

CHATS BY THE WEATHER MAN.

Wed., Jan. 25 1928

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

ANNOUNCEMENT: More information on the Weather Bureau's special weather service for farmers. That's what the Weather Man is going to tell Station \_\_\_\_\_'s radio listeners today. If you don't happen to be a farmer, you'll probably find that this information is interesting to townspeople too. Most folks haven't heard this story before. Please stand by.

---ooOoo---

Speaking as the man who makes the weather-- although I really don't have a thing to do with that--- I can tell you folks out there that we weather men think we know what parts of Weather Bureau work you're most familiar with.

The many perfectly welcome 'phone calls we get every day help us to read your interests.

For example, just the other day I got a call from the chairman of a committee that was planning a big farmers' social affair. It seems that they were going to have exhibits and their wives were going to serve hot coffee and hot food for the men in order to make the affair a big success. You know, women have it all figured out that no gathering of men is successful without food. Are they right?

Well, anyhow, this chairman wanted to know several weeks ahead what the chances were for good weather--- that is, clear weather--- on the day set for the big doings. He told me that many of the men wouldn't turn out if a blizzard came up or if it rained or if it was too blame cold. They had set the date for January 23.

What did I tell him? Well, I told him that a definite forecast could not be made so far in advance, but I asked him to call me again in 15 minutes. Then I went to the records for about 25 years back and found that in that particular community the latter part of January usually had been clear and rather crisp. I told the chairman when he called me back that the chances were in favor of a good day. It happened that the weather was fair.

Now, listen. We hope you won't all call your weather offices and ask for too many prophecies of this kind. Averages for a particular place and period of time are determined from what actually occurred in many years of the past. If the record shows that there were more good days than hard ones the chances are more in favor of a good day--- that is all. Our records for the years past are mighty helpful and we're always glad to bring them out for your

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use, but such records are not dependable for a reliable forecast.

But, I particularly wanted to tell you about snow charts today-- and flood predictions-- and other special services of the Weather Bureau.

Have you ever seen a snow chart? It's really a blank map of the United States on which specialists in the Weather Bureau plot, or set down, the snowfall over different parts of the Nation. These charts are gotten out every week during the winter months, from early in December to late in March, say. All you have to do is to look at this map and you can tell at a glance where in the United States the snowfall is heaviest. Also where it's lightest. And also where there's no snow at all. Areas having some snowfall are shaded in red. A glance at the map about this time will show that the snow blanket is very thick in some parts, especially in the mountains, and very, very thin in others. The maps also show the depth of ice on rivers and other bodies of water. What good are the maps? Well, if you had to travel a lot in the winter time-- if you were engaged in the ice cutting business-- or in the manufacture or sale of goods affected by such conditions-- if you were a captain of a river or lake steamer-- if you were a farmer who depends a lot on this winter's snow to furnish next summer's water for his crops, you'd know what good they are.

Then, we mustn't forget the fruit grower in today's talk. In the old days, the fruit grower just took the weather as it came. If a frost came late and froze the blossoms on his fruit trees-- or if it came early and spoiled some of his fall crop-- he just gritted his teeth and probably made a vow that he'd never raise fruit or truck crops again as long as he lived. You'd doubtless find him doing business at the old stand the very next year-- and making good at it. Farmers are like that. But nowadays it's different. Nowadays, the orchardist insures himself against frost damage with smudge pots in his orchard, or else by actually taking out frost insurance. If he uses the smudge pots, the weather observers at his local office tell him when he'd better light up. If he insures his crop against frost by actually taking out a financial insurance policy, the weather men supply the insurance company with figures and records, so it's about the same in either case. It's all service to agriculture.

Maybe you didn't know about this matter of weather insurance. Hail insurance is really the oldest kind of distinctly weather insurance in the United States. It's written in large amounts in those States where hail damage is likely. Perhaps you didn't know that the total hail insurance premiums paid in the United States in 1924 amounted to about forty million dollars. Most of that sum, I imagine, went to agriculture.

Windstorm and tornado insurance is another promising side line of fire-insurance companies. Annual premiums paid out nowadays amount to something like thirty million dollars in this country alone.

Then there's rain insurance. It differs from other forms of weather insurance in that it doesn't cover property damage. Rain insurance is desig-

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ned to cover events mainly-- ball games, prize fights, open-air concerts-- which depend on public patronage for their success. Some of the policies cover no more than three hours, but that's plenty long enough for a man to make a lot of money in a big public affair. Fair managers and retail stores advertising special sales often take out rain insurance.

Damage by lightning is generally covered in fire insurance, but there are certain freak types of insurance that might also be of interest. For instance, a motion picture company taking snow scenes once took out some insurance to protect itself in case it didn't snow.

Modern, scientific farmers are insuring their crops when they consider it a good investment to do so. That decision, of course, is up to the farmer. Up-to-date methods of scientific farming are making it possible for farmers to take a good many of the hazards out of their business that has so long been hazardous. It's likely that crop insurance will go still further in giving farmers still more peace of mind. The study of climatic factors in certain areas enables the farmer to even choose the regions where he wants to grow the crops he is interested in. That study also makes it possible for him to decide whether to insure his crops by smudge pots or commercial insurance policies or both, it seems to me.

During recent years, the Department of Agriculture has gone into this matter of crop insurance with a lot of care. So have a number of foreign countries. In fact, some countries have gone so far as to put direct governmental supervision over insurance companies that insure crops against weather damage.

That reminds me. I was also going to mention flood insurance. A man would think that not much can be done to regulate the flow of great rivers. But it is possible to determine something about how much water there'll be in those rivers at different times from year to year. The men who operate the dams and locks along the Ohio river, for example, are interested in knowing about the rise and fall of that river. Without some such knowledge, the operation of the locks and dams is conducted with great difficulty and sometimes with great loss. Operators of electric power plants along the rivers also want to know how high the water will be in different years and during different seasons in the same year. The farmer also wants to know if that river is likely to overflow its banks and endanger his crops.

How do the river experts in the Weather Bureau work? Well, the quantity of water in a river depends to a very large extent on the quantity of rainfall in the section of the country through which the stream flows. For the purpose of aiding navigation, electric power men, and farmers, the Weather Bureau carries on special water-supply studies. Weather men measure the annual rainfall and then make special surveys which prove mighty valuable

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to a large number of people living in the territories served by the streams. Having these figures before them, and knowing the habits of the particular rivers studied, the experts are usually able to predict very accurately the amount of rise and fall of waters in these rivers at given times.

Our time is up so we'd better sign off. But I'd like to say that the Weather Bureau will be glad to answer any questions you might want to ask on the work of the Bureau and how it can be of increased help to farmers and others. Just send them in. Another Weather Chat will be released on February 8. Watch for it.

# **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

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July 23, 2010