

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt  
but intended for use  
August 9, 1932

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed August 2, 1932.

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Authority on Meteorology.

RAINFALL

One of the principal ways in which rainfall affects our pocketbooks is through its control of the crops. Moisture is, of course, essential to the existence of every plant, and one of the recent discoveries of science is that, for each kind of crop, there is a particular period in its development when it is especially responsive to the supply of this element. A famous example is furnished by Indian corn, or maize. Thus it is stated that a difference of one inch (viz., the difference between 4 1/2 and 5 1/2 inches) in the rainfall during July over the American "corn belt" means a difference of more than \$400,000,000 in the value of the crop, at average prices.

Rain affects crops in another way besides supplying them with moisture. The atmosphere always contains nitrogenous substances that are valuable as fertilizers, and the rain washes them down in considerable quantities. The rain of tropical countries is especially rich in these substances. According to a French authority, M. Capus, the Tonkin delta in Indo-China, with its vast rice plantations, receives annually an amount of these atmospheric fertilizers that would be worth, at market prices, nearly 100,000,000 francs.

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