

EDITORIAL 4

Timing on the Revision of Papers

Experience gained in the handling of about 400 papers during 1977, and the resulting interaction with the scientific community, have caused the Editors of the *Journal of Applied Meteorology* to focus on several problem areas and to set forth new policies described in this and other issues. One such new policy concerns fixing a time limit for authors to perform a requested revision of their paper.

A major goal of JAM Editors is to get papers through the review and the publication process, if found acceptable, as quickly as possible. We typically seek to accomplish this in three months or less. Many scientific papers, particularly of an applied nature, have timeliness as an important feature. Thus, they deserve publication and availability to the scientific community as soon as possible.

An unexpected problem concerns certain authors of papers accepted but requiring revision. Some authors literally do nothing for months and months to revise their papers that have been "accepted after revision." In fact, some have waited for more than a year before revising a paper. One might argue that this is the author's privilege and decision, and that if he wishes to wait, let him do so. This issue, however, embraces another problem area, that of dating a paper and the rights of scientific discovery.

JAM receives many papers in closely parallel and fast developing scientific and technical areas. If a paper is submitted to the JOURNAL with an interesting new finding and the paper is accepted (and dated) but is

held by the author in the revision process for an extended period, we have a distinct problem with new papers being submitted that contain (or may be effected by) the same material, information or discovery as the earlier paper awaiting revision and publication.

How long can we allow the revision process to last which ultimately affects the total period of handling a paper? After much discussion, the Editors have decided that we will not consider publishing a paper that has been in the hands of its author for revision for more than six months after the Editor mailed it to the author. Our Editors will contact authors holding papers for revision after three months of waiting as a reminder to complete their revision.

Papers held for revision for more than six months will be considered by the Editors of JAM as new papers. In this circumstance, authors will have to "start over." This means submitting five new copies to the Chief Editor and then having the paper go through the formal review process again.

If there should be some major extenuating circumstances that the author can demonstrate to the Editors, such as prolonged illness, extended trips outside of the nation or lack of necessary facilities, then this limit can be extended by the Chief Editor. However, any such extension must be requested by the author before the six-month deadline arrives. Otherwise, the six-month limit will be invoked regardless of the reason.

Stanley A. Changnon, Jr.