

**By Jan Schultz**

***The Imperial Republican***

Being an ag community, moisture is always a topic of conversation.

In that light, it was a good weather year.

Moisture totals grew again in 2009 compared to the year before, making it three years in a row for a higher annual total than the year before.

But, in the 2009 weather year, more than 43 inches of recorded snowfall was a big factor in the overall 26.27 inches of moisture recorded in Imperial.

Last year's moisture topped the 2008 total of 22.77 inches. The year 2007 recorded 21.31 inches. All three years were well above the annual moisture average here.

The moisture in 2009 presented its challenges, too.

The 15 inches of snow that came in October started off what's already been called too long of a winter season here. And, winter didn't even start officially until Dec. 21.

Just 1.5 inches of snow came in November, but the final month of the year ended with another 10.5 inches of the white stuff.

It was a spring and summer for plentiful rains last year. July topped all 12 months with nearly five inches that month coming from 13 days of rainfall.

April, May and June also saw plentiful moisture, but the continual rains caused problems for corn planting and wheat harvest.

The harvest challenges continued in the fall as the early snow halted corn and bean harvests. While the corn crop also took its time drying down, the extra snow didn't help field conditions, which stayed wet and muddy as more snow kept coming.

Corn can still be seen standing in some fields.

While the area received more moisture at times than producers wanted, no one wants to go back to the year 2002, the driest of 114 years here when only 9.38 inches of moisture fell.

The driest month in 2009 was January, when only .23 inch of moisture was recorded.

### **No days over 100 last year**

The constant spring and summer rains contributed to cooler temperatures, as well, last year.

According to the weather statistics compiled by Cory Schuller of Imperial for the National Weather Service, no days eclipsed the 100-degree mark in 2009.

The warmest day of the year was July 24 when it reached only 97 degrees. The next warmest day was in June when it warmed to 95 degrees on the 26th.

December was the coldest month of the year with seven days of below zero readings. The coldest days of 2009 were Dec. 6 and 8, each recording a low of minus 13 degrees.