## Dam satellites... A&M developing orbiting water

Satellites may soon predict oods, crop yields and runoff while mission. elling us when and where to irriate and how to build dams.

eveloping what they call a brand ew concept in environmental onitoring. They have two comementing systems that basically ve readings on soil moisture. The dar devices eventually have the pability of being mounted on itellites. A primitive version in fact

The two groups have joined forces to spend the summer perfect-University of Kansas scientists ing their devices on an A&M farm ave joined TAMU researchers in by monitoring different soil types and crop growths.

Dr. Cliff Harlan and Richard Newton of the TAMU Remote Sensing Center and Dr. Fawwaz Ulaby, director of the U. K. Remote Sensing Laboratory, head their respective groups. The effort is aided by NASA equipment operated by a Lockheed Electronics crew.

parabolic dishes strapped to spindly booms that range through specially cultivated rows of maize, pulsing information to monitoring crews in nearby electronic vans.

The TAMU-NASA crew operates a passive device that measures naturally emitted heat radiation. The amount of water in the soil causes the dielectric constant (an expression of electric properties) of the soil to change. The sensors pick up the change and convert it into information on the water content of

Harlan noted, "We know we can tions. This in turn is computed into see relative changes in soil moisture. Now we are attempting to measure how much water there is. A less sophisticated version of our thermo-microwave measuring device on Skylab took 60 square mile readings of soil moisture. Many of these same KU students took soil samples across Kansas that pro-

readings of the satellite.

duced excellent correlation with the

moisture information. Their measurements probe under the ground to find the amount of water in the root zone.

Ulaby pointed out that by using the two systems in the same place at the same time, "...it eliminates doubt at the end of the project in our findings. They've arranged three fields each with three soil conditions and three stages of vegetation. That The Kansas group uses an active system that sends a radar pulse into way surface roughness and vegetation, which is 85 percent water, can curately. This could save millions of accurately predict floods. dollars on dams that are now being

overbuilt by as much as a factor of ten. Measurements of irrigated areas would tell when farm lands dry out endangering crops. More water could be released but only when needed. This would conserve water and use it more efficiently.'

moisture is important in planting second step.

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be accounted for in observations.

"The applications of the technique is vital," claimed Ulaby. "We some crops. Also these systems would allow us to monitor through clouds, day or night. A hydrologist could figure the runoff for dams ac- with soil moisture information could

## New dean for LA

Dr. Diane W. Strommer has een named associate dean for stuent affairs in the College of Liberal rts, announced Dean W. David Dr. Strommer joined the

ollege's administrative staff Monay, effective date of appointment.
She succeeds Dr. Charles AcCandless, now director of ademic planning and services in TAMU's academic affairs division. Most recently an administrator nd professor in Boston University's College of Basic Studies, Dr. Strommer has taught and worked imarily on the East Coast.

"Dr. Strommer has a diversity of ministrative experience, in telesion, radio and university adinistration," Maxwell said. "She



Dr. Diane Strommer

also has had experience in curriculum development and imlementation.

The new TAMU faculty member eceived the B.A. at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, in 1962. Ohio State University awarded both the M.A. in English and Ph.D. in Renaissance drama, the latter in 1969.

Dr. Strommer taught at an Oak Ridge, N. C., junior college, Chapel Hill and Ohio State. At Boson, she was in charge of the basic division. Her TV program, "The Woman's Magazine of the Air," won the North Carolina Broadcaster's Award of Excellence. She coneived, wrote and produced it.

Dr. Strommer was a textbook onsultant for MacMillan Co. and has a book on language and politics ready for publication. She has done directing and stage management for the Raleigh Little Theater.

She is married and has two chil-

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This is the second step of a project that began last year. NASA aircraft and University of Michigan researchers took airborne readings over 100 miles of fields near Phoenix, Ariz. where there was no moisture change except for irrigation. These results were compared with soil Harlan added, "The amount of samples. The project here is the DRUMSTICKS



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