

Popular weatherman to deliver annual forecast

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

Art Douglas admits he's a "weatherbug."

"I can't put the computer down, I've always got to know what the weather's doing," he says. "I'm just fascinated with it."

And, he says, "If you get fascinated with weather, the next step is, you obviously are interested in forecasting."

That fascination with the weather has turned into Douglas' life's work. He is a professor emeritus of atmospheric sciences at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb., having started there in 1982 and retiring in 2007.

Other agricultural audiences Douglas speaks to include the National Cattleman's Beef Association and Gavilon, an Omaha commodity management firm.

But Douglas draws a particularly loyal audience at the Spokane Ag Expo and Pacific Northwest Farm Forum, where he will offer his forecast following the presentation of the Excellence in Ag Awards, which starts at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 7, in the main ballroom of the convention center.

Douglas began speaking at the show in 1989.

"The farmers like him and they trust what he says," said show manager Myrna O'Leary. "The one year, we couldn't get him and (we) wanted to hide. They were angry Art wasn't there."

Douglas knows what his farmer and rancher audiences want to hear.

"They're not just interested in the weather," Douglas said. "They want to get a hedge in the future and listen to what might possibly occur."

Douglas said he is not particularly interested in the day-to-day forecasts found on



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Creighton University professor emeritus Art Douglas will deliver his annual forecast Tuesday, Feb. 7, at the Spokane Ag Expo and Pacific Northwest Farm Forum.

television or from the weather services.

"Models are doing a pretty dam good job now of forecasting six to eight days, and they

even get it right sometimes out to two weeks," he said. "But the real challenge continues to be the next month to three months."

At that point, numerical models still have a tough time predicting the weather, Douglas said.

"The reality is, it's a very complex science," he said. "But to me it's challenging."

In December, Douglas said he expected colder weather than the last three or four years, with below-normal precipitation and lower snow levels.

"The question is, is there enough soil moisture in the ground to hold it through a cold, dry winter?" he said. "Are you going to be able to keep snow on the ground? It'll be cold, but are we going to get enough snow storms to keep protection on the ground?"

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