

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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UTILIZING FOG-DRIP

Last summer's drought inspired a scheme now under discussion in North Dakota to construct "dew ponds" on the hills near Bismarck for the purpose of augmenting the water supply when rain is scarce. The scheme is foredoomed to failure. The English dew-ponds, on the summits of the South Downs, are, it is true, valuable watering places for sheep and cattle in time of drought, but they get their water at such times from sea fogs, which are dense and frequent in that region. There are doubtless other parts of the world, including the coast of California, where such means of storing the water resulting from "fog-drip" would be useful for similar purposes, though they would not catch enough water for irrigation over more than very limited areas. At Bismarck, however, dense fogs average barely half a dozen a year.

Projects for gathering water from the fogs along the California coast for extensive irrigation have frequently cropped up; the usual suggestion being to erect screens of wire network to catch the drifting moisture. It has been calculated, however, that even a screen 250 feet high, the construction of which would be prohibitively costly, would, taking account of the usual lightness of winds accompanying dense fog, provide irrigation water for a strip of land not more than a half a mile wide back of it.

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