

METEOROLOGY

Crops Wrecked as Drought Center Shifts to Northwest

DROUGHT, the foe of agriculture, has shifted its center this year and drawn in its parching arms. In the central valleys of the country, where last summer a continual blazing sun made conditions the worst, rain now falls; and this time in the northwest, unyielding skies have been seen the longest. But the stricken area is less than was the drought focus of 1930, Joseph B. Kincer of the U. S. Weather Bureau has found, and the country as a whole is faring better.

Montana, Minnesota, and the Dakotas, after experiencing their driest winter, have been getting a double dose of heat and lack of precipitation. Since January 1 the rainfall in these states has been about a third below normal. For the six-months period, figures from the U. S. Weather Bureau show, North Dakota averaged 60 per cent. of the normal rainfall while for the same period in 1930 its average was 92 per cent. normal. For Montana the average is 51 per cent. during the past six months as compared with 73 per cent. normal for the time last year.

Twice As Much Cotton

That the drought is serious in the north central and western states, is shown by the fact that for the month of July alone 200,000,000 bushels of the nation's corn crop have been lost. Heavy drops, ranging from 4 to 137 million bushels, have also been reported in July for oats, barley and other small crops, while the decrease in the spring wheat yield is the greatest on record.

In contrast to these losses, Arkansas, probably the worst sufferer during last summer's dry spell, is having bumper crops—twice as much cotton as last year—and the rainfall average has jumped from 19 per cent. of normal for July, 1930, to 157 per cent. of normal for the same month this season.

Pasture lands are feeling the grip of the present drought most keenly. From Ohio westward, Mr. Kincer says, at least a third of the states have the poorest or next to the poorest pastures on record. As the center of this summer's drought area, South Dakota has the poorest pastures in the state's history,

and with the exception of two or three states in the past, is harder hit in this respect than any other state in the country in any year.

Mr. Kincer explained that in its entirety the United States was not suffering from the drought as much as during last year because the drought center is considerably smaller this year and because the rains, though few in comparison with normal years, have been well distributed and have come at intervals necessary to keep crops in general from failing.

Science News Letter, August 22, 1931

ZOOLOGY

THE GIRL ON THE COVER

HER name is Janet Penserōsa. She is about four years old and her home is at the New York Zoological Park. And now she can claim the distinction of being the first female gorilla to survive in Gotham's animal center. Not only that but she is probably the only gorilla that has stayed out of doors during the day for an entire year in the North Temperate zone. Her attendant let her play in the snow and she liked it.

Charles V. Noback, veterinarian of the park where Penserōsa lives, has told interestingly of how he saw to it that pneumonia, the nemesis of baby gorillas brought to this country, didn't carry his charge away. Penserōsa, as she is called because of her serious and pensive nature, was taken from Central Africa by a clergyman in the summer of 1928, and given to the New York Zoological Society.

Miss Janet, as she appears on the cover, is suffering, as the saying goes, from either the weather or the company. It probably isn't the latter because her ally in time of distress and continual playmate is another young lady, a jovial, light-hearted chimpanzee, named Ellen Allegra. They have a grand time together.

Janet was sickly when she first came to the park, but a steady diet of fruit, vegetables and cod liver oil has made her plump (stylishly so) and healthy. And does she like bananas!

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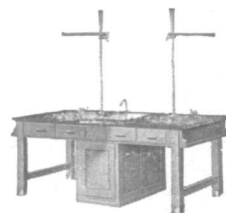
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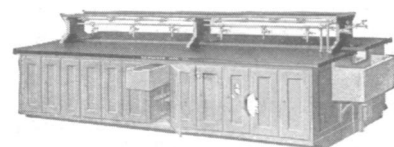
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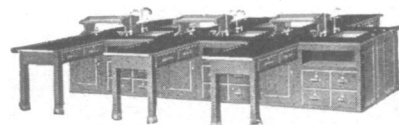
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