

A methodological note on crop yield forecasting in the Sahel

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Crop yield forecasting is an important aspect of the early warning system that was put in place at the AGRHYMET regional centre since it started its activities following the catastrophic droughts of the early 1970s in the Sahel. It is currently implemented with the crop water balance simulation model DHC (Diagnostic Hydrique des Cultures) that was developed by CIRAD and transferred to AGRHYMET in the early 1990s. This paper examines some of the shortcomings of the existing methodology and makes suggestions regarding the effect of the late beginning of the rainy season on crops production potential in the region. It also suggests production scenarios based on historical rainfall data that policy makers might use in combination with the results of seasonal forecasts to come up with decisions regarding food security for the entire Sahel region.

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