

CHATS BY THE WEATHER MAN.

Wed., Dec. 14.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

ANNOUNCEMENT: The Weather Man is going to tell Station _____'s listeners what the Weather Bureau does for farmers today. His talk is one of the regular CHATS BY THE WEATHER MAN which are released every other Wednesday by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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The Weather Man was telling me about a conversation he had with one of the leading farmers of his territory the other day. It seems that the farmer, Mr. Brown, was in town to buy some feed and he dropped in to see his friend the Weather Man, as is his custom when in town. Well, Brown walked in and the Weather Man looked up from his work and greeted his agricultural friend with these words:

"Hello, Brown--- how are the crops?"

"Hello, there", returned the farmer, "how's the weather?"

Then they both laughed. They know that those are possibly the oldest questions in the world-- that men have been greeting each other that way for centuries.

"Well, Brown", said the Weather Man, "I think I can promise you fair weather tomorrow".

"Crops are fair, too", said Brown.

And they laughed again. By that time, things were on a familiar footing and Brown sat down near the Weather Man's work table and watched him make marks on a weather map. Occasionally he put in a word or two.

The Weather Man dipped his pen in the inkwell, looked at his friend, and smiled.

"I know why you fellows are always asking about the weather", he began.

"It's a perfectly natural and practical thing to do. An extra quarter of an inch of rain at the right time may add hundreds and thousands of bushels to your corn crop. A few degrees lower temperature may put lots of money into the potato grower's pocket. The direction of the wind is sometimes more important than the cost of farm labor. It's a mere matter of business to you fellows. Am I right?"

"Certainly you're right", admitted Brown. "And I know why you scientists are interested in crops. A larger wheat crop will mean cheaper bread. A good

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year for the farmers will also mean a good year for you. Am I right?"

The Weather Man smiled again and nodded his head.

"I've learned by this time", the farmer continued, "that you meteorologists don't make the weather. What you fellows do is act as publicity agents for the forces that do actually make the weather. In other words, you tell us what's coming. And I'll admit that you're usually right. I've learned to follow those weather warnings with a lot of trust", said Brown.

"Does it pay?" asked the Weather Man. "Are you getting your money's worth?"

"How much do these warnings cost me, all told?" the farmer wanted to know.

"Oh, in a year, the price of a postage stamp", said the Weather Man.

Brown whistled softly. "Is that a fact?" he asked. "Well, I can't complain over that cost, anyhow. By the way, I'd like to know just what we farmers are getting for our two or three cents. Just go on and tell me while you're drawing those lines and circles, will you?"

"The whole story would take a long time", began the Weather Man, "but I can tell you a few things the Weather Bureau does for farmers. Of course you know that crop yields are controlled by the quantity of rainfall, sunshine, and heat received. All farm operations, of course, are encouraged or hindered by the prevailing weather. The weather is a source of worry to farmers from the time of preparation of the soil for the seed until the final harvest is gathered. Even then the producer's worry is not over, because the weather may hinder the movement of his wagon or truck hauling the crops to the freight station".

"That's true", said Brown, "but what can the farmer do about it?"

Well, he could time his farm operations by the weather warnings and forecasts gotten out by the weather office in his particular locality", the Weather Man said. "All localities are well covered and many of the main Weather Bureau offices prepare special forecast services for farmers in their special territory. Every morning and evening at 7 o'clock, Central Standard time, work speeds up at 200 different stations in the United States as observations are made of the wind, air pressure and temperature, clouds, humidity, and rainfall. Within five minutes after these observations are taken, a telegraph message in code, giving all the essential weather facts, is filed at the local telegraph offices. Within 30 minutes, these telegrams are transmitted to the District Forecast centers at Washington, Chicago, New Orleans, Denver, and San Francisco, and to about 180 other important Weather Bureau offices in various parts of the country. Trained men take these telegrams as fast as they are received, and chart the information on outline maps of the United States so that by the time the last message is received, the forecaster has a complete picture of the weather as recorded at the same moment over the whole Nation. There's your weather service in brief. The maps and the special weather fore-

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casts issued by the various weather offices, give you a picture of the weather in the next 24 hours. Farmers can make good use of these warnings just as manufacturers, railroad and steamship officials, travelers, merchants, and dozens of other classes of people make use of them.

"All right. Now just a word or two about crops. Climate is responsible for a harvest value of from 10 to 20 dollars per acre from crops in parts of the Mississippi and Missouri river valleys, as compared with less than 10 cents per acre over large areas in the arid Southwest. With corn, for example, rainfall is the climatic factor of greatest importance in varying the yield. The critical period of corn growth is about the time of tasseling. On the other hand, temperature has a greater influence than rainfall in varying the yield of potatoes. July is the critical month and it must be cool for best results. The yield of spring wheat is influenced largely by the rainfall in May and June. In general, the most critical period for small grains is when the berry is in the milk or dough stage. Hot and dry weather at this time will reduce the yield of high-class seed greatly. A full knowledge of the effect of the different kinds of weather on the growth and ripening of the various farm crops would be of untold value to the farmers and other business men in this country. Some day, farmers will know enough about both crops and weather to judge the best kinds of crops for profitable growth in each particular locality".

"Does the Weather Bureau have any special services for farmers mainly?" Brown asked.

"Yes, indeed", said the Weather Man. "Of course, the general forecast and warning service is designed for the farmer as well as the business man, the housewife, and all other classes of citizens. Through the use of the radio, the newspapers, and the posted bulletins of the Weather Bureau, farmers can secure and make good use of weather reports showing weather conditions which occur daily throughout the United States. In this way, the farmers can plan their daily work with an 80 per cent assurance that predictions will be accurate. In the South, the Weather Bureau gets out cotton bulletins--- in the corn and wheat belts, special crop bulletins dealing with these crops--- in the truck garden districts, reports dealing with those products--- in Florida and California and other fruit-raising sections, special bulletins having to do with the fruit crop at different seasons of the year. The Weather Bureau has a well-organized frost warning service and fire-weather service. The first issues warnings of killing frosts so that growers can protect their crops while there is yet time. The fire-weather service is designed to protect the national and private forests from fires. This also protects those who are endangered by forest fires. Another very important Weather Bureau office specializes in flood and river-stage warnings. Millions of dollars in property values are protected every year by flood warnings which this office circulates. Other special services given out by the Weather Bureau protect shippers from losses to goods in transit from freezing or heat".

The Weather Man took a paper from his files and showed it to Brown.

"I want to give you an example of how these special weather warnings help

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farmers", he said. "Out in the Great Central Valley of California, in the late summer and early fall, millions of dollars worth of fruit lays on trays in the sun to dry. Rain would ruin this fruit and cause losses running into large fortunes. One of the duties of the weather forecaster is to give warnings of such rains so that the fruit may be put under cover in time. Here's another case. In the Pacific States, the lumber industry is a large one and forest fires take a heavy toll each year. Forest fires start more easily and are harder to control when the humidity of the air is low and the wind high. It is the duty of the forecaster to announce the coming of these conditions so that extra precautions may be taken to prevent forest fires and to have the fire-fighting forces on the alert to suppress them when they start".

Farmer Brown arose from his chair and put his hat on. "That's been a mighty interesting talk", he said. "I'm beginning to appreciate what you gentlemen are doing for us".

"Thank you", said the Weather Man. Brown said good-day and the Weather Man answered the telephone, advising a traveler that he had better not take the mountain road as sleet had made it slippery and dangerous over night.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: Two weeks from today, this Station will put another WEATHER CHAT on the air. You are all invited to listen in.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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July 23, 2010