Guidelines for Preparing an Interpretive Summary

The interpretive summary needs only be 6-9 paragraphs long (400-600 total words). Use easy-to-read language for the general public. Avoid the use of detailed terminology. The news release should contain the following:

- A short, interesting headline. A good headline contains a strong verb.
- A brief explanation of the problem, information about methods used and what you discovered.
- What's the impact of your research on society, industry, or the environment? Interpretation of what the results mean, and if there is need for future research.
- Reference the Society and the name and date of the Journal. Also, state if this paper will or has been presented at a scientific meeting – name and date of the meeting.
- Reference your affiliation as scientists (university, company, and state/country). Also, who funded the research.
- Include the timeframe for the study, "The research was conducted from 2000 to 2001 in which . . ."
- Include a quote or two by the authors, stating conclusions, findings, or impacts of the research.
- Include your name, affiliation, and e-mail at the conclusion of the news release. List a contact name, phone, and e-mail for the media to call if they need more information.
- Include a Media Relations Department contact, phone, and e-mail, if your affiliation has this. They may distribute your research release through their media outlets. The Societies and your Media Relations Department can coordinate this.

For assistance in preparing your interpretive summary, contact Sara Procknow Uttech at ASA-CSSA-SSSA headquarters, e-mail suttech@agronomy.org or call her at (608) 273-8090, ext. 323 for assistance.

Below is What You Prepare

Will Perennial Crops Survive Climate Change?

Scientists from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada predict perennial forage crops in Eastern Canada will be at a greater risk of winter damage in the future even though the climate will be warmer. Perennial forage crops are grown on more than 40% of the cultivated land in Eastern Canada and other regions of North America, where they constitute the backbone of the livestock industry.

The winter survival of perennial crops require the right climatic conditions. Sub-freezing temperature, loss of cold hardiness due to warm periods, ice encasement, and soil heaving result in frequent losses of forage stands. Winter temperatures are expected to increase by 2 to 6□C over the next 50 years in Eastern Canada. The study of the impact of this significant warming on the risks of winter damage to perennial forage crops is published in the September-October issue of *Agronomy Journal*.

For this study conducted from 1999 to 2001, scientists developed agro-climatic indices related to the effect of climate conditions on winter survival of perennial forage crops. These agro-climatic indices were then calculated for current conditions (1961-90) and two future periods (2010-39, 2040-69). Sixty-nine climatic stations located in all agricultural areas of Eastern Canada were used.

The loss of snow cover due to warmer winter conditions will increase exposure of plants to freezing temperatures. The authors also conclude that the occurrence of above-freezing temperatures and loss of cold hardiness will increase with climate warming. Forage crops are also likely to enter the winter in a lower state of cold hardiness due to warmer fall temperatures.

Gilles Bélanger, project leader, stated "This might be a surprise to many that warmer winter conditions will mean greater risks to perennial forage crops. Perennial forage crops in Canada and in the northern part of the United States prefer the comfort of a nice snow cover after a good rest period in the fall. Rain, ice, and no snow cover in the middle of the winter will occur more often in the future; this brings no comfort to perennial forage crops".

For forage producers, climate change will mean increased risks in an agricultural industry already facing major challenges. The authors of the study, however, are confident that current and future research efforts in the development of improved cultivars and the adaptation of management practices will help producers make the best of climate change.

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