

Report from the PACS Breakout

Working Group #3: PACS

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EWS is an excellent communication tool for DRI and we anticipate great results.

Data Issues:

Programs have been developed without much scientific input. The types of input that are required include:

High resolution precipitation and soil moisture estimates (droughts can be very localized)

Vegetation data could be used more effectively.

Policy and Linkages Issues:

Example: Saskatchewan is implementing a policy of providing more on-farm water participation of drought. Should more reliance be placed on groundwater since it provides a more stable supply than surface water.

Should DRI provide a useful assessment?

Policy makes and the public are concerned about the potential of climate change effects. They also want to know if there are trends in droughts, and if they are becoming more severe or not.

What extent can DRI answer these questions?

n-farm issues:

RI needs to open a dialogue at the farmer level. This would involve:
talking to the farmers and listening to their needs.

developing a strategy for communications, possibly using
Saskatchewan Watersheds and others as a link to the community.

developing a web site that would be available on a long term basis to
farmers

distributing the information to a wide community in readily understood
maps, application tools, etc.

Some networks have outreach coordinators to organize user workshops. Should
strengthen its communications capability.

Information from DRI for the community:

- Farmers looking for the information content
- Information presented in map form
- Governments need access to the information through research papers.
- Data should be archived according to international standards (in line with GEO standards)

-Need something to translate the science into information. In particular, we need a strategy to transfer DRI information into user systems.

Considerations:

- Range of scientific developments (all valuable but not all appropriate for this exercise)
- applications can fit in the best
- To date we have been relying on timeliness, opportunism.

Legacy:

DRI should leave some tools that will provide farmers and others with the specific information they require (e.g. groundwater in a particular area).

Newspapers:

Should target the audience with what is relevant.

Networking at all levels:

Get people at all levels enthused about drought and DRI including MPs and MLAs. Also enhance communications are key with the people within departments. DRI needs a communications person who will tell the story. Create a clear message on the things we have learned. DRI should organize joint meetings with its partners.

Make sure we go further than just studies – must have some information that is integrated so that we tell a consistent story.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Subject to budget considerations PACS should organize a users Workshop (Jim Bruce to serve as a fund-raiser).

DRI should establish a data task with GEO that conforms to GEO standards for data and for the GEO portal.

Develop a series of newspaper articles for prairie newspapers (Grade 4 level). However DRI must have a clear message that it wants to communicate beforehand (Issues of drought variability and change should be highlighted).

-PACS on behalf of DRI should develop a strategy for identifying how it can better move its scientific findings into information that its partners will find useable.

Presentations on DRI should be given at Wheat Board, Municipality and other meetings and articles should be written for Newspapers to get word on its successes out to a larger audiences.