GROWING SEASON WEATHER 2005

THE DAKOTA LAKES STAFF

INTRODUCTION:

Precipitation and other climatic data are usually recorded on a calendar year basis. That is not the most appropriate period to use in evaluating the moisture available to grow a crop in South Dakota. It is much more appropriate to use the twelve months from October 1 through September 30. Using this system the 2005 "**growing season**" extends from October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005. This period works very well for most crops. A September 1 to August 30 might be better for winter wheat.

The 2005 Growing Season:

The 2005 growing season was warmer and drier (2.74 inches below) than normal. That has been the trend since the 2000 growing season at Dakota Lakes. In fact, only one season in the last 6 has been above average. That was 2003-2004 where precipitation was 0.6 inches more than normal. Two seasons of these 6 (2000 and 2002) were less than ½ of normal. Years with one-half of normal precipitation or less are very infrequent even in continental climates. For instance, in the 1932 to 1938 period at Onida there were no years less than ½ of normal. The historic dry growing season of 1975-1976 at Gettysburg was greater than ½ of normal. The period of 2000 through 2005 will probably go down as an historically dry period.

Winter wheat did exceptionally well during the 2005 season. The reason for that is evident when looking at the rainfall chart. September of 2004 was exceptionally wet (4.99 inches). This set up the winter wheat for an exceptional start and provided some moisture reserves in the soil. September is not counted in the October through September system. If September 1 to August 30 were used as the growing season, the year would have been 1.15 inches above normal. In other words, the September rain made the winter wheat grain. Other crops did not fare so well. The very hot (ten days in excess of 100 degrees F) summer combined with the dry late season weather made 2005 one of the poorer years for summer crop production in the history of Dakota Lakes.

Excellent weather data is available through the Automatic Weather Station system operated the SDSU. Any information needed can be found there. The link to this site is: http://climate.sdstate.edu/w_info/Query/awdndailyfr.htm . There are two stations operated in the Dakota Lakes Area. The automatic station denoted as Pierre is located just south of the headquarters at the main station. The automatic station denoted as Dakota Lakes has been located at our North Unit since 2002. Prior to that it was located at our Wheat Commission Rotation Study in northern Lyman County.

Dakota Lakes Main Station
October 1 to September 30 Rainfall