

PHOTO BY LON TONNIESON



**WINTER BEAUTY:** Fewer sun dogs, like this one over a Red River Valley farmstead, are in the winter forecast, which calls for above-normal temperatures across much of North Dakota and South Dakota.

# Warmer winter pattern likely

By **FRANK WATSON**



**L**OOKING ahead to the winter months, I like the prospects of a warmer-than-normal winter season overall, November through February.

Northwestern North Dakota stands the best chance for some colder-than-normal temperatures in November, but as we get deeper into the winter months, expect temperatures to run above normal.

Above-normal temperatures can cause havoc with the snow forecast. Warmer Novembers and Decembers can turn a nice half-foot of snow used for ground cover into a half inch of rain. It seems this has been happening more often, especially for the months of November and December.

Prospects favor above-average precipitation for the eastern half of the Dakotas. I expect precipitation totals for the months of November, December and January to total near or above normal with February totaling near normal to drier than normal.

### Key Points

- Dakota winter will likely be mild, says forecaster.
- Conditions favor above-normal temperatures through February.
- Precipitation will likely be above normal early in the eastern Dakotas.

The odds favor near-normal to below-normal precipitation totals for much of the central regions of the Dakotas from November through January. During February, precipitation totals should once again be drier than normal.

The western regions of South Dakota are expected to receive near-normal precipitation totals over the winter months. Look for a dry start for this region in November with precipitation prospects increasing as we go through the winter months.

The precipitation pattern for west-central and northwestern portions of North Dakota is expected to resemble a roller coaster — near normal in November, dry in December, near normal in January and dry again in February.

# WEATHER OUTLOOK

## Nov. 11-Dec. 10

By **FRANK WATSON**

**T**EMPERATURES are favored to average warmer than normal for southeastern South Dakota. Meanwhile, expect below-normal temperatures for northwestern North Dakota, with near-normal temperatures in-between. Precipitation is expected to total near normal over much of the Dakotas with below-normal totals over western South Dakota.

Expect clouds and scattered precipitation for Sunday and Monday, Nov. 11-12. A mix of rain and snow is possible, especially over North Dakota.

A day of fair weather is favored for Tuesday, Nov. 13, changing to clouds and widespread precipitation for Wednesday, Nov. 14. Locally heavy totals are possible.

Prospects are good for a stretch of mostly dry weather from Thursday to Tuesday, Nov. 15-20. Clouds and scattered precipitation might sneak in on Sunday, Nov. 18, with light totals.

### Sun for Thanksgiving

A mix of sun, clouds and scattered precipitation is favored from Wednesday to Saturday, Nov. 21-24. Precipitation is expected to be mixed, with light totals.

Fair skies on Sunday and Monday, Nov. 25-26, are expected to give way to clouds and snow on Tuesday and Wednesday, Nov. 27-28. Locally heavy totals are possible with falling temperatures.

Scattered snow is possible on Friday, Nov. 30, over South Dakota.

Clouds with light precipitation are expected from Sunday to Wednesday, Dec. 2-5.

Expect to see more clouds than sun from Friday to Monday, Dec. 7-10. Scattered areas of precipitation are favored, with the precipitation most likely snow. Temperatures are expected to turn colder.

Watson is a White Bear Lake, Minn., meteorologist. His Web site is [www.weathermanwatson.com](http://www.weathermanwatson.com).

### WEATHERGRAM

**January temperature:** Above-normal temperatures. **January precipitation:** Below-normal totals over South Dakota with above-normal totals in North Dakota.

	North Dakota				South Dakota			
	S K Y	P C P	T E M P	N O T E	S K Y	P C P	T E M P	N O T E
SU 11	☁	☔	-		☁	-	-	
MO 12	☁	★	-	W I N D Y	☁	-	-	W I N D Y
TU 13	☀	-	-		☀	-	-	
WE 14	☁	★	-		☁	★	-	
TH 15	☁	-	-		☁	-	-	
FR 16	☀	-	-	F A I R	☀	-	-	F A I R
SA 17	☀	-	-		☀	-	-	
SU 18	☁	☆☆	-	S K I E S	☁	☆☆	-	S K I E S
MO 19	☀	-	-		☀	-	-	
TU 20	☀	-	-		☀	-	-	
WE 21	☁	☔	+		☁	☔	+	
TH 22	☁	☔	+	S C A T T E R E D	☁	☔	+	S C A T T E R E D
FR 23	☁	☔	-		☁	☔	-	
SA 24	☁	☔	-		☁	☔	-	
SU 25	☁	☆☆	-		☁	☆☆	-	
MO 26	☀	-	+		☀	-	+	
TU 27	☁	☆☆	+		☁	☆☆	+	
WE 28	☁	☆☆	+		☁	☆☆	+	
TH 29	☀	-	-		☀	-	-	
FR 30	☁	-	-		☁	-	-	
SA 1	☀	-	-		☀	-	-	
SU 2	☁	☆☆	+		☁	☆☆	+	
MO 3	☁	☔	+		☁	☔	+	
TU 4	☁	☆☆	+		☁	☆☆	+	
WE 5	☀	-	-		☀	-	-	
TH 6	☁	-	-		☁	-	-	
FR 7	☁	-	-		☁	-	-	
SA 8	☀	-	-		☀	-	-	
SU 9	☁	-	-		☁	-	-	
MO 10	☁	☆☆	-		☁	☆☆	-	

Cloudy ☁	Rain ☔	Partly Cloudy ☁
Rain Widespread ☔	Sun ☀	Snow ★
Light Snow ☆☆☆	Cool Below Normal ■	Mild Above Normal +

## Other forecasters predict a mild winter over the Dakotas

**M**ILD is the watchword issued for the upcoming winter by a couple of other sources.

On the highly scientific and official side, the U.S. Climate Prediction Center says odds favor above-normal temperatures for at least southern South Dakota through March. Across North Dakota, there is an equal chance of normal, above-normal and below-normal winter temperatures. The center says that conditions favor

near-normal precipitation. For more information, visit [www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov).

### Split by Mississippi

The 2008 *Farmers' Almanac* predicts winter will be milder than normal west of the Mississippi River and colder and wetter than normal east of the Mississippi River.

"This is not to say that there won't be any snow in the north-central region," says Peter Geiger, editor of the *Farmers'*

*Almanac*, "but we do feel that overall Mother Nature is showing no mercy to the East and being a little more forgiving in the West."

The winter should also average as much as 3 degrees F below normal down most of the Atlantic Coast, from New England through the Mid-Atlantic and the Piedmont into the Southeast, according to *Farmers' Almanac*. Cold conditions are on tap for the Southeast, with at least four cold frosts predicted

all the way to Florida. Cold and snowy weather should also prevail over the Great Lakes. Even as far south as the central and eastern Gulf Coast, unseasonably chilly weather will prevail.

In contrast, the Great Plains, the Rocky Mountains, the Southwest desert, and the Pacific Coast should enjoy a relatively mild and somewhat drier-than-normal winter overall.

For more information, visit [www.farmersalmanac.com](http://www.farmersalmanac.com).