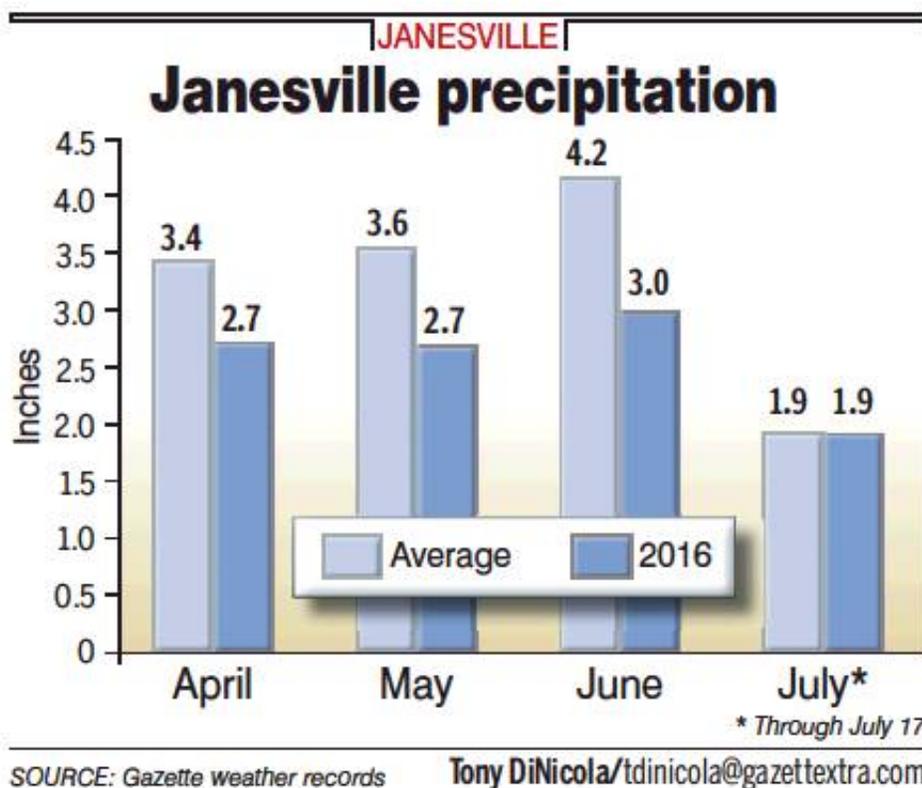


# Area's rainfall shortage isn't a problem —yet

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## JANESVILLE

The lack of rainfall plaguing southeastern Wisconsin could last until at least the end of the month.

While the southeastern corner of the state has experienced dryness throughout the summer, the south central region's precipitation deficit has only sprung up in the last few weeks, said meteorologist Sarah Marquardt of the National Weather Service.

Janesville has had below average rainfall in April,

May and June, but July through Sunday has had normal precipitation, according to Gazette weather data.

Rock County's recent dryness has made it a "transition zone" to the drier areas to the east, Marquardt said. Last week, the U.S. Drought Monitor classified nearly all of Walworth, Racine, Kenosha and Milwaukee counties as "abnormally dry," and that

classification extends into eastern Rock County.

The county's rain shortage has not yet affected crops, but the area is in "pre-drought conditions" and could use moisture soon, said Nick Baker, UW Extension agriculture agent for Rock County.

"If we don't get significant rainfall in the future, we'll start to get (crop) yield reduction," Baker said.

For those watering crops and lawns, Baker recommended doing so early in the morning or late at night to minimize evaporation. It is best to use large quantities of water less frequently because it gets more liquid to the roots, he added.

Janesville has chances for storms on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday of this week, but none is expected to deliver widespread rain, Marquardt said. The National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center shows that much of the state will likely experience below average rainfall and above average temperatures during the next two weeks.

Having increased temperatures will cause soil moisture to evaporate. A wet winter season led to deep soil moisture, but it's uncertain how long that resource will last, Assistant State Climatologist Ed Hopkins said.

It is ideal to get one inch of rain per week during the summertime, or even half that amount if it arrives routinely. Recently, local rainfall has been too sporadic to have much of an impact, Hopkins said.

Both Hopkins and Marquardt still consider the recent dryness to be a short-term issue, however.

"Most of the corn and soybeans look good. They don't appear to be water stressed," Hopkins said. "It's fairly short term, and if we get timely rains, I think we can pull through this."