

UA Gets \$13,400 For Study

Legal Problems Of Weather

By JOHN RIDDICK
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The Department of the Interior announced today it has given the University of Arizona College of Law a \$13,400 contract to explore the legal problems connected with trying to control the weather.

"As we advance in controlling the weather, we likewise become more deeply involved in local, state, regional, national and even international aspects of the law," said Secretary Stewart L. Udall in announcing the contract.

"We must know what laws now really govern the rivers of the skies, how they might be applied and interpreted and what new laws might be needed.

"The pioneering pilot study by the University of Arizona marks the beginning of a much-needed companion research effort in weather modification."

The principal investigator for the project is Ray Jay Davis of the UA law school. He has degrees from Idaho State University, Harvard law school and Columbia law school.

Charles E. Ares, UA law school dean, said the contract between the Interior Department's Bureau of Reclamation and the university is for a study that will attempt to lay a legal framework over which scientific progress can be helped.

Dr. James E. McDonald, UA atmospheric physicist and a member of the National Academy of Science's Committee on Weather and Climate Modification, said: "The legal problems will grow more acute" as the scientists become more optimistic of success.

Typically in the past, a farmer who hired the rain makers and then was sued for damages hid afterwards in court behind a cloud of uncertainty.

For example, a multi-million dollar suit over flood damages from the Feather River in California was thrown out of court because witnesses stated it cannot be ascertained that man, through seeding, can actually make rain.

But greatly through McDonald's efforts, the National Academy committee came out with a positive report on cloud seeding.

"There is a ticklish problem of who owns the clouds," said McDonald. "There is also a question of when the water molecules in the atmosphere become potentially anyone's property.

"Is water vapor that streams over California towards Nevada California property before it is condensed into clouds?"