

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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CURIOUS USES FOR FORECASTS

Certain merchants and storekeepers in southern California are anxious to receive the Weather Bureau's daily forecasts of the next morning's minimum temperatures for their localities. They are not personally interested in the thermometer, but they want to know what the orange men are going to do. For on cold nights the oil burners in the orchards are lighted and smoke pervades the atmosphere. The storekeepers, therefore, when warned of a cold night hasten to cover up any exposed merchandise to protect it not from frost but from soot!

Similarly, grain traders in Chicago sometimes invest in commercial, so-called "long-range weather forecasts". In this case they may have no faith in the forecast itself, but they want to know how the market may be affected by the other fellow, who directs his gambling by the forecast.

These uses of weather forecasts to gauge what others are going to do appears to be a new departure in applied meteorology.

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