



Several hailstorms in the area have damaged or destroyed crops, with some farmers forfeiting what they'd hoped was a bumper crop. (Top left): Hailstones, found by Alexis Malmkar at her home in Grant at around 2:30 a.m. Thursday, July 16, easily fall into the golf ball size range, measuring about two inches in diameter. (Left): There's no question about the size of hailstones collected by Cecil and Bev Hendricks at their farm southwest of Grant following an afternoon storm on Monday, July 20. Storms on Thursday, Friday and Monday added over two inches of rain, bringing the area's total precipitation to 20.5 inches so far in 2009. Hail is formed inside thunderstorms when droplets of water are picked up by warm updrafts, carried above the freezing level and fall again with the cold downdrafts. The process repeats, adding layers of ice until the hailstone becomes too heavy and falls to the ground. Most hail is under two inches in diameter. The largest recorded hailstone with a diameter of seven inches and a circumference of 18.75 inches, fell in Aurora, Neb. on June 23, 2003 weighing just under one pound.



