North Dakota
Monthly Climate Summary

April 2011

Precipitation:

Precipitation ranged from approximately 50% to 300% of normal precipitation. The heaviest amounts of above normal precipitation fell in the southwest and eastern regions. (Figure 1. High Plains Regional Climate Center). Precipitation totals ranged primarily from 0.50 to 3.0 inches. A cool wet cycle continued into April. April had two scattered snow events which were from the 15th through the 16th and from the 17th through the 19th. The heaviest snow totals of 7 and up to 9 inches fell on the 15th in the central part of the state. The Red River crested at Fargo on the 9th at 38.75 ft which was the 4th highest on record. Many roads including parts of the interstate were closed due to overland flooding for much of April especially in the Red River Valley. Pictures showing the magnitude of the flood are attached.
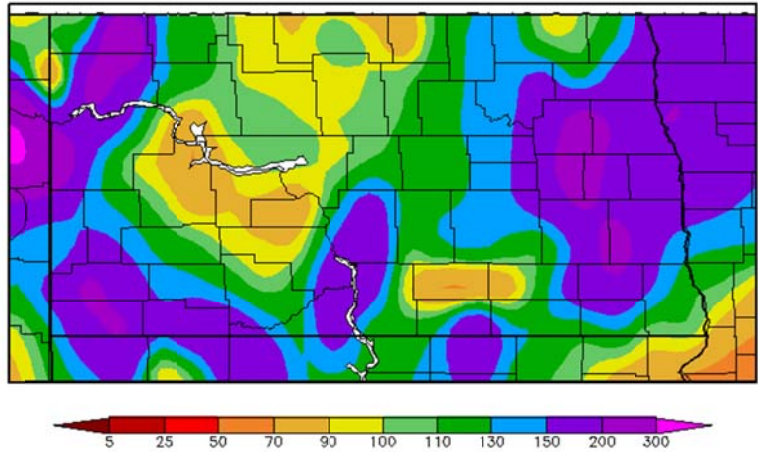
Figure 1. Precipitation Percent of Normal in April 2011 for North Dakota (High Plains Regional Climate Center)

Temperature:

The North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network (NDAWN) April average air temperatures ranged from 35 °F to 43 °F. NDAWN departure from normal temperatures ranged from 1 °F to -5 °F (Figure 2. North Dakota State Climate Office). April is the fifth straight month of below average air temperatures for most of the state. The average of 12/01/2010 through 04/30/2011 departure from normal average air temperature range was 2 to 7 °F below normal. Average daily air temperatures hovered near normal for most of the state during the first half of the month. Average air temperatures dropped to 10 and 20 °F below normal across the state during the majority of the last half of the month. The wet and cool conditions prohibited field work. According to the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, North Dakota Field Office the average starting date for field work is May 6th which is 15 days behind the five-year (2006-2010) average.
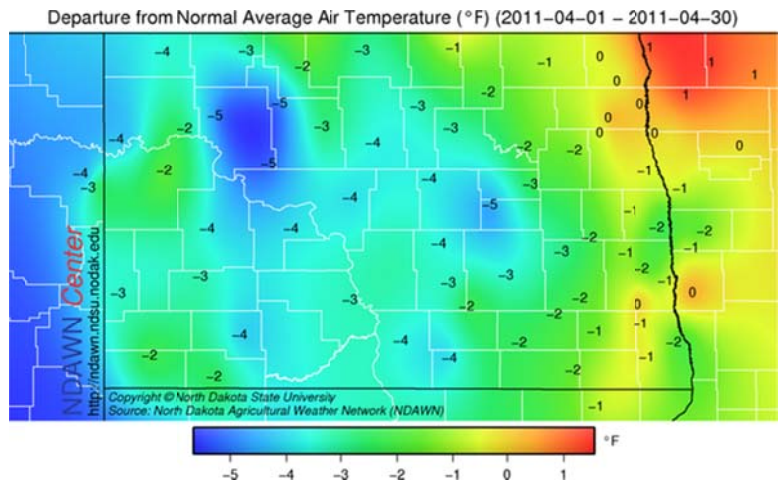
Figure 2. Temperature Departure from Normal in April 2011 for North Dakota (North Dakota State Climate Office)

Harwood, ND
(North of Fargo)
Photo by Vern Whitten

Central Fargo, ND
Photo by Vern Whitten

Looking south toward Fargo (Harwood is in the mid-foreground) on April 11, 2011
Photo by BNSF