

Vintage 2009 – Current Climate Summary and Ripening Period Outlook

Monthly temperature departures from normal for McMinnville, Milton-Freewater, Roseburg, and Medford from November 2008 through August 2009 show a warmer than average November last year, which was followed by a colder than average December through April statewide (Figure 1). May through August has been warmer than average with only McMinnville showing a slight cooler August compared to the other locations. Overall the growing season so far is warmer than average or near normal with Medford currently running 1.9°F above average.

Monthly precipitation amounts for the four locations are showing below normal rainfall since last November with McMinnville showing the greatest reduction (over 20" down for the just completed water year, nearly 45%). Medford was 16% down for the water year, with areas north and south of us averaging 15-40% down (Figure 2). The United States Drought Monitor currently has most of Washington, Oregon, and California under a moderate to severe drought status (Figure 3) (<http://drought.unl.edu/DM/MONITOR.html>).

Focusing on Medford's weather specifically, the area experienced a warmer than average November, then relatively cold period through most of December followed by normal swings through to the start of April and then wider than normal temperature departures (mostly warmer) since then (Figure 4). Precipitation variations have been roughly normal, although the greater than 1" rainfall in the first week of May and the near 0.5" rainfall the first of August both stand out as outside the norm.

Examining daily growing degree-day (GrDD) accumulations from April 1st to August 31st shows much wider swings in heat accumulation over the 2009 vintage compared to the last 80 years (Figure 5). The wide swings were hinted at in the early season outlook I made this past winter and were due to strong ocean temperature differences between the coastal waters and further out in the Pacific, along with waning La Niña conditions. The vintage cumulative GrDD from April 1st to August 31st is currently tracking the 2004 and 2006 vintages, which for Medford were the two warmest in the last 8 years (Figure 6).

The Medford GrDD data is from the airport weather station and I am using this station because of the historical record. However, the numbers are mirroring those observed at the AgriMet station at SOREC where current GrDD accumulation is 2243 compared to 2658 at the airport (normal difference for this time of year).

The weather outlook through the end of September:

The short term forecast calls for a warmer than average next seven days with daytime temperatures reaching into the mid to high 90s in most areas. However nighttime lows are starting to show greater drops indicating the onset of some our largest diurnal temperature ranges of the season. While the models show a warmer than average rest of September, they do hint at a few storms passing through Oregon over the rest of the month. The rainfall amounts from these systems are usually greater in Washington and Oregon and diminish by the time they get to us ... but you never know.

The weather outlook through the end of October:

All weather/climate outlooks from the Climate Prediction Center (NOAA) and elsewhere are pointing to a continued warmer than normal end to the growing season. Precipitation amounts are

also forecasted to be lower than average over the next three months. However, there are still some indicators that point to Oregon experiencing a greater likelihood than average of wide swings between warm/dry to cool/wet periods. While this scenario appears good for harvest, some of the long-term outlooks are discussing prolonged drought conditions into the winter throughout the western US.

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Seasonal and Monthly Temperature Departures from Normal

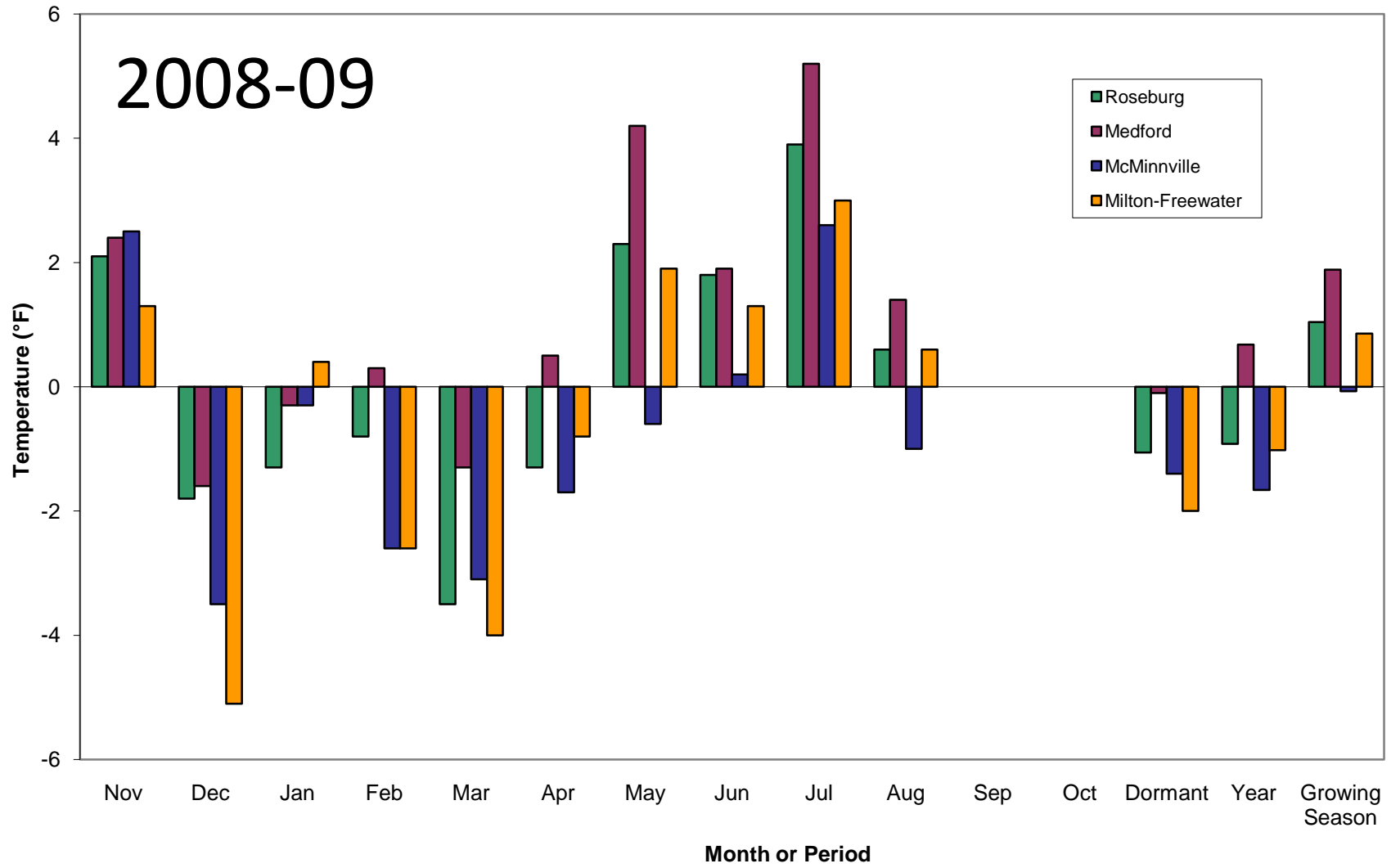


Figure 1

Seasonal and Monthly Precipitation Departures from Normal

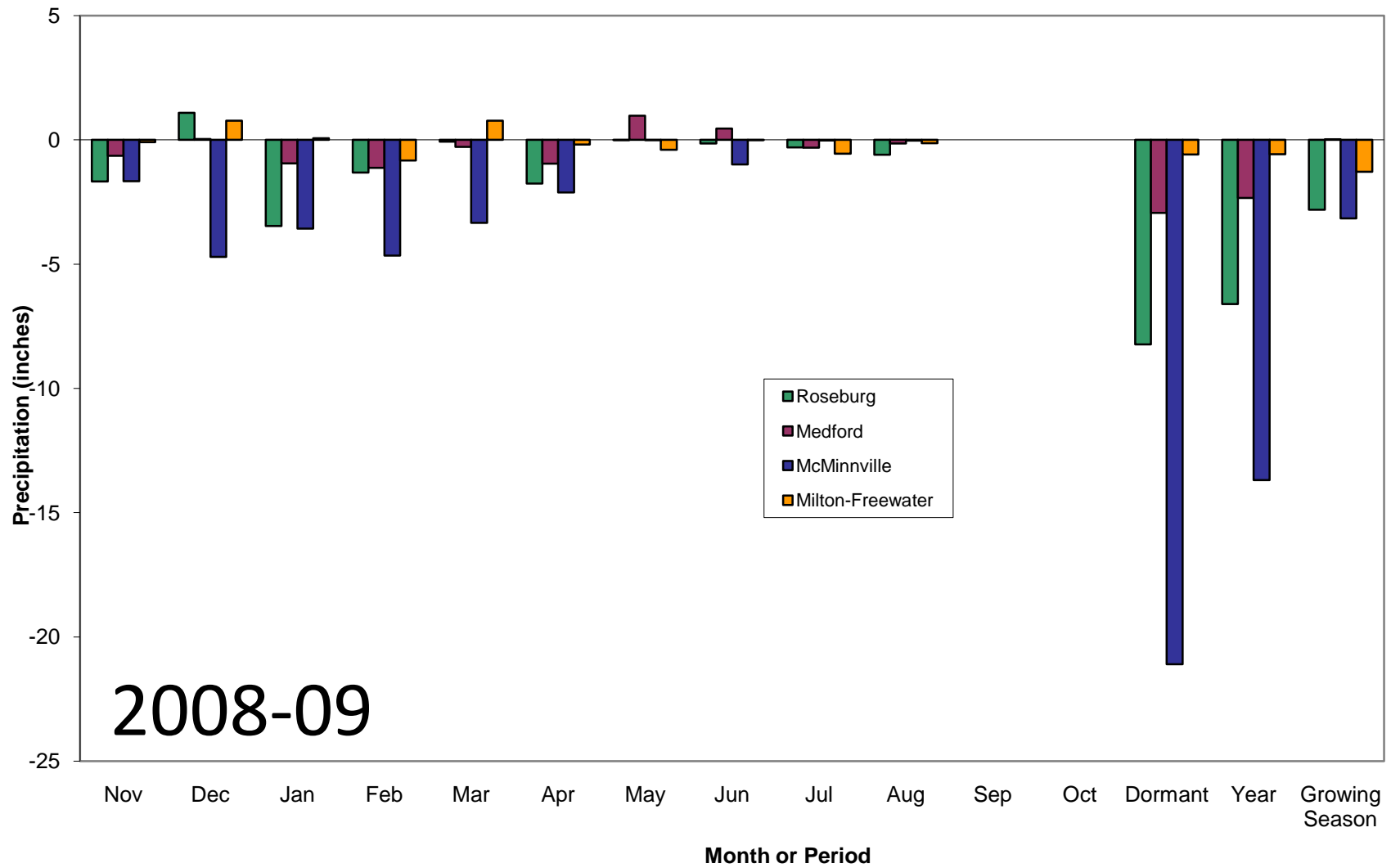
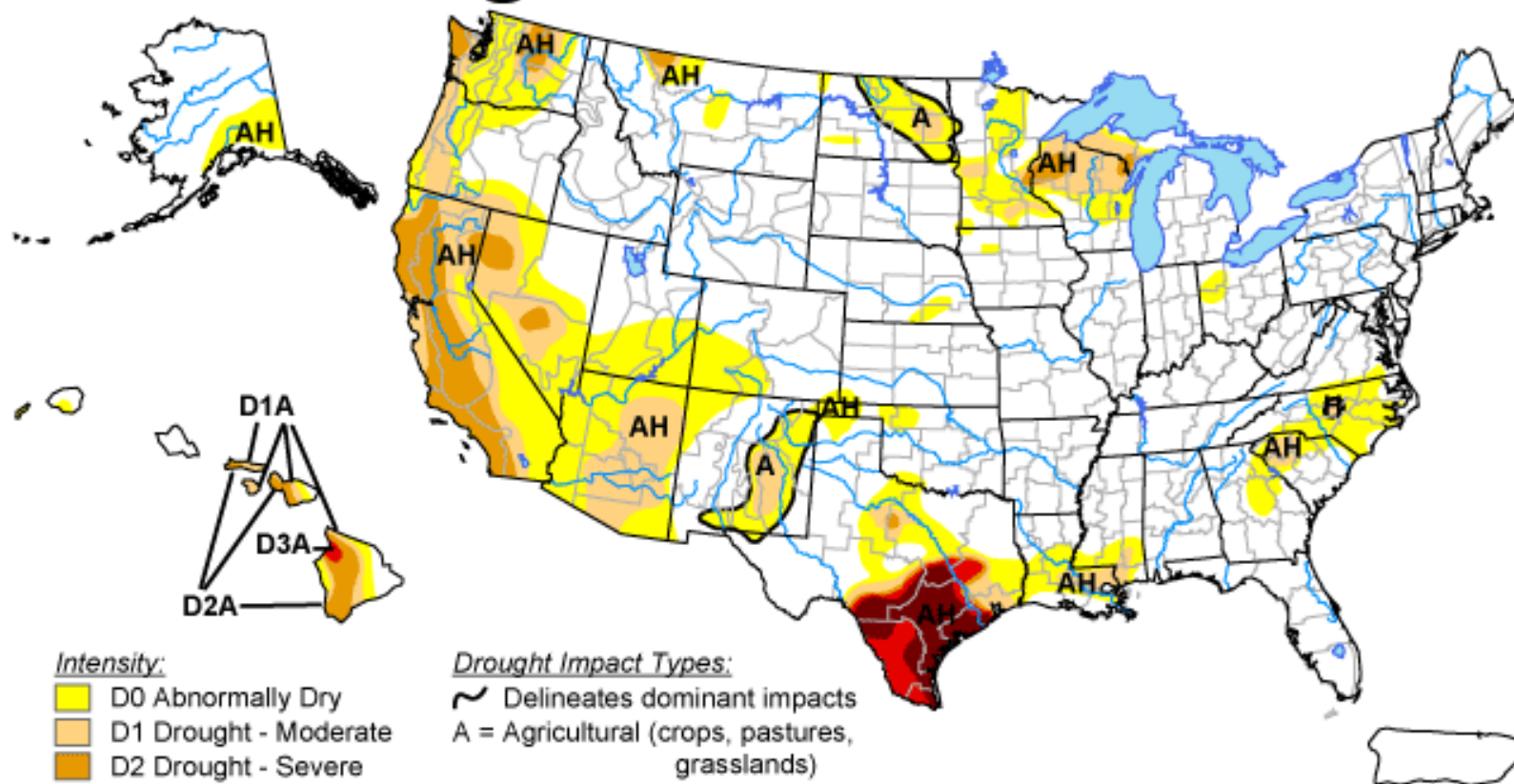


Figure 2

U.S. Drought Monitor

September 1, 2009
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional

Drought Impact Types:

- Delineates dominant impacts
- A = Agricultural (crops, pastures, grasslands)
- H = Hydrological (water)

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://drought.unl.edu/dm>



Released Thursday, September 3, 2009
Author: Brad Rippey, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Figure 3

Medford 2008-09 Temperature Departures from Normal and Precipitation

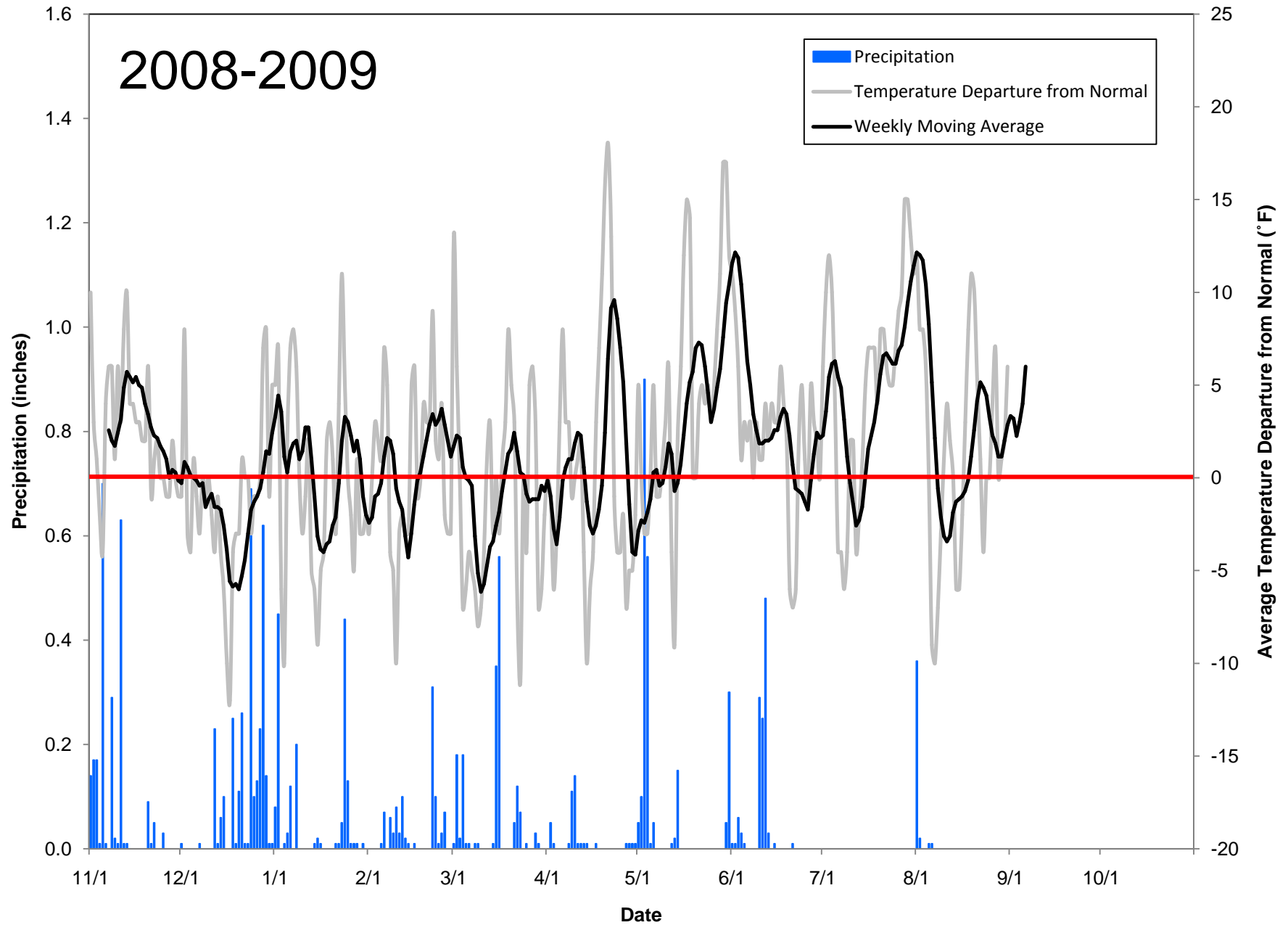


Figure 4

Medford 2009 and Historical Daily Growing Degree-Days

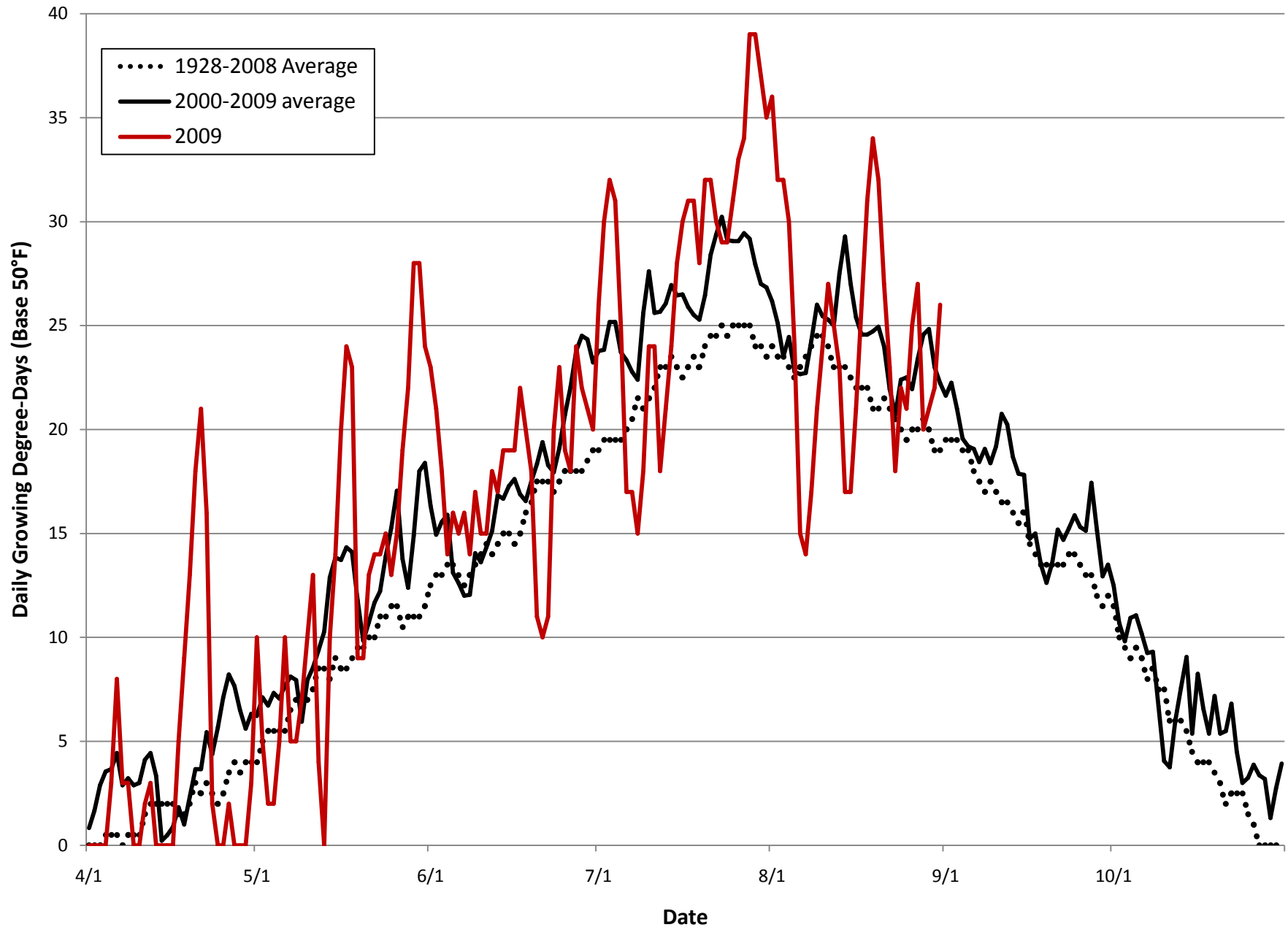


Figure 5

Medford 2009 and Historical Cumulative Growing Degree-Days

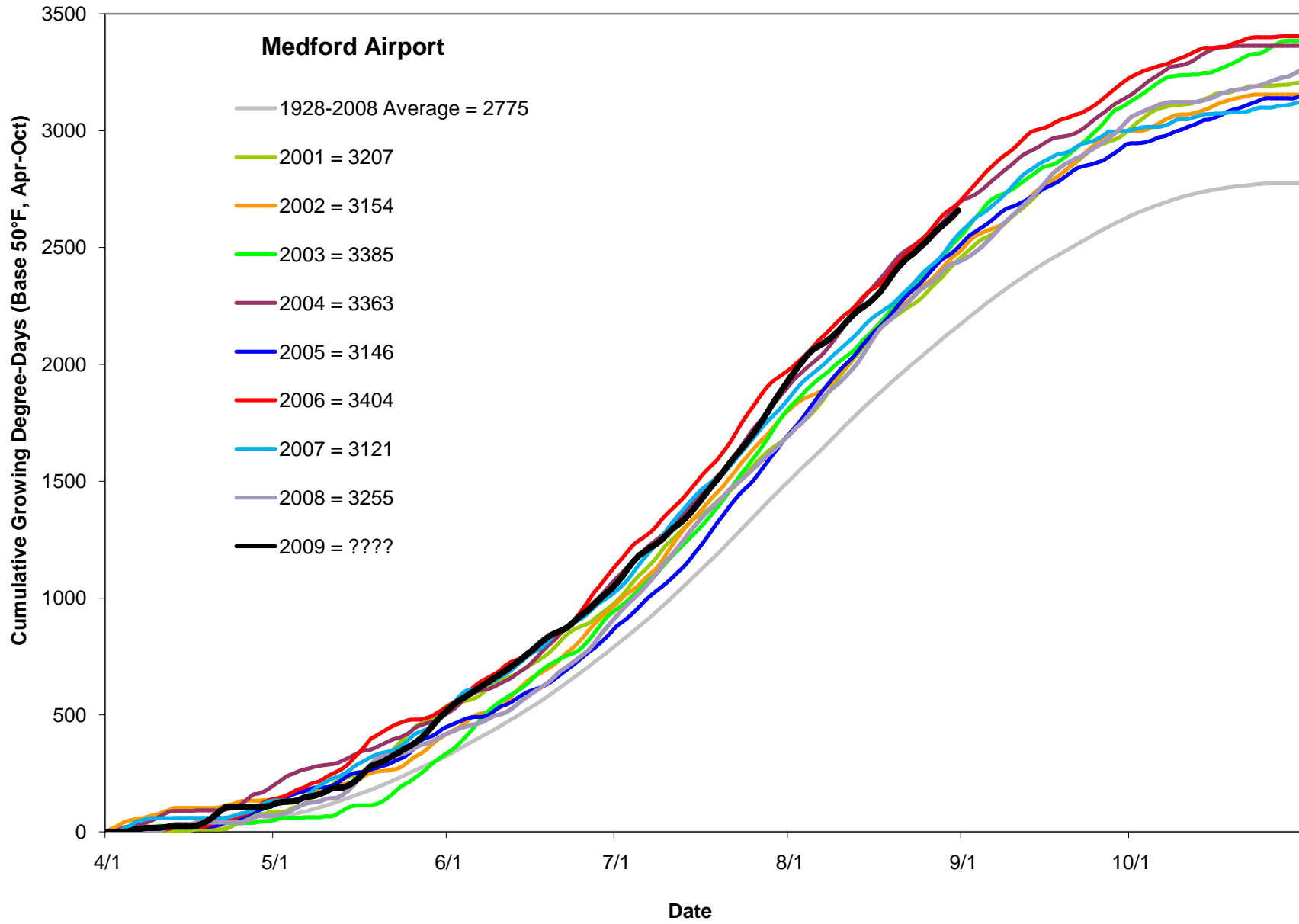


Figure 6