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Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
of Clark University,
Discusses

HAIL DAMAGE

Hail damage to crops, houses, and livestock is most frequent in the western plains region of the United States; Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, western Iowa, and northeastern Missouri being among the chief sufferers. Hail here is not only relatively frequent, but the hail stones may attain enormous size. Hail stones the size of hen's eggs, and even bigger, have been photographed in Kansas City, Mo., and Concordia, Kan. Stones of this size will damage houses, as well as crops, and kill small animals such as rabbits. At Cheyenne, Wyoming, which has more hail than any other town in the United States, greenhouse glass is quite generally shielded with chicken wire netting.

Various schemes of hail protection have been tried unseccessfully. In Europe, particularly, vineyards and gardens have suffered so much damage from hail that the matter has received much attention. In France, "hail rods," a type of lightning rod, have had great vogue. These rods were supposed to draw down electrical charges from the clouds, though just how this would prevent hail is not clear. Shooting at the clouds was another common expedient. In 1900, 10,000 hail cannon were in use in Italy alone. These devices have been discountenanced by scientific investigation; and the farmer can rely only upon hail insurance to protect him from hail losses.

(Tomorrow: Daytime Breezes)

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B and 21st Sts.,
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