheldon and Sibley. Incredible!

There is a lot more weather data available than what you see on your smart phone app or hear on the radio. If you have as much interest as I do in more detail, look at these websites.

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