

are used up in this same Tyumen' province, yet no more than 5 million rubles of this goes into forecasting work. Yes, we do use satellites and computers, but this is nothing new. It must be admitted that technologically we are hopelessly behind. But the main problem is that nobody is obliged to act on the free information we give out.

Today we are not offering seasonal forecasts in rural areas, yet if we were to do so, the collective and state farms would be able to select what varieties of grain, potato and other crops to go for, given expected weather conditions.

Oil and gas producers are also showing great interest in a reliable weather service. The industry suffers colossal losses when it is forced to shut down owing to the electrical supply being disconnected. Early storm warnings would give them time to switch over the reserve power supplies. They ask us to let them know exactly when and for how long bogs will be frozen over or thaw out, and it is extremely important for the people installing super generator units to know how high the river waters will be. It is also vital for the forestry, freight and construction industries to have good quality forecasting.

"Yes, good quality forecasting. But don't you frequently get it wrong?"

"You are right; we get it wrong more often than many of our western colleagues do. Despite the fact that the work of our service is considered satisfactory, as it was 30-40 years ago, we are aware of the fact that we are simply still using out-dated methods. And this is the whole problem, there is no incentive for creative research; our equipment and