

INDIA HEADQUARTERS

Quest offices, Technopolis, DLF
Golf-Course Road, Sector 54,
Gurgaon, India

Long range weather forecast for Monsoon 2016 and required Risk Management Strategy.

SEMINAR ON APRIL 1, 2016

DELHI CHAPTER

Successive years of drought and crop failure across the country have been instrumental in the creation of the vicious cycle of rural tragedy. The last two years, especially, bore the brunt of remarkable deficits in rainfall caused by El Nino and the consequential decline in agricultural production. Variability of Indian Monsoon is a debilitating puzzle that cries out to be dealt with; as climatic unpredictability can lead to a worsening agrarian crisis with large swathes of agricultural land left unsown at the peak of the agricultural cycle.

There is a clear need for improvement in the accuracy of weather forecasting and monsoon prediction services as well as identification of the appropriate strategies to help the farmers combat the vagaries of Indian Monsoon and make informed decisions at every step - be it the choice of crops / fodder; coming up with clear cut strategies for management of crop quality or that of soil and water resources or managing every farm - level risk caused by the monsoon variability.

The challenges seem daunting; and require meaningful initiatives on our part. I am happy that **Weather Risk Management Services Pvt Ltd (WRMS)** has taken a step in this direction.

On **1st April 2016** the first Monsoon Outlook Seminar has been organized by WRMS to initiate a dialogue with the leading climate experts, corporate executives and bureaucrats, decision and policy makers from the various fields of agriculture, energy, dairy, insurance and rural management and development. **Dr. Kanti Prasad** and **Dr. Ashwini K Bohra** led the panel of speakers graced by **Dr. M. K. Prasad, Mr. S. S. Saxena, Mr. Vanit Kathuria** and **Mr. Mayank Dubey**.

The Long Range Weather Forecast presented by WRMS is based on the data received from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, USA. This prediction expects the rainfall to be above normal, roughly more than **104%** in most parts of the country, except the Northeast. The models are indicating above average rainfall from June to September, with June having the highest positive departure from normal and September the lowest. June rainfall is likely to be highest from normal in South, Central and Northeastern regions, while in the Northwest, July, August and September are expected to be wetter than normal. The biggest factor favoring good rainfall was the projected continued weakening of **El Nino** conditions over the coming several months, and a chance of **La Nina** development by fall.

We have released percentage-wise forecasts for each month of the monsoon season as well as for each region, but right now have low confidence on the numbers. As Dr. Kanti Prasad, the veteran weather scientist in our team put it, the focus was not on highlighting specific numbers but on outlining the general direction. We have done this successfully, and henceforth plan to update the monsoon forecast every fortnight and open new doors for extensive discussions and interactions on this area.

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The seminar discussions also pointed to the following imminent needs that require to be taken care of:

- There should be provisions for micro - long range forecasts that can be used by district administrators and input companies for planning. These forecasts should be available ideally around January when the planning exercise happens. Decision support systems need to be established to enable improved and fast decision making and adequately respond to the pressing questions on Indian Agriculture.
- Long range forecasts also need to be supplemented with periodical medium and short range forecasts. Industry has started using these short range forecasts and they prove to be useful indicators for decision making and planning.
- Given the fact that farmers tend to agree to insurance when the weather forecasts are not favorable; more awareness needs to be generated among them about how the insurance covers a range of risks and why they should be taken irrespective of the forecasts.
- Integration of insurance with national irrigation project is a must for better and more effective implementation of both the projects and the comprehensive value that they together can create.
- Using better technologies is a matter of utmost concern; because this is one sure way that can help us to gradually decrease our reliance on weather. This seems to be a long haul, but it's time we take the baby steps in this direction, so that we can reach there in a decade or two.

WRMS has served over 1 Million farmers till date and our innovative and essential solutions are poised to bring a positive transformation in the lives of many more Indian farmers this year.

SONU AGRAWAL / Managing Director
Weather Risk Management Services Pvt. Ltd.
sonu.agrawal@weather-risk.com
Ph: 011-42486389