More in a Research Communication.

Cotton Chronicles
Mapping cotton yield

More than half of both women’s and men’s clothing contain some kind of cotton fibre, either alone or in combination with man-made fibres. It comes as no surprise then that cotton is grown in 85 countries all over the world. An important factor that affects cotton yield is irrigation. About 70–90% of the crop is made up of water, and when water is scarce, plant growth is affected. There is stunting and reduction in leaf area – both signs of water stress.

Many small landholders depend on monsoon to irrigate their fields. And departures in seasonal rainfall affect the quality of the crop. To a large extent, these could be mitigated through alternate means of irrigation. But both the time and stage of irrigation can make a difference. On page 948 in a Research Communication, a team of scientists from Delhi and Haryana shows how irrigation during different stages of the cotton crop can impact productivity for cotton production in Hisar, Haryana.

Depending on extensive field tests conducted over the past two years, scientists simulated the yield of three cotton crop varieties widely grown in Hisar and compared this with actual data from the region. Scientists believe that such endeavours can help farmers chose the best variety most suited to their farms and also ensure better management practices to improve crop yield.

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