

1986 Rainfall Still Half Foot Below Normal

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Widespread and welcome showers drenched parts of Rockingham County over the weekend but barely dampened the ground in other areas.

The .34 inch recorded Saturday at Dale Enterprise was the most measured in a 24-hour period at the National Weather Service station in more than a month.

But the Saturday afternoon and early Sunday morning thunderstorms still left the weather station west of Harrisonburg nearly six inches below the normal rainfall for the year.

Through Sunday, Dale Enterprise had measured 10.16 inches of rain this year, compared with the 30-year average of 16.08 inches for the six-month period, according to weather records compiled by

Tommy Thompson.

The weather station has measured only 1.37 inches in June, with just one day left in the month. And the forecast for today gave little hope for any additional rain this month. That leaves June a full two inches below the month's average.

That makes June the fourth straight month and fifth in six this year to see below normal precipitation.

June, normally one of the year's third wettest months after August and July, was by far the driest this year in comparison with average rainfall.

The unusually dry weather also likely has contributed to June's higher-than-normal temperatures. Through Sunday, the day-time highs have averaged a sweltering 85.6 degrees — 3½ degrees above normal. The night-time lows have averaged just a shade

under 59 degrees — 1½ degrees above normal.

At Bridgewater, Clayton Towers recorded only .31 of an inch of rain over the weekend. His total for the month of 2.58 inches was well above Dale Enterprise's but was more than a half-inch below his June average.

"It's what I call rain-for-a-day — just enough for a day but that's about it," Towers said of the weekend showers.

"Four storms skipped right by us," he said, adding that "corn is even wilting already."

Towers has recorded 12.54 inches this year, compared with his six-month average of 16.31.

In Harrisonburg, no accurate measurement could be found Sunday for the weekend showers. However, a storm, accompanied by heavy wind and rain, shortly after noon Saturday dumped hail on the

eastern part of the city in the Spotswood Country Club area, observers reported.

Bob McInturff, southeast of McGaheysville, measured exactly an inch of rain over the weekend. He said a wind-driven storm dumped a half-inch of rain Saturday, and an overnight storm left another half-inch in his gauge Sunday morning.

The McGaheysville area generally is one of Rockingham County's wetter spots by virtue of being off the tip of the Massanutten Mountain range. This year appears no exception. McInturff reported 13.49 inches of rain this year, but that's still well below his average, he noted.

"It's awful dry here," he reported.

"Cub Run is pretty near dry," he added, suspecting that irrigation is syphoning off some of the stream's water.

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