

ORGANISATION MÉTÉOROLOGIQUE
MONDIALE
COMMISSION DE MÉTÉOROLOGIE
AGRICOLE



WORLD METEOROLOGICAL
ORGANIZATION
COMMISSION FOR AGRICULTURAL
METEOROLOGY

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GENEVA, 4 June 2008

Circular letter CAgM No. 2 of the president of CAgM*

Subject: Key Features and Activities of the Commission

Dear Colleagues,

I hope that the past year has been very productive and I will discuss the key features and activities of the Commission that have occurred. The year has been a productive one establishing the Expert and Implementation/Coordination Teams. The progress on these and the numerous Commission activities are highlighted in this circular letter. My thanks go to the hard working staff of the Agricultural Meteorology Division of WMO, and the support of the Secretary-General. I would also like to take this opportunity to wish you all a productive and successful 2008.

To: Members of the Commission for Agricultural Meteorology (CAgM-241)
Leaders, co-leaders and experts of OPAGs of the Commission for Agricultural
Meteorology who are not members of the Commission

cc: Presidents of technical commissions)
Presidents of regional associations)
Chairmen of working groups and) (for information)
rapporteurs of regional associations)
dealing with CAgM-related topics)

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1. OPAG Activities

1.1 OPAG 1 Agrometeorological Services for Agrometeorological Production

Early in the year, the Terms of Reference were reviewed by the members of the group via e-mail. Each ICT member made a contribution to at least one of the TORs. The reports were then presented at the ICT meeting, which was held in Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, from 12 to 14 December 2007, hosted by the Viet Nam Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology. Recommendations on regional training needs were reviewed, systematic procedures for regionalized services to agriculture discussed, and options raising awareness of the work of the OPAG I documented. Four or five major recommendations from this meeting will be made by the OPAG chair.

A meeting of the ET on Agrometeorological Aspects of Sustainable Agricultural Development will be held in Edmonton, Canada, 17-18 July 2008, preceded by an International Fire Early Warning Workshop, 14-16 July 2008.

1.2 OPAG 2 Support Systems for Agrometeorological Services

ICT members for OPAG 2 were asked to become task leaders for each Term of Reference (TOR) in February 2008. A task will be assigned to all members, with a time line given for the end of March 2009. The ET on Collection and Evaluation of Operational Agrometeorological Tools and Methodologies is scheduled to meet in October most likely in Kenya. Meetings of ET 2.3 and ICT 2.1 are likely scheduled for 2009.

1.3 OPAG 3 Climate Change/Variability and Natural Disasters in Agriculture

ICT members for OPAG 3 were asked to become task leaders for each Term of Reference (TOR) in February 2007. All members agreed to each assigned task, with a time line given for the end of March 2008 for an initial draft for their assigned task. A meeting of ICT 3.1 is tentatively planned for November 2008 in Orlando, Florida, USA. It will be held jointly with the U.S. Southeast Climate Consortium (U.S. SECC), with a general topic of Climate Change/Variability and Natural Disasters in Agriculture. Both the ICT and SECC will hold their business meetings immediately following the joint technical meeting.

The ET on Climate Risk in Vulnerable Areas: Agrometeorological Monitoring and Coping Strategies will hold a Symposium on 4-6 June, 2008 in Oscarsborg, Norway. Dr Simone Orlandini (Italy) is the Team Leader of ET 3.2, and has organized the joint meeting for CAgM. The symposium is co-sponsored by WMO and COST ACTION 734. The symposium sessions are closely connected to the working groups of COST ACTION 734 "Impact of Climate Change and Variability on European Agriculture".

The ET on Drought and Extreme Temperatures: Preparedness and Management for Sustainable Agriculture, Rangelands, Forestry and Fisheries will hold its meeting in early 2009.

A draft manuscript is being prepared for OPAG 3 to address a framework for the development of adaptation policy issues. The objective is to focus more attention on preparedness and adaptation strategies to cope with climate and natural disaster issues.

1.4 ET on the Guide to Agricultural Meteorological Practices

Professor Stigter, leader of this ET continues to work hard on the draft third edition is on the INSAM Website at: http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/wcp/agm/gamp/gamp_en.html for review. The GAMP will be finalized during 2008 and is currently being prepared for publication by WMO. My thanks go to Professor Stigter and his team for bringing this large task to a successful conclusion.

1.5 Policy Support for Capacity Building

Professor Stigter has visited several developing countries. The need for capacity building on an institutional/ governance scale runs parallel with the need for capacity building on an extension scale. Agrometeorological and related services can only really blossom in rural areas where also a "services climate" exists in other fields, such as improving education, health care, disaster preparedness and relief activities, infrastructures, credit facilities, agricultural input availabilities, markets and communication technologies. In practice this means that for the establishment of agrometeorological services one has to take the actual status of the other above mentioned facilities, and realistically projected progress, into account. Only then can new agrometeorological products/practices/services be sufficiently feasible, attractive and justifiable and contribute to poverty alleviation. The most determining problem statement was that adoption of such and other feasible new products/practices/services by the mass of smallholder farmers had not, or very insufficiently, taken place.

Three overall conclusions can be drawn:

- (i) Means of communication and education are part of sustainable development;
- (ii) To a large extent only richer farmers are able to make use of whatever support systems are organized, while the majority of marginal farmers are left in misery;
- (iii) Developing a response farming approach with forecasting capabilities that change and improve in the course of time is a condition for sustainable development.

2.0 World Agrometeorological Information Service (WAMIS)

The WAMIS Website (www.wamis.org) continues to assist members in disseminating their products. There are products from 40 countries or institutions are now available on WAMIS, with nearly 100,000 visits to the Website in 2007 with a monthly average of 8000 visits.

3.0 WMO Strategic Plan 2008-2011 and beyond

Congress has recognized the need to focus WMO long-term planning on strategies to achieve Top Level Objectives with desired outcomes. This sets the direction of WMO, and establishes WMO's eleven Expected Results and Key Performance Indicators. The WMO Strategic Plan (WMO-No. 1028) is available at: http://www.wmo.int/pages/about/spla_en.html.

CAGM will be reviewing its internal working structures and mechanisms so that these can be aligned to the results-based strategies of WMO.

4.0 WMO Secretariat restructuring

WMO Secretariat restructuring under the Results-based Management is very much connected to management by objectives. It has been used to align activities and structures in support of the WMO Programmes to achieve the Expected Results. The work in progress plan for this has been presented at several meetings, with four new technical departments established:

- (i) Weather and Climate Risk Reduction Services (WDS);
- (ii) Climate and Water (CLW) which includes the Agricultural Meteorology Division;
- (iii) Observing and Information Systems (OBS);
- (iv) Research Department (RES).

This was fully discussed at the Presidents of Technical Commission's Meeting in February 2008. The new structure has minimal impact on the running of the CAgM secretariat.

5.0 Working Groups on Agricultural Meteorology of regional associations

A meeting of the RA II WG on Agricultural Meteorology was held at the Viet Nam Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology in Hanoi, 17-19 December 2007. The WG reviewed and evaluated the status of education and training in reference to early warning and drought monitoring and the importance of urban indoor agriculture in RA II and the strategy to promote them for sustainable agriculture.

6.0 Support for UN Conventions and Organisations

At the 8th COP of the UNCCD held in Madrid the WMO International Workshop on Climate and Land Degradation was cited as a useful model to reform the Committee on Science and Technology of UNCCD.

There is to be a FAO High-Level Conference on World Food Security and the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy to take place 3-5 June 2008. The recent thirty-fourth session of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Conference called for a series of expert meetings on climate change and bioenergy, have been held between January and April 2008 and two stakeholder consultations aimed at civil society organizations and the private sector. The expert meetings and stakeholder consultations are to be followed by the High-Level Conference. The High-Level Conference will be informed by work undertaken and findings which emerge from the expert meetings and stakeholder consultations. CAgM has been designated the WMO focal point for this important activity, and has attended two of the expert meetings. For more details see: <http://www.fao.org/foodclimate/hlc-home/en/>.

7.0 Drought Management Centres

WMO and UNCCD have been involved in establishing a Drought Management Centre for South-eastern Europe in Slovenia (DMCSEE). The mission of the proposed DMCSEE is to coordinate and facilitate the development, assessment, and application of drought risk management tools and policies in South-Eastern Europe with the goal of improving drought preparedness and reducing drought impacts. Therefore DMCSEE will focus its work on monitoring and assessing drought and assessing risks and vulnerability connected to drought. See: <http://www.dmcsee.org/>.

Several meetings have been held on the possible establishment of a similar centre for Central Asia.

8.0 Meetings

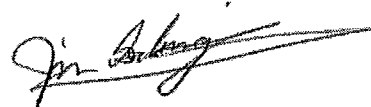
The Secretariat has represented and promoted CAgM at fourteen meetings:

- (a) Coordination and kick-off meeting of CIIFEN project "Climate and Information Applied to Agricultural Risk Management in the Andean Countries (Ecuador, June 2007);
- (b) GEOSS Operational Agricultural Monitoring system (Rome, July 2007);
- (c) Mediterranean Training Programme for the Harmonization of Early Warning Systems and Operational Instruments for Monitoring Climate Change and Desertification (Florence, September 2007);

- (d) Intersectorial Association about Cereal and other Arable Lands (Bologna, September 2007);
- (e) American Society of Agronomy Meetings (New Orleans, November 2007);
- (f) 1st Venezuelan Congress and 5th Latin-American Meeting on Agrometeorology (Venezuela, November 2007);
- (g) Agriculture Service on Agriculture and Climate (Italy, January 2008);
- (h) UNECE 3rd Regional Implementation Meeting on Sustainable Development (Geneva, January 2008);
- (i) Workshop on Climate and Crop Disease Management (Bangladesh, February 2008);
- (j) International Symposium on Agrometeorology and Food Security (India, February 2008);
- (k) Session of the Governing Council of IFAD (Rome, February 2008);
- (l) Climate Change and Biodiversity in the Americas (Panama, February 2008);
- (m) FAO Expert Meeting on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (Rome, March 2008);
- (n) Sharing Knowledge Foundation Meeting (Greece, April 2008).

More details on these can be obtained by contacting the CAGM secretariat of WMO.
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Yours sincerely,



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(President)
Commission for Agricultural Meteorology