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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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SOIL WATER AND RAINFALL

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Fortunately for the farmer, the supply of soil water in any region is far more stable than the rainfall of the same region, because there is usually a large reserve of water in the ground, which accumulates in rainy weather, as well as during the melting of snow, and is but slowly depleted when the rainfall fails. If plants depended directly upon rain for their supply of moisture, agriculture would hardly be possible even in nominally humid climates, which are, as a rule, subject to occasional dry spells of long duration. Southern New England, for example, is a well-watered region, with a normal rainfall about double the minimum amount required for ordinary crops; yet statistics show that once every two years, on an average, this region experiences a dry spell lasting 30 days or more, during which no day brings as much as a quarter of an inch of rain. A serious depletion of soil water is the result of persistent drought and especially from a succession of droughty years.

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