Guidelines for Newsletter and Bulletins

Robert Stefanski
Chief. Agricultural Meteorology Division

Food for Thought

- *"An expert is one who knows more and more about less and less until he knows absolutely everything about nothing."*
- Agricultural meteorology highly specialized field that is composed of diverse disciplines
- Open communication channels of between experts in different fields of expertise is essential for successful bulletin.
- Cooperative effort between experts in various fields, along with proper recognition for their contribution, effective means for collaboration, preparation, and dissemination for quality bulletin.

Food for Thought

- *"It's a simple task to make things complex, but a complex task to make them simple."*

- The objectives of a bulletin must be clearly defined.
- Most important objective is to know who the users of the bulletin are.
- Accessibility to appropriate input data is absolutely necessary.
- Input data must be available on a routine basis

Food for Thought

- *"One thing that is good about procrastination is that you always have something planned for tomorrow."*

- **Each new task must be well thought out with respect to the final product.**
- **Procedures need to be tested before operational implementation.**
- **Feedback from the users is an absolute necessity to ensure the desired outcome**

Food for Thought

- *"Anything you try to fix will take longer and cost more than you thought."*
- **Some problems may be solved by readily available 'off the shelf' solutions.**
- **An important step is to establish guidelines for improving the bulletin. The first and foremost consideration is user requirements.**

Preparation, modernization and distribution of agromet

- Input requirements
- Analytical tools
- Information delivery

Content of Agromet Bulletins

- Significant features of the past and present weather and climatic conditions at the national/regional/local level
- Presented in the form of graphs, tables, drawings, maps, satellite imagery and text. Average and extreme values of meteorological, agrometeorological and hydrometeorological elements are also presented.

Content of Agromet Bulletins

- **Existing agrometeorological conditions.**
- **Written text describes the state and the phases of development of agricultural crops, forest plantations and farm animals. In addition, comments are made on the soil-water regime, the state of agricultural drought, flooding, dangerous conditions of forest management, etc. All this information is complemented with maps, graphs, drawings and tables.**

Content of Agromet Bulletins

- **Forecasted meteorological conditions**
- **Weather and climate is analysed for the next time period that the bulletin will cover. This could be for the next twenty-four (24) hours, for the next forty-eight (48) to seventy-two (72) hours, for the next five (5) days, ten (10) days, month or for the entire cropping season.**

Content of Agromet Bulletins

- **Forecasted agrometeorological conditions**
- **Possible effects of expected weather and climate on cultivated crops, tree plantations and on farm animals at different stages of development and on their yields.**

Basic Recommendations

- Don’t promise too much to quickly.

- Start with basic, easily accessible weather data and simple derived products.
- For example, growing degree-days provide a useful indicator of general crop phenology.

Basic Recommendations

- **Relate the weather data to meaningful agricultural information.**
- **While reported weather information may be useful without further elaboration, impact on agriculture is the ultimate goal. How does reported information affect crop growth and yield potential?**
- **How does current weather situation compare to a past known event, which had an impact on agriculture?**

Basic Recommendations

- Don’t oversell the information.
- Weather has a direct impact on crop yield potential. However, other factors such as farm management practices (cultivation, fertilization, and migration) and technology changes (seed hybrids, conservation practices) may also influence yield potential.

Basic Recommendations

- **Establish credibility slowly but surely.**
- **There is an essential need to establish consistency and reliability in reporting. While responsive to changing user requirements and increasing demands for information, there is an absolute mandate to strive toward standards of reporting and effective quality control mechanisms.**

Basic Recommendations

- Implement new products with proper introduction.
- Announce to the user groups the intention of new product implementation into the bulletin and fully explain why it will be made available.
- Encourage user feedback to promote response, and modify the product as needed to account for significant user recommendations.

Basic Recommendations

- Be proactive in demonstrating the usefulness of your products.
- Always strive to improve the quality of the bulletin with new products and better representation of existing products.
- Periodic user forums or surveys should be encouraged to maintain the necessary contact with the client of your bulletin.

Basic Recommendations

- Training and education is an essential component.
- This must involve both the providers and users of data and information. Both parties involved in the agrometeorological bulletin must be able to ‘speak’ and ‘understand’ the same technical language.

Basic Recommendations

- **Look to pool resources.**
- Human and financial resources are very often limited.
- share ideas, exchange experiences, establish standard guidelines, and formulate recommendations for bulletin improvements.
- With proper recognition for contributions and mutual access to the products, great strides can be achieved more rapidly by a concerted and coordinated effort.

Final Thoughts

- What information does the user need?
- When does the user need this information?
- To answer these questions, there must be an established mechanism ….

…. between users & producers .

Thank You

rstefanski@wmo.int

www.wmo.int/agm

Development of Draft Bulletin

- Rainfall Summary
- Temperature
- Agromet Analysis
- Weather/Agromet Forecasts
- Synoptic Situation
- Highlights
- Crop Status
- Soil Moisture/ Water Balance
- Pest/Disease

- Vegetation
- Hydrology
- Relative Humidity
- Evaporation
- Wind
- Sunshine
- Fisheries
- Prices
- Food Situation

- What Maps?
- What Tables?
- What Graphs?

Next Steps?

- Action Items
  - Climate bulletin
  - Crop Calendars
  - Put products on web
  - Email lists
- Agromet bulletins weekly or every 10 days (monthly is too long)
- Make Agromet forecast with same period of weather forecasts
- National and/or Regional Bulletins