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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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Authority on Meteorology.

THE MONEY VALUE OF RAIN

J.B. Kincer, agricultural meteorologist of the U.S. Weather Bureau, tells us that the expression "a million-dollar rain" is by no means an exaggeration. He says:

"We know that when a season is very dry many crops are short and when there is plenty of moisture they are, as a rule, comparatively large. We have the past records of rainfall for many years for all states, from month to month during the growing season, and also the records of crop yields, and by employing a suitable statistical operation can approximate how much one inch of rain means in the way of increase in production. This is true, especially, for crops that require plenty of moisture during critical periods of growth, such as hay in the springtime, and corn during the heat of the summer.

"One good rain in Kansas during the corn-growing season has made for the farmers of that State, at the average farm price of corn during the last ten years, more than \$8,000,000.

"In North Dakota one inch of rainfall produces about 6,000,000 bushels of oats; nearly 3,000,000 bushels of barley; nearly 1,000,000 bushels of potatoes; more than 500,000 bushels of flaxseed; about 9,000,000 bushels of wheat, and more than 125,000 tons of hay; to say nothing of truck gardens, and many other crops. Computed on the basis of average prices for the last ten years, a good rain, one inch, in North Dakota, any time from May to July, is worth, on the average, to the farmers of that State the neat little sum of \$17,000,000, for these six crops alone.

"Knowing that rainfall during the months of May and June is especially desirable for hay in the northern half of the United States, we can compute, in like manner, the value of an inch of rain during these months in hay production for the entire area from the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas eastward to the Atlantic Ocean, and here is where we find big money. On the average, for the last 20 years, one inch of rain over this area increased the yield of hay by 264 pounds an acre, which, on an average 10-year acreage in hay, makes a total increase in production of some 5,500,000 tons a year. At the average price of hay for the last 10 years, this means a total of more than \$77,000,000, as the value of one inch of rain to the hay crop alone. So, it is not hard to find a million-dollar rain."

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