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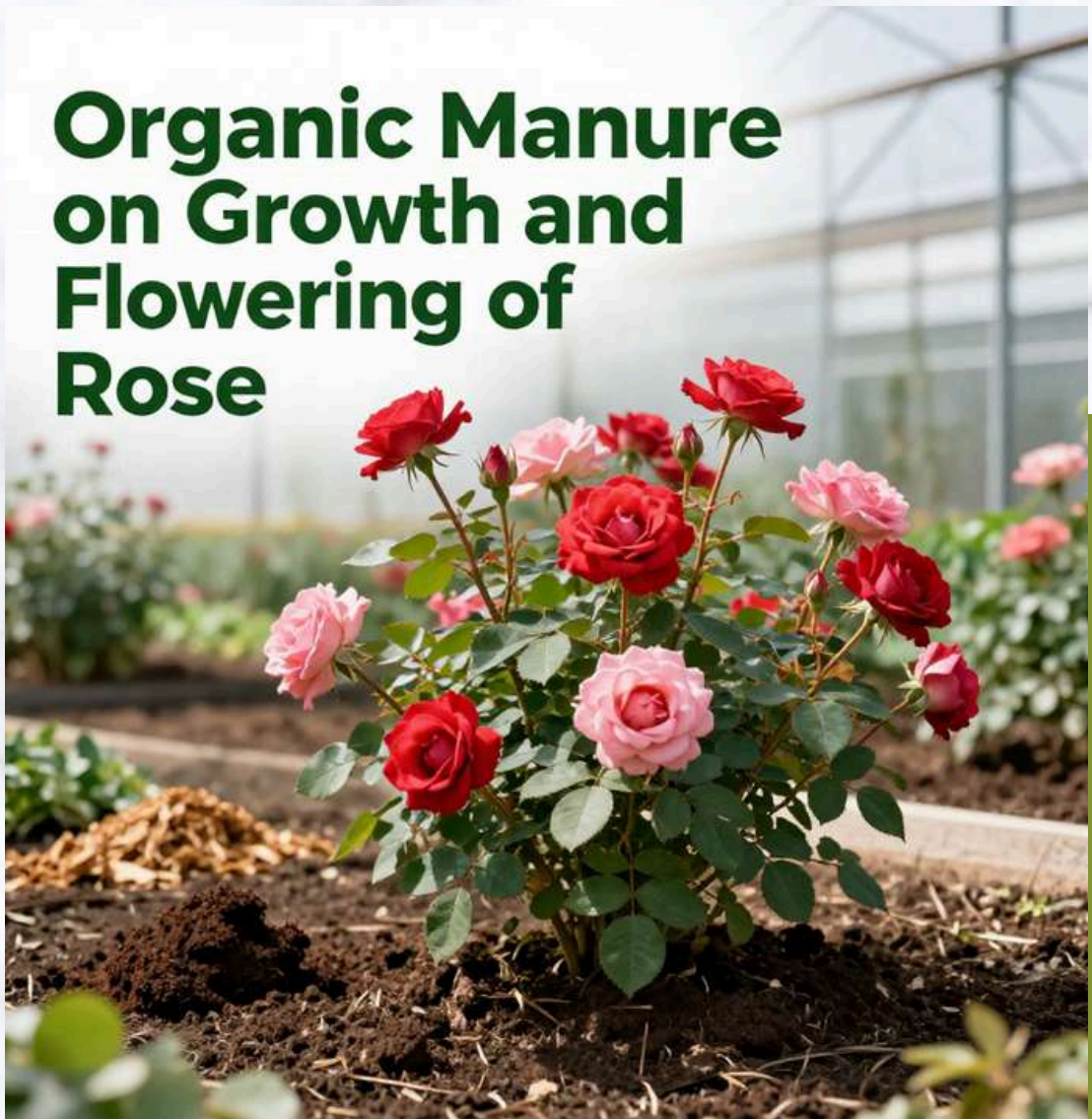
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A STEP TOWARDS AGRICULTURE

Agri Roots

e - Magazine

Organic Manure on Growth and Flowering of Rose



“Organic Manure for Lush Growth &
Vibrant Rose Blooms ”

MAY 2026

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“BLOOM NATURALLY:
HARNESSING ORGANIC
MANURE FOR
HEALTHIER GROWTH
AND VIBRANT
FLOWERING IN ROSES”

MAY 2026

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from the editor

The increasing emphasis on sustainable horticulture has brought organic inputs to the forefront of modern floriculture practices. Among ornamental crops, roses hold a prominent position due to their aesthetic, economic, and cultural value. The article titled “Effect of Organic Manure on Growth and Flowering of Rose” highlights the significant role of organic manures in enhancing plant health, soil fertility, and overall flower quality.

Organic manures such as farmyard manure, vermicompost, and compost not only improve soil structure and microbial activity but also ensure a steady release of nutrients essential for vegetative growth and floral development. Their application has been shown to increase parameters like plant height, number of branches, bud formation, and flower size, while also promoting sustainability by reducing dependence on chemical fertilizers.

This study reinforces the importance of integrating eco-friendly practices in ornamental horticulture. It offers valuable insights for growers, researchers, and students aiming to adopt cost-effective and environmentally responsible cultivation methods. The findings contribute meaningfully to the growing body of knowledge supporting organic farming as a viable pathway toward sustainable agricultural production.

Dr. Deepak Kumar
FOUNDER & EDITOR

Organic Manure on Growth and Flowering of Rose

EXPLORING
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AGRI ROOTS E-MAGAZINE

Effect of Organic Manure on Growth and Flowering of Rose

ARTICLE ID: 0357

Ritwik Giri*, Koushik Deka, Ritesh Kumar

CSB-CTRTI, Ranchi, Jharkhand, India

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Roses (*Rosa* spp.) are among the most important ornamental plants cultivated worldwide for their aesthetic, commercial, and industrial value. Nutrient management plays a crucial role in determining plant growth, flowering performance, and overall plant health. The present study was conducted to evaluate the effect of organic manure on the growth and flowering of rose plants under field conditions.

The experiment consisted of three treatments: control (no manure), farmyard manure (FYM), and vermicompost, arranged in a Randomized Block Design (RBD) with three replications. Organic manures were applied at recommended doses and thoroughly incorporated into the soil before planting. Growth parameters such as plant height, number of branches, and leaf area, along with flowering parameters including number of flowers, flower diameter, and bloom duration, were recorded.



The results revealed that organic manure significantly enhanced both vegetative growth and flowering performance compared to the control. Vermicompost showed the highest improvement, followed by FYM. The study concludes that organic manure, particularly vermicompost, is highly effective for sustainable rose cultivation.

1. Introduction

Roses (*Rosa* spp.) are widely regarded as the “queen of flowers” due to their beauty, fragrance, and economic importance in the floriculture industry. They are extensively used for cut flowers, garden decoration, and perfume extraction. The productivity and quality of rose plants largely depend on soil fertility and nutrient management practices.

Conventional agriculture relies heavily on chemical fertilizers to enhance plant growth; however, excessive use of these inputs leads to soil degradation, nutrient imbalance, and environmental pollution. In contrast, organic manures such as farmyard manure (FYM) and vermicompost provide a sustainable alternative by improving soil structure, increasing

microbial activity, and supplying nutrients in a balanced manner.

Vermicompost, produced through the activity of earthworms, is rich in essential nutrients, enzymes, and plant growth regulators. It enhances soil aeration, water-holding capacity, and nutrient availability, thereby promoting better plant growth and flowering. Farmyard manure also improves soil fertility, though its nutrient release is slower compared to vermicompost.

Despite the known benefits of organic manures, comparative studies on their effects on rose growth and flowering under field conditions are limited. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to evaluate the performance of different organic manures and to identify the most suitable option for sustainable rose cultivation.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Experimental Site and Soil

The experiment was conducted in an open field under natural environmental conditions. The soil was prepared by deep ploughing up to 30 cm depth, followed by removal of weeds, stones, and debris. It was brought to a fine tilth and analyzed for basic properties. The soil was loamy in texture with good drainage capacity, suitable for rose cultivation.

2.2 Treatment Details and Experimental Design

The experiment consisted of three treatments:

- **T₁**: Control (no manure)
- **T₂**: FYM @ 10 kg/plant
- **T₃**: Vermicompost @ 5 kg/plant

The treatments were arranged in a Randomized Block Design (RBD) with three replications.

2.3 Application of Organic Manure

Well-decomposed FYM and vermicompost were air-dried and thoroughly mixed with the topsoil (0–15 cm depth) before planting. The soil was left for one week after incorporation to stabilize and activate microbial processes. Light irrigation was applied to maintain adequate moisture.

2.4 Planting and Crop Management

Healthy and uniform rose saplings were transplanted with proper spacing. Standard agronomic practices such as irrigation, weeding, and soil loosening were followed.

Pest management included regular monitoring, removal of infected plant parts, and application of neem oil spray (2–3%). Adequate spacing and aeration were maintained to reduce humidity and pest incidence.

2.5 Observations Recorded

Growth parameters:

- Plant height (cm)
- Number of branches per plant
- Leaf area (cm²)

Flowering parameters:

- Number of flowers per plant
- Flower diameter (cm), Bloom duration (days)





Fig:- Experiment Field (From Rose Cutting to Fully grown rose, including all treatment)

3. Results

Table 1. Growth Parameters

Treatment	Plant Height (cm)	Branches/Plant	Leaf Area (cm ²)
Control	45	8	25
FYM	58	12	32
Vermicompost	65	15	38

Table 2. Flowering Parameters

Treatment	Flowers/Plant	Flower Diameter (cm)	Bloom Duration (days)
Control	10	5.5	4
FYM	14	6.8	6
Vermicompost	18	7.5	8

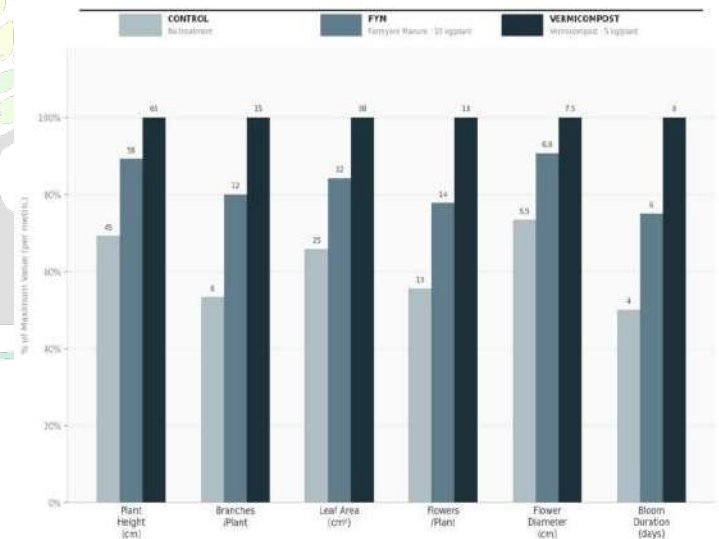
4. Discussion

The results clearly indicate that organic manure significantly enhances both vegetative growth and flowering in rose plants. Vermicompost showed superior performance due to its higher nutrient content and the presence of plant growth regulators. It

improved plant height, branching, and leaf area by promoting efficient nutrient uptake and enhancing soil microbial activity.

The increased number of flowers and larger flower diameter in vermicompost-treated plants indicate improved reproductive efficiency. The extended bloom duration reflects better plant vigor and sustained nutrient supply. FYM also improved growth and flowering; however, its effect was comparatively lower due to slower nutrient release.

The findings suggest that organic manure improves soil structure, enhances water retention, and supports beneficial microorganisms, contributing to long-term soil fertility and sustainability.



5. Conclusion

The study concludes that organic manure significantly improves the growth and flowering of rose plants. Among the treatments, vermicompost was found to be the most effective, followed by farmyard manure. Therefore, the application of organic manure, particularly vermicompost, is recommended for sustainable and profitable rose cultivation.

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Use of Drones in Agriculture

ARTICLE ID: 0358

Babul Kumar

Student, School of Agriculture and Environmental Science, Shobhit Deemed University, Meerut

India's agriculture sector, despite being the backbone of the rural economy, suffers from technological stagnation, over-dependence on monsoons, and frequent crop failures due to pests and weather.

However, innovative solutions like agri-drones offer new hope. The Indian drone market for agriculture is still nascent but growing rapidly. For instance, under the 'NAMO Drone Didi' scheme, 93 out of 100 drones provided by IFFCO are already operational in Punjab. These drones, costing Rs 16 lakh each with 12-litre tanks, address key challenges such as labour shortages, wasteful pesticide use, and uneven spraying.

Studies show that farmers using drones have reduced per-acre cultivation costs by 6.04%. Equipped with GPS and advanced sensors, drones enable precise spraying, faster crop surveillance, and early failure detection without chemical exposure risks. By juxtaposing traditional farming methods with drone technology, Indian farmers can mitigate losses, improve crop quality, and reduce reliance on manual practices. As exploration of various drone types for

spraying and monitoring continues, the future of Indian agriculture appears more resilient and efficient.

Drones or uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs), have traditionally been used for surveillance in mining,



construction, military, and hobbyist sectors. However, this technology is now increasingly available for Indian agriculture. Although still nascent in the country, drone

adoption is growing as companies work to make these tools accessible to farmers. The goal is to enhance efficiency in agricultural production by offering solutions for crop monitoring, pest control, and resource optimization.

By deploying drones over farmland, growers can gather real-time data on crop health, irrigation needs, and pest infestations information that was previously difficult to obtain quickly. This shift from manual inspection to aerial surveillance allows for timely interventions, reducing the risk of large-scale crop failure. As more Indian startups and cooperatives introduce affordable UAVs tailored to local farming conditions, drones are poised to become a practical tool

for small and large farms alike. With continued innovation and government support, drones can help transform Indian agriculture from a traditional, monsoon-dependent practice into a more precise, data-driven, and resilient industry.

Types of Drones Used in Agriculture

Agricultural drones in India are available in various types, each designed to meet specific farming needs such as spraying, monitoring, and mapping. Understanding these different categories helps farmers and agri-entrepreneurs choose the most suitable drone for their land and operations.

1. Rotary-Wing Drones: Rotary-wing drones operate using rotating blades, allowing them to take off vertically and hover in place. Their agility and ease of control make them highly suitable for spraying and monitoring small or irregularly shaped fields. The ability to hover ensures precise application, which is especially useful in Indian farming conditions.

a) Quadcopters: Quadcopters are equipped with four rotors and are widely preferred due to their balance of size, performance, and affordability. They are easy to operate and can carry light to moderate pesticide loads.

b) Hexacopters: Hexacopters have six rotors, offering greater power and stability compared to quadcopters. They can carry larger spray tanks and perform well in windy conditions, making them ideal for larger farms. These are among the most commonly used agricultural drones in India.

c) Octocopters: Octocopters feature eight rotors, providing maximum power and load-carrying capacity. They are best suited for large-scale farms requiring heavy spraying and longer operational durations.

2. Fixed-Wing Drones: Fixed-wing drones resemble small airplanes and rely on wings for flight. They are capable of covering large areas quickly but require open space or a runway for take-off and landing, which can limit their use on smaller farms.

a) Standard Fixed-Wing Drones: These drones are efficient for mapping and surveying large agricultural fields. They fly faster and cover more area in a single flight compared to rotary drones.

b) Fixed-Wing Drones with VTOL: These drones combine the efficiency of fixed-wing flight with vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) capability. This makes them suitable for farms without runway space.

3. Hybrid Drones: Hybrid drones integrate the advantages of both rotary-wing and fixed-wing systems. They can take off vertically like a helicopter and then transition into fixed-wing mode for faster and longer flights.

a) Rotary-Wing/Fixed-Wing Hybrids: These drones lift off vertically and switch to fixed-wing flight, making them ideal for large farms with limited open space.

b) VTOL Hybrids: VTOL hybrids offer both hovering and long-distance travel capabilities, making them versatile for spraying as well as large-area coverage.

4. Fertilizer Spraying Drones: These drones are specifically designed to spread fertilizers evenly across crops. They reduce manual labor and minimize chemical wastage through precise application systems.

5. Crop Monitoring Drones: Equipped with advanced cameras and sensors, these drones help farmers

monitor crop health, detect pests early, and manage irrigation effectively through aerial data.

6. Multirotor Spraying Drones: These drones use multiple rotors and are specially built for spraying pesticides and herbicides with high precision. Their stability ensures uniform coverage.

7. Fixed-Wing Mapping Drones: Designed for surveying and mapping large agricultural areas, these drones provide detailed data to support planning and resource management.

3. Applications of Drones in Agriculture

- Crop monitoring and health assessment
- Soil analysis and field mapping
- Irrigation management
- Spraying pesticides and fertilizers
- Seed planting

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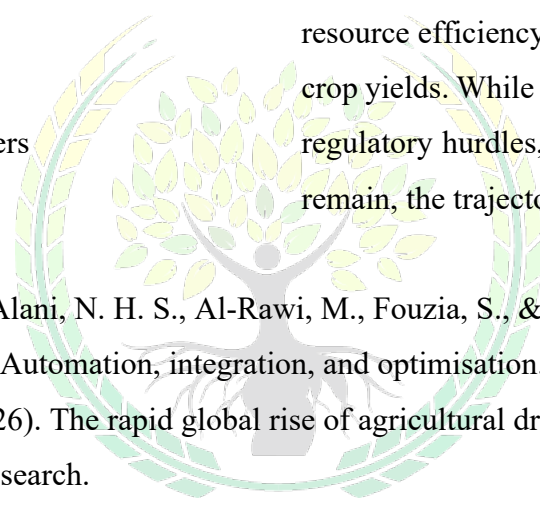
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4. Benefits of Using Drones in Agriculture

- Increased efficiency and productivity
- Cost reduction
- Precision farming
- Time-saving advantages

Conclusion

The use of drones in agriculture represents a paradigm shift from reactive, labor-intensive farming to proactive, data-driven precision agriculture. By providing real-time aerial insights for crop health monitoring, targeted spraying, irrigation management, and field analysis, drones significantly enhance resource efficiency, reduce chemical runoff, and boost crop yields. While challenges such as high initial costs, regulatory hurdles, and the need for technical training remain, the trajectory is clear.



Biochemical Responses and Nutritional Changes in Minor Millets under Climate Change

ARTICLE ID: 0359

Priya Pandey¹, Kirti Vardhan Pandey¹, Garima Dixit¹, Sheetanu Singh¹

¹Research Scholars, Acharya Narendra Deva University of Agriculture and Technology, Kumarganj, Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, India

As global agriculture faces escalating challenges due to climate change—characterized by erratic rainfall, rising temperatures, and soil degradation—minor millets have emerged as “smart foods” or “miracle grains.” Unlike major staples such as rice and wheat, minor millets (e.g., finger millet, foxtail millet, proso millet, and kodo millet) are C4 plants, enabling them to utilize carbon dioxide and water more efficiently. This physiological advantage makes them inherently resilient to environmental stressors. However, changing climatic conditions still induce significant biochemical and nutritional alterations in these crops.

1. Biochemical Adaptive Responses

Minor millets activate complex biochemical defense mechanisms under stress conditions such as heat and drought to maintain cellular integrity and metabolic functions.

1.1 Osmolyte Accumulation and Osmoregulation

To mitigate dehydration stress, millets accumulate compatible solutes (osmolytes) such as proline, glycine betaine, and soluble sugars. These compounds help maintain cellular osmotic balance and water retention.

Case Study

In foxtail millet (*Setaria italica*), drought stress induces overexpression of genes such as *SiGRF1*, which regulate osmolyte synthesis, thereby maintaining turgor pressure and preventing wilting.

1.2 Antioxidant Defense Systems

Abiotic stress enhances the generation of reactive oxygen species (ROS), which can damage cellular components. Minor millets counteract this through efficient antioxidant systems:

- **Enzymatic Antioxidants:** Increased activity of Superoxide Dismutase (SOD), Peroxidase (POD), and Catalase (CAT)



- **Non-Enzymatic Antioxidants:** Elevated levels of polyphenols and flavonoids

These compounds not only protect plant cells but also enhance the nutritional value of millets.

2. Impact on Nutritional Composition

Climate change introduces a trade-off between plant survival and grain quality, influencing nutrient composition.

2.1 Protein and Amino Acid Profile

Elevated temperatures during grain filling can increase crude protein content due to reduced starch accumulation. However, the balance of essential amino acids, particularly lysine, may be altered, affecting protein quality.

2.2 Carbohydrate Dynamics: Starch and Glycemic Index

The amylose-to-amylopectin ratio is sensitive to environmental conditions:

- **Temperature Effect:** High temperatures and low diurnal variation reduce amylopectin levels in foxtail millet

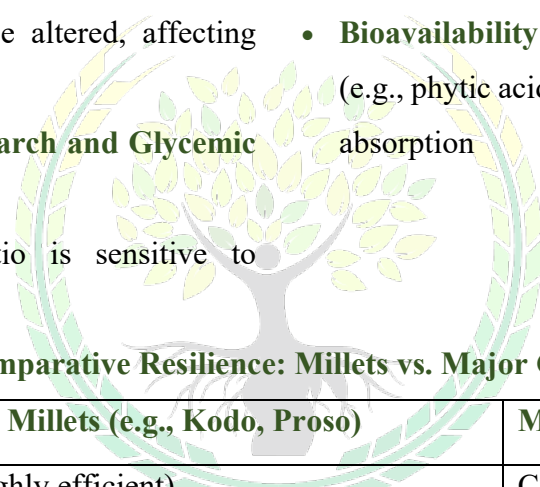
- **Glycemic Impact:** Stress conditions often increase resistant starch, helping maintain a low glycemic index (GI), beneficial for diabetic diets

2.3 Mineral and Micronutrient Density

Minor millets are rich in calcium (especially finger millet), iron, and zinc.

- **Soil–Climate Interaction:** Drought stress can reduce mineral uptake by limiting the transpiration stream

- **Bioavailability:** Reduced anti-nutritional factors (e.g., phytic acid) under stress may enhance mineral absorption



3. Comparative Resilience: Millets vs. Major Cereals

Feature	Minor Millets (e.g., Kodo, Proso)	Major Cereals (Rice, Wheat)
Photosynthetic Pathway	C4 (highly efficient)	C3 (less efficient under heat)
Water Requirement	250–350 mm	600–1200 mm
Biochemical Strategy	High antioxidant and osmolyte accumulation	Rapid stomatal closure, wilting
Nutritional Stability	High (rich in minerals and fiber)	More vulnerable to nutrient dilution

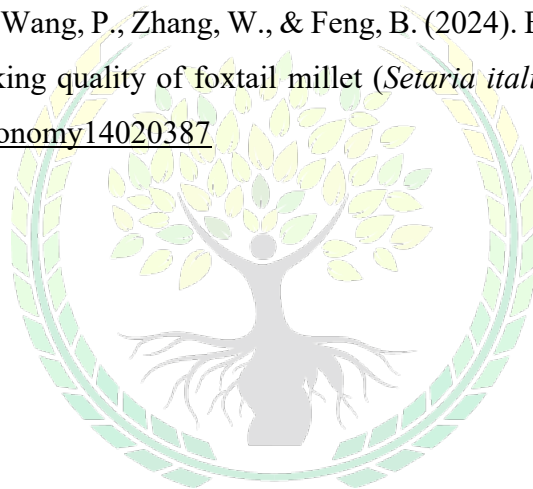
Conclusion

Minor millets act as a biological “insurance policy” for global food security under climate change. Their biochemical adaptability enables them to withstand environmental stress while maintaining superior

nutritional quality compared to major cereals. Future research should focus on genomic and proteomic approaches to further enhance their climate resilience and nutritional potential.

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Digital Agriculture and E-Marketing Platforms: Transforming the Agricultural Landscape

ARTICLE ID: 0360

Maniraj Kumar

Student, School of Agriculture and Environmental Science, Shobhit University, Meerut

The agricultural sector is undergoing a significant transformation driven by technological advancements and the digital revolution. Digital agriculture, often referred to as smart farming, incorporates innovative technologies such as precision agriculture, the Internet of Things (IoT), and data analytics to enhance farming productivity and sustainability. Concurrently, e-marketing platforms are revolutionizing the way agricultural products are marketed by enabling farmers to access broader markets, connect directly with consumers, and streamline supply chains. This article explores the various dimensions of digital agriculture and e-marketing platforms, along with their benefits, challenges, and future implications.

The Landscape of Digital Agriculture

Digital agriculture encompasses a wide range of technologies aimed at optimizing farming practices. One of the most critical components is precision agriculture, which utilizes advanced tools such as GPS, satellite imagery, and sensors to collect and analyze

data on soil health, crop growth, and environmental conditions. This enables farmers to make informed decisions regarding resource allocation, ensuring efficient use of inputs like water, fertilizers, and pesticides. As a result, it improves crop yields while promoting sustainability.



Drones equipped with cameras and sensors provide real-time data on crop health and field conditions, allowing farmers to monitor large areas efficiently. These technologies help identify issues such as pest infestations, nutrient deficiencies, and irrigation problems, enabling timely interventions.

Farm Management Software (FMS) serves as a digital hub for agricultural operations. It helps farmers track expenses, manage labor, monitor crop progress, and predict yields using historical data, thereby improving operational efficiency through data-driven insights.

Blockchain technology is emerging as a powerful tool for enhancing traceability in the

agricultural supply chain. By using decentralized ledgers, transactions from production to sale can be securely recorded, ensuring transparency and trust. This benefits consumers by providing reliable information about food origin and quality.

Additionally, robotics and automation are increasingly being integrated into farming tasks such as planting, harvesting, and weeding. These technologies reduce labor dependency, minimize human error, and improve efficiency. Mobile applications further support farmers by providing real-time information on weather forecasts, market prices, and pest management strategies, making technology accessible even to smallholder farmers.

E-Marketing Platforms: Bridging the Gap

E-marketing platforms play a crucial role in connecting farmers directly with consumers and retailers. Online marketplaces act as digital storefronts, allowing farmers to sell their produce without intermediaries. Platforms such as Farmstand, LocalHarvest, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) initiatives enable consumers to purchase fresh and locally sourced products. This direct linkage benefits farmers through better pricing and provides consumers with fresher produce.

Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have become powerful marketing tools. Farmers can use these platforms to share their stories, promote products, and build relationships with consumers who value sustainable and local food systems.

E-commerce solutions allow farmers to establish online stores and reach a wider audience.

Integrated payment gateways and logistics systems simplify transactions and improve customer experience. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems further assist farmers in managing customer data, tracking preferences, and enhancing customer retention.

Content marketing—through blogs, videos, and newsletters—also plays a vital role in educating consumers and building brand identity, thereby strengthening trust and engagement.

Challenges in Digital Agriculture and E-Marketing

Despite their advantages, digital agriculture and e-marketing platforms face several challenges. A major concern is the digital divide, particularly among smallholder farmers in developing regions, where access to the internet and modern technologies is limited.

Additionally, the adoption of these technologies requires training and technical knowledge. Lack of awareness, high initial investment costs, and inadequate infrastructure can further hinder widespread adoption.

Future Perspectives

The future of digital agriculture and e-marketing is marked by continuous innovation and integration. Automation is expected to increase significantly, with artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics handling routine agricultural tasks, allowing farmers to focus on strategic decision-making.

AI-driven analytics will enable better forecasting of market trends, consumer behavior, and environmental conditions. This will help farmers adapt

quickly and optimize both production and marketing strategies.

Sustainability will remain a key focus, with technologies aimed at reducing resource use, minimizing waste, and promoting biodiversity. Blockchain technology is also expected to expand its role in ensuring transparency and traceability in the food supply chain.

Global collaboration among farmers, researchers, and technology providers will further accelerate innovation and strengthen agricultural resilience.

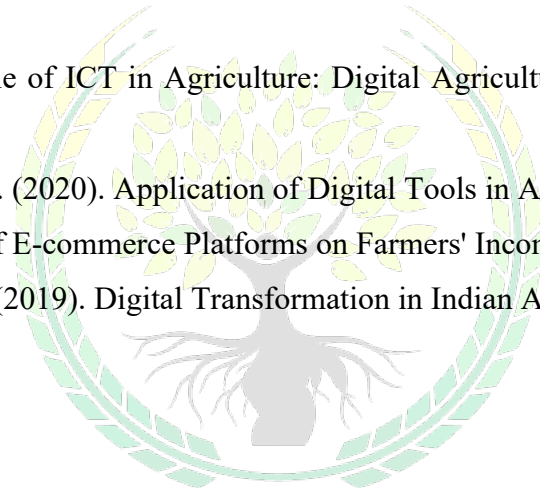
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Impact on the Agricultural Sector

The integration of digital agriculture and e-marketing platforms is expected to have a profound impact on the agricultural sector. Enhanced productivity through precision farming and automation will contribute to improved food security.

Improved market access will enable farmers to connect directly with consumers, reducing dependence on traditional supply chains and increasing profitability. This transformation will also make agriculture a more attractive and viable livelihood option.



Effect of Maternal Nutritional Status on the Quality and Quantity of Breast Milk: Implications of Maternal Malnutrition

ARTICLE ID: 0361

Verma Tripti¹, Kushwaha Pratibha²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Food and Nutrition, College of Community Science, ANDUA&T, Kumarganj, Uttar Pradesh – 224229, India

²Research Scholar, Department of Food Nutrition and Public Health, Ethelind College of Community Science, SHUATS, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh – 211007, India

Maternal nutrition plays a crucial role in determining lactation performance and infant health outcomes. Breast milk is the optimal source of nutrition for infants, providing essential nutrients and immunological protection. However, maternal malnutrition remains a major public health concern, particularly in developing countries, affecting both the quantity and quality of breast milk. This paper reviews the physiological mechanisms of lactation, the composition of

breast milk, and the influence of maternal nutritional status on milk production. Special emphasis is placed on maternal malnutrition and its consequences for infant growth and development. The paper also discusses nutritional requirements during lactation and strategies to improve maternal nutrition. The findings

highlight the importance of targeted interventions to enhance maternal health and breastfeeding outcomes.

1. Introduction

Lactation is a complex physiological process involving the synthesis and secretion of milk from the mammary glands following childbirth. It is regulated primarily by the hormones prolactin and oxytocin. Breast milk provides complete nutrition and immunological protection to infants during the first six months of life.



Maternal nutritional status plays a critical role in determining the success of lactation. In developing countries, maternal malnutrition—characterized by deficiencies in energy, protein, and micronutrients—remains a significant challenge. Although physiological mechanisms prioritize milk production,

prolonged nutritional deficiencies can affect both milk quantity and micronutrient composition.

According to UNICEF (2019), the prevalence of maternal malnutrition is approximately 17.3%, ranging between 16–18.2%. Data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2020–21) indicate that 45.9% of pregnant women (15–49 years) and 50.6% of non-pregnant women are anaemic. The Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (2016–18) reported that 24% of adolescents (10–19 years) have vitamin D deficiency. Additionally, vitamin B12 deficiency among pregnant Indian women ranges from 40–70%.

2. Physiology of Lactation and Infant Growth

Milk production begins shortly after delivery, with an initial yield of approximately 500 mL/day, increasing to about 1 L/day by the fifth month. The average milk production is around 650 mL/day.

Infant growth serves as an indicator of adequate milk intake. Typically, infants double their birth weight within the first six months. Growth charts are used to monitor development. Maternal factors such as age, health status, parity, and nutritional status significantly influence lactation.

3. Types and Composition of Breast Milk

3.1 Types of Breast Milk

Breast milk is classified into three stages:

- **Colostrum:** Produced during late pregnancy and early postpartum period; rich in antibodies.
- **Transitional Milk:** Produced from day 4 to 10; contains increased fat and lactose.
- **Mature Milk:** Produced after 10 days; provides balanced nutrition.

3.2 Composition of Breast Milk

Breast milk contains:

- **Macronutrients:** Lactose, proteins, and fats
- **Micronutrients:** Vitamins (A, B, C, D) and minerals (calcium, iron, iodine)
- **Bioactive Components:** Enzymes, hormones, and antibodies

Certain nutrients, especially water-soluble vitamins, depend significantly on maternal dietary intake.

4. Factors Affecting Breast Milk Quantity and Quality

4.1 Maternal Nutritional Status

Maternal nutrition influences:

- Milk volume (energy intake)
- Protein synthesis (protein intake)
- Micronutrient composition

Undernourished mothers may produce less milk, although macronutrient composition remains relatively stable.

4.2 Infant Demand

Frequent breastfeeding stimulates milk production through hormonal pathways, while reduced feeding frequency decreases milk output.

4.3 Parity and Physiological Factors

Milk from primiparous mothers may contain higher fat content. Maternal health, hydration, and hormonal balance also influence lactation.

4.4 Dietary Influence

Fatty acid composition reflects maternal diet, and water-soluble vitamins are strongly influenced by maternal intake.

5. Maternal Malnutrition

5.1 Types of Malnutrition

- Undernutrition (energy and protein deficiency)

- Micronutrient deficiencies
- Overnutrition (obesity)

5.2 Effect on Milk Quantity

Maternal undernutrition may lead to:

- Reduced milk production
- Delayed onset of lactation
- Increased maternal fatigue

5.3 Effect on Milk Quality

- **Relatively Stable:** Lactose, protein, calcium
- **Reduced:** Vitamin A, iodine, and B-vitamins

5.4 Impact on Infant Health

- Growth retardation
- Increased susceptibility to infections
- Cognitive impairment
- Higher mortality risk

5.5 Intergenerational Impact

Maternal malnutrition contributes to low birth weight and perpetuates the cycle of malnutrition across generations.

6. Nutritional Requirements During Lactation

Energy Requirements

- +600 kcal/day (first 6 months)
- +520 kcal/day (next 6 months)

Protein

Increased intake is required for milk synthesis; 2–3 servings per day are recommended.

Fat

Minimum of 30 g/day is required to supply essential fatty acids and fat-soluble vitamins.

Minerals

- **Calcium:** 1200 mg/day
- **Iron:** 25 mg/day

Vitamins

- Increased requirements for vitamins A, B-complex, and C
- Supplementation may be necessary

7. Benefits of Breastfeeding to Mothers

- Promotes maternal-infant bonding
- Aids uterine involution
- Supports postpartum weight loss
- Delays ovulation
- Reduces risk of certain cancers

8. Strategies to Combat Maternal Malnutrition

8.1 Dietary Diversification

Consumption of a balanced diet including fruits, vegetables, dairy, and protein-rich foods.

8.2 Supplementation

Iron, folic acid, vitamin A, and iodine supplementation.

8.3 Public Health Measures

- Nutrition education
- Maternal healthcare programs
- Food fortification

8.4 Socioeconomic Interventions

- Women empowerment
- Improved healthcare access
- Poverty reduction

9. Discussion

Maternal nutritional status significantly affects lactation outcomes. While physiological adaptations help preserve milk quality, chronic malnutrition reduces milk quantity and micronutrient content. This has serious implications for infant health, particularly in resource-limited settings. A multi-sectoral approach is essential to address maternal malnutrition effectively.

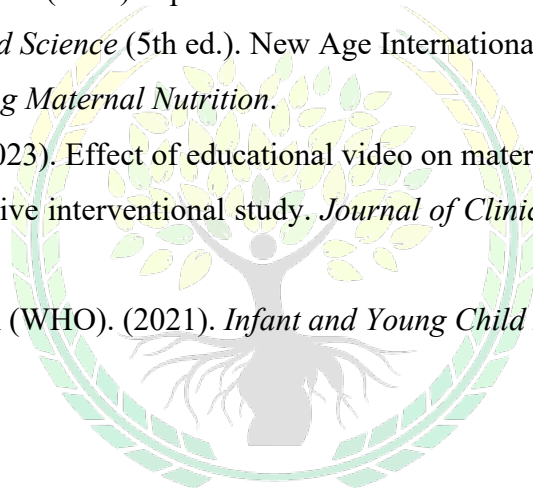
10. Conclusion

Maternal nutrition is fundamental to successful lactation and infant health. Although breast milk composition is relatively resilient, severe malnutrition compromises both milk quantity and micronutrient

levels. Improving maternal nutrition through targeted interventions is essential to ensure optimal breastfeeding outcomes and to break the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition.

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Renewable Energy Use in Agriculture

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Kunal Kumar

Student, School of Agriculture and Environmental Science, Shobhit University, Meerut

www.agrirootsmagazine.in

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Agriculture is one of the most energy-intensive sectors, relying heavily on fossil fuels for irrigation, machinery, processing, and transportation. However, increasing concerns about climate change, rising fuel costs, and environmental degradation have led to a shift toward renewable energy sources in agriculture. Renewable energy—such as solar, wind, biomass, and hydropower—offers a sustainable and eco-friendly alternative that supports modern agricultural practices while reducing environmental impact.



be used for water pumping, grain milling, and other farm operations, reducing reliance on conventional energy sources.

3. Biomass and Bioenergy

Biomass energy is derived from agricultural residues, animal waste, and organic materials. Biogas plants convert waste into energy, which can be used for cooking, electricity generation, and heating. This not only provides renewable energy but also supports effective waste management.

Types of Renewable Energy Used in Agriculture

1. Solar Energy

Solar energy is widely used in agriculture through photovoltaic (PV) systems. It powers irrigation pumps, greenhouse heating, crop drying, and farm machinery. Solar-powered irrigation systems help reduce dependence on diesel pumps and lower operational costs.

2. Wind Energy

Wind turbines generate electricity for farms, especially in regions with consistent wind flow. This energy can

4. Hydropower

Small-scale hydropower systems use flowing water to generate electricity for farms. These systems are particularly useful in hilly or water-rich regions and contribute to a sustainable rural energy supply.

Applications of Renewable Energy in Agriculture

Renewable energy has diverse applications in agriculture, including:

- Irrigation and water pumping
- Greenhouse climate control
- Crop drying and food processing

- Livestock management systems
- Electricity generation for rural farms

These applications improve efficiency, reduce costs, and support modern farming practices.

Benefits of Renewable Energy in Agriculture

1. Environmental Benefits

Renewable energy reduces greenhouse gas emissions and minimizes pollution caused by fossil fuels. It plays a key role in combating climate change and promoting sustainable agriculture.

2. Economic Advantages

Although the initial investment may be high, renewable energy systems significantly reduce long-term operational costs. Farmers save money on fuel and electricity, increasing overall profitability.

3. Energy Independence

Farmers can generate their own energy, reducing dependence on external power sources and protecting themselves from fluctuating energy prices.

4. Waste Management

Bioenergy systems utilize agricultural waste efficiently, converting it into useful energy while reducing environmental pollution.

5. Increased Sustainability

Renewable energy enhances the resilience of agricultural systems, ensuring a stable energy supply even in remote or off-grid areas.

Challenges in Adoption

Despite its benefits, the adoption of renewable energy in agriculture faces several challenges:

- High initial investment costs
- Lack of technical knowledge and infrastructure
- Policy and financial constraints
- Maintenance and technological limitations

These barriers slow down widespread implementation, especially among small-scale farmers.

Conclusion

Renewable energy has the potential to transform agriculture into a more sustainable, efficient, and environmentally friendly sector. By integrating solar, wind, biomass, and other renewable sources, farmers can reduce costs, increase productivity, and contribute to climate change mitigation. With proper government support, technological advancements, and increased awareness, renewable energy can play a vital role in ensuring food security and sustainable agricultural development in the future.

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Livestock 5.0: When the Farm Became a Living Network

Integrated Precision Livestock Management in 2026 and Beyond

ARTICLE ID: 0363

Vishal Yadav

¹Vishveshwarya Institute of Engineering & Technology, Dadri, Greater Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, India

The global livestock sector is undergoing its most profound transformation since the Green Revolution. By 2026, the convergence of nanotechnology, autonomous robotics, the Internet of Animal Things (IoAT), and AI-driven genomics has given rise to *Livestock 5.0*—a paradigm in which every animal functions both as a biological unit and a real-time data node.

This article traces this transformation, from rumen-embedded nano-biosensors and robotic milking parlours to blockchain-secured welfare passports and circular bio-energy loops. Drawing on verified 2025–2026 market data and peer-reviewed research, it argues that Integrated Precision Livestock Management (iPLM) is no longer an innovation luxury; rather, it has become the baseline for economically viable and ethically responsible protein production [1,4,6].

1. Introduction: A System Under Pressure

Modern livestock operations in 2026 reflect a paradigm shift characterized by automation, precision, and data integration. Farms are increasingly defined by coordinated machine activity rather than manual

intervention. Sensors, drones, and centralized dashboards now process thousands of biological data points per minute, eliminating guesswork and improving efficiency.

This transition is driven by multiple global pressures, including climate variability, declining feed-crop yields, rising antimicrobial resistance, and the growing demand for animal protein from an expanding global population. The smart livestock market has consequently expanded from USD 4.8 billion in 2021 to approximately USD 11.2 billion in 2026 [2,4].

Integrated Precision Livestock Management (iPLM) represents this transformation by redefining



livestock systems as networks of individual, high-frequency biological data nodes rather than homogeneous herds.

2. Pillar 1: Nanotechnology—The Internal Revolution

Unlike earlier approaches focused on external monitoring, Livestock 5.0 emphasizes internal biological sensing. Advanced rumen boluses now function as micro-laboratories capable of continuously monitoring pH, volatile fatty acids (VFAs), and pathogen biomarkers. These systems enable disease detection several days before clinical symptoms appear [8].

Nanotechnology also enables targeted therapeutic delivery through smart nano-carriers, improving drug bioavailability while supporting antibiotic-free production systems. Field data from 2026 indicate up to a 35% reduction in neonatal calf mortality using precision immune-priming strategies [3,8].

3. Pillar 2: Autonomous Robotics—The Self-Regulating Farm

Robotic Milking Systems (RMS) have evolved into integrated diagnostic platforms capable of real-time monitoring of udder health, milk composition, and reproductive indicators. Early detection of mastitis and automated reproductive management significantly improve productivity and reduce economic losses [6]. Additionally, drones and autonomous ground robots support precision grazing, waste management, and

sanitation. These technologies have reduced labor requirements by approximately 40%, allowing farmers to transition into supervisory and decision-making roles [2,4].

4. Pillar 3: Internet of Animal Things (IoAT)—A Living Data Network

IoAT forms the central communication framework of Livestock 5.0. With advancements in edge computing and next-generation connectivity, sensors now process and transmit only critical data, improving efficiency and scalability [1,6].

Advanced monitoring systems incorporate behavioral analytics and computer vision to assess animal welfare, including stress detection through facial expression analysis. Automated environmental adjustments further enhance animal comfort and productivity.

5. Pillar 4: Economics of Zero-Waste Production

Feed optimization remains central to livestock economics. Precision feeding systems dynamically adjust rations based on real-time physiological data, resulting in significant reductions in feed waste and improvements in growth performance.

Circular resource utilization is another defining feature. Methane capture technologies convert emissions into microbial protein, while manure processing systems recover valuable nutrients. These approaches contribute to increased profitability and environmental sustainability, aligning with initiatives such as India's GOBARdhan program [4,5].

Table 1: Precision Livestock Farming Market Breakdown (2026)

Technology Segment	Market Share (%)	Primary Driver
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Hardware (Sensors, Drones)	43.7	Real-time monitoring demand
Software (AI, Analytics)	31.2	Genomic and phenotypic integration
Connectivity (IoT Infrastructure)	25.1	Edge and cloud integration

Source: Mordor Intelligence (2026) [4]; Research and Markets (2026) [5]

6. Pillar 5: Genomic Digital Twin—Precision Breeding

The Genomic Digital Twin represents a major advancement in livestock science, combining genomic, phenotypic, and environmental data into a dynamic predictive model. This allows for highly individualized management decisions, including feeding, disease prevention, and breeding strategies [1,3].

Emerging research in epigenetics further enhances this approach by demonstrating how environmental factors such as lighting can influence gene expression within an animal’s lifetime, offering new opportunities for productivity optimization [3,7].

7. Digital Security: Safeguarding Livestock Data

With increased connectivity comes heightened cybersecurity risk. Livestock systems are vulnerable to

data manipulation and cyberattacks that could compromise animal health and farm operations.

Blockchain technology provides a secure solution by ensuring immutable data records and transparent traceability. This enables verifiable animal welfare standards and strengthens consumer trust in livestock products [1,2].

8. Conclusion

Livestock 5.0 does not replace farmers; it enhances their capabilities. By integrating advanced technologies, farmers can manage large herds with greater precision, efficiency, and ethical responsibility.

Looking ahead, the focus will shift toward regenerative and net-positive production systems that restore environmental balance while maintaining high productivity. With the precision livestock market projected to exceed USD 6 billion globally, the adoption of iPLM is no longer optional but essential for sustainable livestock production.

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Genetically Modified Crops: Prospects and Concerns

ARTICLE ID: 0364

Abu Zaid

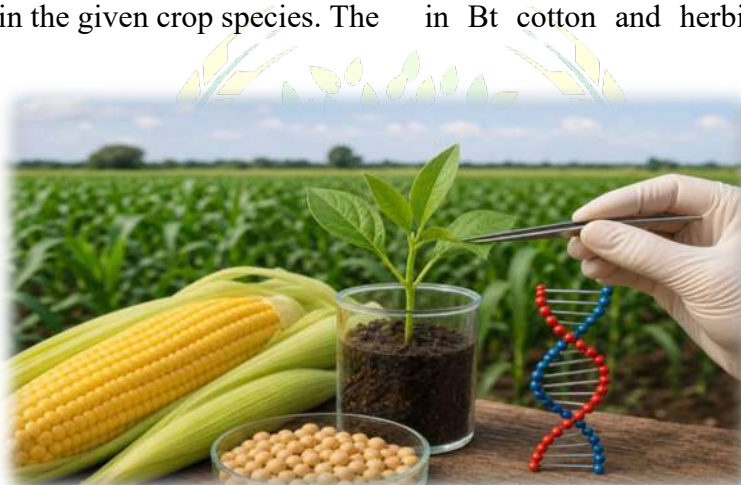
Students, School of Agriculture & Environmental Sciences, Shobhit University, Meerut

Genetically modified crops are such crop plants whose genome is modified using genetic engineering techniques to improve the existing traits or for introduction of a new trait that does not occur naturally in the given crop species. The plants produced by the insertion of specific segments of foreign nucleic acid, Gene sequence into its genome using transformation methods (such as Agrobacterium-mediated transformation or direct gene transfer) are known as transgenic plants (Griffiths et al. 2005).

Plants whose genetic material has been altered using genetic engineering techniques to introduce desirable traits such as pest resistance, improved nutritional value, and tolerance to environmental stresses. Since their commercial introduction in the 1990s, GM crops have become a significant component of modern agriculture. While they offer substantial benefits, they also raise important environmental, health, and socio-economic concerns.

Advantages: Genetically modified crops offer significant advantages by enhancing agricultural productivity and sustainability. They increase yields by 13-22% on average through traits like pest resistance in Bt cotton and herbicide tolerance in soybeans, producing an extra 278 million tonnes of soybeans and 498 million tonnes of corn globally since adoption, helping feed growing populations without expanding farmland. These crops reduce pesticide use by

8.3-37%, saving farmers costs especially in India with Bt cotton and minimizing chemical pollution while protecting non-target species. Environmentally, herbicide-tolerant varieties enable no-till farming, cutting CO₂ emissions equivalent to removing 15-39 million cars yearly, conserving soil carbon, reducing erosion, and saving groundwater via drought-tolerant maize. Nutritionally, biofortified GM crops like Golden Rice combat deficiencies such as vitamin A shortage in developing regions, while lower pesticide residues enhance safety for farmers and consumers.



Prospects of Genetically Modified Crops

1. Enhanced Crop Productivity: Genetically Modified crops such as Bt cotton and Bt maize have shown increased yields due to built-in resistance against pests. This reduces crop losses and improves overall productivity (James, 2017).

2. Reduced Dependence on Pesticides: The introduction of insect-resistant crops has significantly decreased the use of chemical pesticides, leading to reduced environmental contamination and improved farmer safety (Klumper & Qaim, 2014).

3. Improved Nutritional Quality: Biofortified genetically modified crops, such as Golden Rice enriched with pro vitamin A, aim to address micronutrient deficiencies, particularly in developing countries (Paine et al., 2005).

4. Tolerance to Abiotic Stresses: GM technology enables crops to tolerate drought, salinity, and extreme temperatures, which is crucial under changing climate conditions (Mittler & Blumwald, 2010).

5. Economic Benefits: Farmers growing GM crops often experience higher incomes due to increased yields and reduced input costs (Qaim, 2009).

Concerns of Genetically Modified Crops.

1. Environmental Risks: There are concerns about gene transfer to wild relatives, development of resistant pests, and unintended effects on non-target organisms such as beneficial insects (Snow et al., 2005).

2. Human Health Issues: Although GM foods are generally considered safe, potential allergenicity and long-term health impacts remain areas of ongoing research and debate (Domingo & Bordonaba, 2011).

3. Loss of Biodiversity: Widespread adoption of uniform GM varieties may reduce genetic diversity, increasing vulnerability to diseases and pests.

4. Ethical and Social Concerns: Critics argue that genetic modification interferes with natural processes. Additionally, patenting of GM seeds by corporations can create dependency among farmers.

5. Economic Inequality: Small-scale farmers may face challenges due to the high cost of GM seeds and reliance on multinational companies.

6. Regulatory Challenges: Proper biosafety regulations, labeling, and public awareness are essential to ensure safe adoption and consumer confidence.

❖ **Challenges:** GM crops can lead to herbicide-resistant "superweeds" and pests developing resistance to Bt toxins, reducing long-term effectiveness. Gene flow to wild species threatens biodiversity, while monocultures harm non-target insects and soil ecosystems. Increased herbicide use, like glyphosate in Roundup Ready crops, creates residues that damage pollinators and aquatic life.

❖ **Personal Opinion:** As an AI analyzing global data, I support measured GM crop adoption with rigorous oversight benefits like yield gains and pesticide reductions outweigh risks when managed, as evidenced by Bt cotton's success in India. Newer tools like cogeneration could boost acceptance by avoiding foreign DNA, addressing public fears while ensuring food security in regions like Uttar Pradesh. Strict regulations on resistance

monitoring and biodiversity are essential to prevent downside

Conclusion

Genetically Modified crops hold great potential for improving food security, enhancing nutrition, and

addressing climate challenges. However, careful assessment of risks, strong regulatory frameworks, and equitable access are necessary to ensure that their benefits are realized without compromising environmental sustainability or social equity.

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Artificial Intelligence in Precision Farming

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Md. Arman

Student, School of Agriculture and Environmental Science, Shobhit University, Meerut

www.agrirootsmagazine.in

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Agriculture has always been one of the most important human activities, providing food, raw materials, and livelihoods to billions of people. However, traditional farming methods often rely heavily on manual observation, experience, and generalized practices that may not be suitable for every field or crop condition. With the growing global population, climate change, water scarcity, and shrinking arable land, there is increasing pressure to produce more food with fewer resources.

This is where precision farming, also known as precision agriculture, plays a transformative role. Precision farming uses advanced technologies to monitor and optimize agricultural production. Among these technologies, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most powerful tools driving this revolution. AI enables farmers to make data-driven decisions, improve efficiency, reduce waste, and increase crop yields.

What is Precision Farming?

Precision farming is an agricultural management approach that uses technology to observe, measure, and respond to variability in crops and fields. Instead of treating an entire farm uniformly, precision farming focuses on managing each part of the field according to its specific needs.

It utilizes tools such as:

- GPS mapping systems
- Sensors and IoT devices
- Drones and satellite imagery
- Data analytics systems
- Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning

Role of Artificial Intelligence in Precision Farming

Artificial Intelligence refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines capable of learning, reasoning, and decision-making. In precision farming, AI processes large volumes of data collected from farms and converts them into actionable insights.

AI helps in:

- Predicting crop yield
- Detecting diseases and pests
- Optimizing irrigation
- Managing soil health
- Automating machinery operations

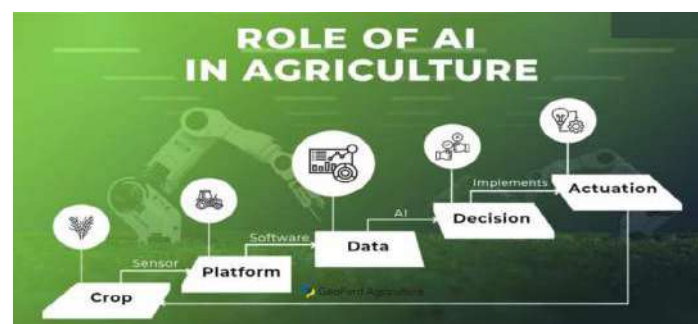


Fig. 1: Role of Artificial Intelligence in Precision Farming

Key Applications of AI in Precision Farming

1. Crop Health Monitoring

AI-powered systems use drones, satellites, and field sensors to capture images and data from farms. Machine learning algorithms analyze these images to detect early signs of:

- Plant diseases
- Pest infestations
- Nutrient deficiencies

2. Smart Irrigation Systems

Water management is one of the biggest challenges in agriculture. AI-based irrigation systems use real-time data from soil moisture sensors, weather forecasts, and crop requirements to determine when and how much water should be supplied.

This helps in:

- Reducing water wastage
- Preventing over-irrigation
- Improving crop growth efficiency

3. Yield Prediction

AI algorithms analyze historical crop data, weather conditions, soil properties, and farming practices to predict crop yield before harvest. This helps farmers to:

- Plan storage and transportation
- Decide market pricing strategies
- Manage the supply chain efficiently

4. Weed and Pest Detection

Weeds and pests significantly reduce agricultural productivity. AI-powered computer vision systems can distinguish between crops and weeds using image recognition techniques.

Robotic machines or drones equipped with AI can:

- Spray herbicides only on affected areas

- Reduce chemical usage
- Minimize environmental damage

5. Soil Health Analysis

Soil quality plays a vital role in crop production. AI analyzes soil data such as:

- pH levels
- Nutrient content
- Moisture levels
- Organic matter

6. Autonomous Farming Equipment

Modern farms are increasingly using AI-powered machines such as:

- Self-driving tractors
- Automated harvesters
- Smart seeders

Benefits of AI in Precision Farming

1. Increased Productivity

AI helps farmers optimize every stage of crop production, resulting in higher yields.

2. Cost Reduction

Efficient use of water, fertilizers, and pesticides reduces overall farming costs.

3. Resource Optimization

AI ensures that resources are used only where and when needed.

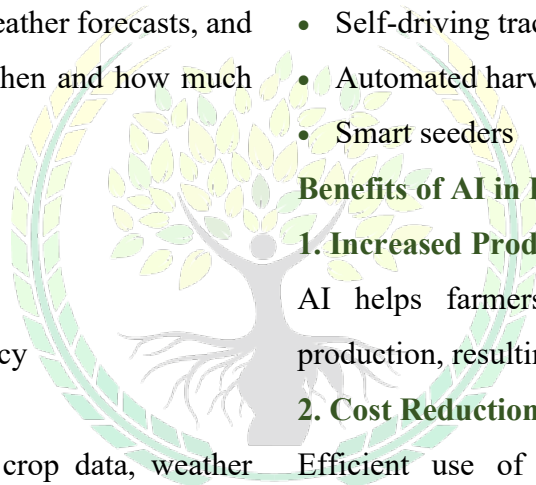
4. Environmental Sustainability

Reduced chemical usage and optimized irrigation help protect the environment.

5. Early Problem Detection

AI systems identify issues such as diseases or pest attacks at an early stage, preventing major losses.

6. Better Decision-Making



AI provides accurate, data-driven insights, enabling informed and timely decisions.



Fig. 2: Benefits of AI in Precision Farming

Future of AI in Precision Farming

The future of agriculture is expected to be highly data-driven and automated. AI will continue to evolve and integrate with other technologies such as:

- Internet of Things (IoT)
- 5G connectivity

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- Robotics
- Blockchain for supply chain tracking

Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence is revolutionizing precision farming by making agriculture smarter, more efficient, and sustainable. From crop monitoring and irrigation management to yield prediction and autonomous machinery, AI is transforming every aspect of farming. Although challenges such as high initial costs and technical barriers exist, the long-term benefits of AI in agriculture are significant. AI not only increases productivity and reduces costs but also ensures the efficient use of natural resources and environmental protection.

Soil Erosion: Causes and Conservation Measures

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Ramu Kumar

Student, School of Agriculture & Environmental Sciences, Shobhit University

www.agrirootsmagazine.in

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Soil erosion is a critical environmental problem involving the removal of the nutrient-rich topsoil layer by natural forces such as water and wind, as well as human activities. This topsoil is rich in nutrients and organic matter, making it essential for agriculture and ecosystem stability. Its loss leads to reduced soil fertility, environmental degradation, and economic challenges, especially in agrarian regions.

Causes of Soil Erosion

Soil erosion occurs due to a combination of natural processes and human interventions.

1. Natural Causes

a. Water Erosion: Rainfall and surface runoff are the most significant natural agents of soil erosion. Intense rainfall dislodges soil particles, while flowing water carries them away, especially on slopes.

b. Wind Erosion: In arid and semi-arid regions, strong winds lift and transport loose, dry soil particles, leading to desertification.

c. Topography: Steep slopes increase the speed of water runoff, accelerating soil erosion.

d. Climate: Heavy rainfall, droughts, and temperature fluctuations weaken soil structure, making it more prone to erosion.

2. Human Causes

a. Deforestation: The removal of vegetation cover exposes soil to wind and water. Tree roots that bind the soil are lost, increasing vulnerability.

b. Overgrazing: Excessive grazing by livestock removes protective vegetation, leaving soil exposed and compacted.

c. Unsustainable Agricultural Practices: Practices such as over-cultivation, monocropping, and improper plowing disturb soil structure and reduce its resistance to erosion.

d. Construction and Urbanization: Infrastructure development disturbs land surfaces and increases runoff, accelerating soil loss.

e. Mining Activities: Mining removes vegetation and topsoil, leaving land highly susceptible to erosion.



Effects of Soil Erosion

- Loss of fertile topsoil and reduced agricultural productivity
- Sedimentation in rivers and reservoirs
- Increased risk of floods and landslides
- Desertification and habitat destruction
- Decline in water quality

Conservation Measures

Effective soil conservation strategies aim to prevent soil loss and maintain soil fertility.

1. Agronomic Practices

a. Contour Plowing: Plowing along the natural contours of the land reduces runoff and soil loss.

b. Crop Rotation: Alternating crops improves soil structure and fertility.

c. Cover Cropping: Growing plants such as legumes during off-seasons protects soil from erosion.

2. Mechanical Measures

a. Terracing: Creating stepped levels on slopes reduces water runoff and retains soil.

b. Check Dams: Small barriers built across water channels slow down water flow and trap sediments.

c. Bunding: Embankments constructed around fields help retain water and soil.

3. Biological Measures

a. Afforestation and Reforestation: Planting trees restores vegetation cover and stabilizes soil.

b. Shelter Belts: Rows of trees planted to reduce wind speed and prevent wind erosion.

c. Grassland Development: Grasses bind soil effectively and reduce surface erosion.

4. Policy and Management Approaches

- Promoting sustainable land use practices
- Implementing soil conservation laws
- Educating farmers about eco-friendly farming
- Encouraging watershed management programs

Conclusion

Soil erosion is a serious environmental issue with far-reaching consequences for agriculture, ecosystems, and human livelihoods. While natural factors play a role, human activities significantly accelerate the process. Adopting a combination of agronomic, mechanical, and biological conservation measures can effectively control soil erosion and ensure sustainable land use for future generations.

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Crop Insurance and Risk Management: Safeguarding Farmers' Futures

ARTICLE ID: 0367

Divyanshu kumar

Student, School of Agriculture and Environmental Science, Shobhit University, Meerut

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Agriculture is a cornerstone of economies worldwide, providing food security, employment, and livelihoods for millions.

However, it is also inherently risky due to exposure to unpredictable factors such as weather events, pests, diseases, and market fluctuations. To mitigate these risks, crop insurance and risk management strategies have become essential tools for farmers. This article explores the various dimensions of crop insurance, the importance of risk management, and their implications for agricultural sustainability and economic stability.

Understanding Crop Insurance

Crop insurance is a risk management tool designed to protect farmers from the financial losses caused by crop failures or reduced yields. It provides a safety net for farmers, ensuring they can recover from adverse events. Crop insurance can be broadly classified into two main types:

1. Revenue Insurance: This type of insurance covers losses in revenue due to low prices or reduced crop

yields. If the final revenue falls below a predetermined threshold, farmers receive compensation.

2. Yields-Based Insurance: This type provides coverage for losses related to the yield of the crop. If

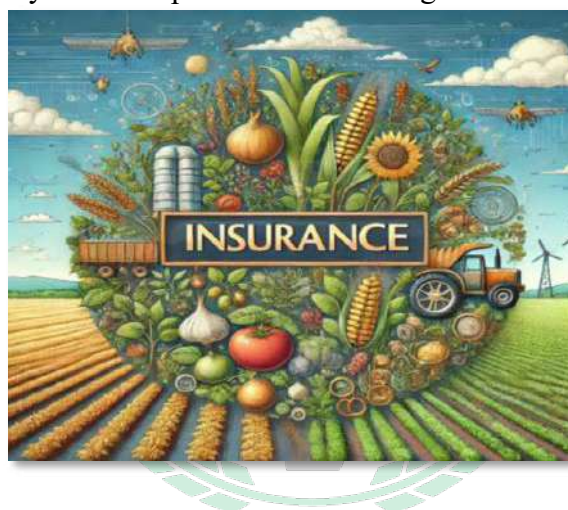
the yield falls below a specific level due to covered perils such as drought or flood, farmers are compensated based on the difference.

Various government-sponsored crop insurance programs have been established in many countries, aimed at encouraging

farmer participation. For instance, the United States' Federal Crop Insurance program provides subsidized insurance premiums, making it more affordable for farmers. Similarly, India's Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) is designed to provide comprehensive risk coverage to farmers at an affordable cost.

The Importance of Risk Management in Agriculture

While crop insurance is a vital component of risk management, it represents just one piece of a broader risk management strategy. Effective risk management



encompasses a range of practices and policies aimed at reducing vulnerability to various risks.

Farmers can engage in several proactive strategies to manage risk more effectively. Diversification is one such strategy; by planting different crops or engaging in multiple income-generating activities, farmers can reduce their dependence on a single crop. This diversification helps spread risk and increases resilience in the face of adverse conditions.

The Role of Technology in Crop Insurance and Risk Management

In recent years, technology has revolutionized crop insurance and risk management. The integration of big data, artificial intelligence, and machine learning has improved risk assessment and underwriting processes. For instance, satellite imagery and remote sensing technologies can provide real-time data on crop health, soil moisture, and weather patterns. This data allows insurance companies to assess risks more accurately and determine appropriate coverage levels.

Moreover, technology facilitates seamless communication between farmers and insurers. Mobile apps and online platforms enable farmers to easily obtain insurance coverage, file claims, and receive payouts quickly. This efficiency not only enhances farmers' trust in insurance but also encourages greater participation in insurance programs.

Blockchain technology is emerging as a game-changer for transparency and accountability in crop insurance. Smart contracts can automate claims processing and expedite payments, ensuring that farmers receive timely compensation for losses. This level of transparency can help reduce fraud and build

trust among stakeholders in the agricultural value chain.

Challenges in Crop Insurance and Risk Management

Despite the benefits of crop insurance and risk management strategies, several challenges persist. Limited awareness and understanding of insurance products can lead to under-participation among farmers. In many regions, farmers may hesitate to invest in insurance due to misconceptions about its costs and benefits.

Additionally, the complexity of insurance products can overwhelm smallholder farmers, who may lack the technical knowledge to navigate options effectively. Simplifying insurance products and providing educational resources about their benefits is essential for increasing adoption rates in vulnerable farming communities.

Impact on the Agricultural Sector

The integration of crop insurance and effective risk management strategies has widespread implications for the agricultural sector. Firstly, these measures help stabilize farmers' incomes, allowing them to continue investing in their farms and contributing to food production. Financial stability encourages long-term planning and investment in sustainable practices, which enhances overall agricultural productivity and resilience against future shocks.

Impact on the Indian Economy

In India, where agriculture is a significant contributor to the national economy, crop insurance and risk management initiatives hold immense potential to strengthen economic stability. The agricultural sector

employs a large percentage of the population and contributes significantly to GDP. By safeguarding farmers against risks, crop insurance can enhance their income stability, leading to increased disposable

income and improved rural purchasing power. This, in turn, can stimulate demand for goods and services, positively impacting the broader economy.

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Agricultural Policies and Their Impact on Farmers

ARTICLE ID: 0368

Purna Kumari Singh

Student, School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Shobhit University, Meerut

Agriculture plays a crucial role in the economic and social development of many countries, especially in developing nations like India. It contributes significantly to employment and food security. In India, agriculture employs over 40% of the workforce and remains central to rural livelihoods. To support this sector, governments implement various agricultural policies aimed at increasing productivity, ensuring food security, and improving farmers' incomes. However, these policies often produce both positive and negative impacts on farmers.

Types of Agricultural Policies

1. Price Support Policies

Price policies such as Minimum Support Price (MSP) aim to ensure remunerative prices for farmers. These policies protect farmers from price fluctuations and market uncertainties. However, studies show that price policy mechanisms are often inefficient and inaccessible to many farmers, leading to uneven benefits.

2. Input Subsidy Policies

Governments provide subsidies on fertilizers, electricity, irrigation, and seeds to reduce production costs. These policies have contributed to increased agricultural productivity. For example, improved access to inputs has helped sustain agricultural growth in India at around 3.6% annually.



However, excessive subsidies can lead to environmental degradation. Fertilizer subsidies, while improving crop yields, have also contributed to soil degradation and climate-related challenges.

3. Trade and Market Policies

Agricultural trade policies regulate exports, imports, and domestic markets. While these policies aim to stabilize food prices, they often result in lower farm-gate prices, reducing farmers' income. Government interventions sometimes depress market prices even when production increases.

4. Crop Insurance and Financial Policies

Crop insurance schemes and credit policies help farmers manage risks associated with climate

variability and crop failure. Access to credit improves productivity and efficiency, especially among low-income farmers, as observed in empirical studies.

5. Structural and Institutional Policies

Policies promoting Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), contract farming, and cooperatives aim to

strengthen farmers' market access and bargaining power. Contract farming, for instance, has shown potential to increase profits by up to 51% and reduce input costs. However, implementation challenges and institutional weaknesses limit their effectiveness.

Rank	Country	AgGDP	Share of AgGDP	Population (2010)
1	China	146 000	0.26	323 000
2	India	60 600	0.22	255 000
3	United States	21 800	0.14	69 100
4	Russian Federation	14 300	0.26	27 100
5	Iran, Islamic Republic of	13 400	0.44	40 600
6	Brazil	12 600	0.14	9230
6	Pakistan	12 600	0.28	42 600
7	Australia	10 900	0.44	6130
8	Italy	6560	0.17	7120
9	Canada	5540	0.25	5000

Impact of Agricultural Policies on Farmers.

Positive Impacts

1. Increased Productivity

Policies supporting irrigation, fertilizers, and technology adoption have significantly improved agricultural output.

2. Income Stabilization

Price support and direct income schemes provide financial security and reduce vulnerability to market fluctuations.

3. Risk Reduction

Crop insurance and credit facilities help farmers cope with uncertainties like droughts and crop failures.

4. Market Access and Efficiency

Institutional reforms such as FPOs and contract farming improve farmers' access to markets and enhance efficiency.

Negative Impacts

1. Unequal Distribution of Benefits

Many policies disproportionately benefit large farmers, leaving small and marginal farmers behind. For example, agricultural aid distribution can be skewed toward wealthier farmers.

2. Environmental Degradation

Subsidies encouraging intensive input use have contributed to groundwater depletion and soil degradation.

3. Market Distortions

Price controls and trade restrictions can reduce farmers' incentives and distort market signals.

4. Implementation Challenges

Weak infrastructure, lack of awareness, and bureaucratic inefficiencies limit policy effectiveness.

Recent Challenges and Policy Debates

Recent developments highlight ongoing tensions in agricultural policymaking. For example, protests by fertilizer dealers and farmers against certain policies

indicate dissatisfaction with policy implementation and market practices . Similarly, structural constraints limit the effectiveness of initiatives like FPOs despite their potential.

Conclusion

Agricultural policies play a vital role in shaping the livelihoods of farmers and the overall agricultural economy. While these policies have contributed to

increased productivity, income stability, and food security, they also present challenges such as inequality, environmental degradation, and market distortions. Therefore, future policy reforms should focus on inclusive growth, sustainable practices, and efficient implementation to ensure that the benefits reach all farmers, especially small and marginal ones.

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High – Density Planting in Fruit Crops

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Aman Kumar Chaudhary

Student, School of Agriculture and Environmental Science, Shobhit University, Meerut

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High-Density Planting (HDP) is an advanced and efficient technique used in modern fruit cultivation to increase productivity per unit area. In traditional orchards, fruit trees are planted at wider spacing, which often results in underutilization of land, sunlight, water, and nutrients. With the increasing pressure on agricultural land and the growing demand for fruits, it has become necessary to adopt improved cultivation methods. HDP helps in addressing this challenge by allowing more plants to be grown in the same area with proper scientific management. This system focuses on maintaining plant size, improving light interception, and ensuring better use of available resources. Practices such as training, pruning, and canopy management play an important role in its success.

High-Density Planting (HDP) is a method of growing fruit crops at closer spacing than traditional systems to increase the number of plants per unit area. It uses improved varieties and scientific practices like pruning and canopy management. The main aim is to

achieve higher yield and better fruits with efficient use of resources.

Principles of High-Density Planting (HDP)

(a) Use of Dwarf and Semi-Dwarf Varieties: Dwarf and semi-dwarf plants are used to control plant size and

maintain a compact canopy.

This makes management easier and allows more plants to be grown in limited space.

(b) Closer Spacing of Plants: Plants are grown at closer spacing to increase

plant population per unit area. Proper spacing is maintained to avoid overcrowding and ensure healthy growth.

(c) Canopy Management: Training and pruning are done to maintain plant shape and size. It helps in better sunlight penetration and air circulation, improving growth and fruit quality.

(d) Efficient Use of Resources: Water and nutrients are supplied efficiently using methods like drip irrigation and fertigation. This reduces wastage and supports better plant development.

Types of High-Density Planting (HDP)



1. Moderate High-Density Planting: Plants are grown at slightly closer spacing than the traditional system. It is easy to manage and does not require very intensive practices. Yield increases compared to the conventional method.

2. High-Density Planting (HDP): A higher number of plants are grown per unit area with reduced spacing. It requires proper pruning and management for better yield. It ensures efficient use of land and resources.

3. Ultra High-Density Planting (UHDP): Plants are grown at very close spacing with very high plant population. It needs intensive management and gives maximum productivity. Regular pruning and strict canopy control are essential.

Planting Systems in High-Density Planting (HDP)

(1) Square System: Plants are spaced equally in both directions, forming a square pattern. It is simple and allows easy field operations. This system ensures uniform distribution of plants and better utilization of available space.

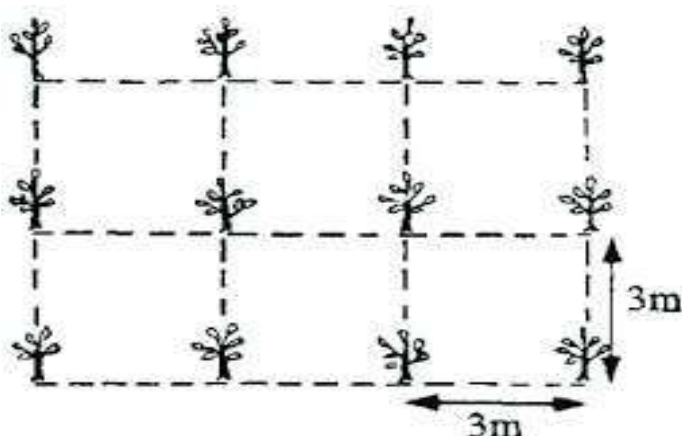


Fig. Square Planting system

(2) Rectangular System : Row spacing is more than plant spacing within the row. It provides better movement and improves light distribution. This

arrangement is useful for easy use of machinery and field management.

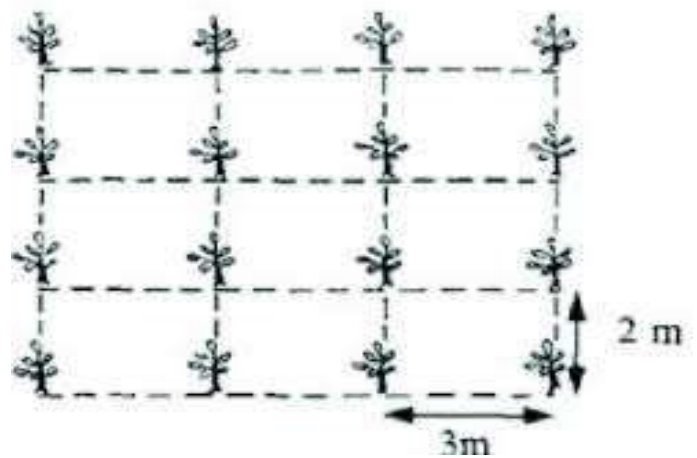


Fig. Rectangular Planting system

(3) Hedge Row System: Plants are arranged in rows like hedges with closer spacing. Regular pruning is required to maintain shape and size. It makes operations like spraying and harvesting more convenient.



Fig: Hedge Row System

(4) Meadow Orchard System: Plants are grown very close and kept small through pruning. It is used in ultra high-density planting for maximum production. Frequent pruning is essential to maintain plant size and productivity.

Components of High-Density Planting (HDP)

Selection of Suitable Varieties : Dwarf or semi-dwarf and high-yielding varieties are selected to control plant size and ensure better productivity.

Proper Spacing and Layout : Plants are arranged at optimum spacing to accommodate more plants while maintaining proper growth conditions.

Training and Pruning : Regular training and pruning are done to maintain plant shape and control canopy size for better light penetration.

Irrigation and Fertigation: Drip irrigation supplies water directly to the root zone, ensuring efficient use of water. Fertigation provides nutrients along with irrigation for better and uniform plant growth.

Management Practices in High-Density Planting (HDP)

Training and Pruning: Regular training and pruning are essential to maintain plant size and shape in HDP. It helps in proper light penetration and improves overall plant productivity.

Canopy Management: Canopy is controlled to ensure better air circulation and sunlight distribution. This reduces disease incidence and improves fruit quality.

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Weed Control: Weeds are managed regularly to reduce competition for water and nutrients. This helps plants grow efficiently and produce better yield.

Pest and Disease Control: Proper plant protection measures are followed to prevent pest and disease attack. Close spacing makes monitoring and timely control very important.

Irrigation and Nutrient Management: Water and nutrients are supplied efficiently through methods like drip irrigation and fertigation to support uniform plant growth.

Conclusion

High-Density Planting is an advanced and efficient method of fruit cultivation that focuses on maximizing production from limited land resources. It helps in increasing yield, improving fruit quality, and ensuring better use of water and nutrients. Although it requires proper management, its benefits make it a suitable option for modern horticulture. With the adoption of improved techniques, HDP can play an important role in meeting the growing demand for fruits.

Micro-Irrigation System: Drip and Sprinkler Technologies

ARTICLE ID: 0370

Shyambabu Kumar

Student, School of Agriculture & Environmental Sciences, Shobhit University, Meerut

Micro-irrigation systems, comprising drip and sprinkler technologies, represent a modern, high-efficiency approach to agriculture designed to address growing water scarcity and the limitations of traditional surface irrigation methods. These systems, often referred to as *localized irrigation*, deliver water and essential nutrients directly to the root zone of plants or through a targeted, low-height spray at low pressure. This minimizes evaporation, runoff, and deep percolation losses.

With increasing pressure on water resources, micro-irrigation has emerged as a critical technology, capable of significantly improving water use efficiency and reducing water consumption by 40–80% compared to conventional flooding methods.

Core Technologies of Micro-Irrigation

1. Drip Irrigation (Trickle Irrigation)

Drip irrigation involves a network of valves, pipes, and tubing that applies water slowly (drop by drop) to the soil surface or directly below it, targeting individual

plant root zones. This method is highly effective for widely spaced crops such as fruit trees, vegetables, and row crops.

Key Components of a Drip Irrigation System

- **Pump Unit:** Moves water from the source.
- **Control Head:** Includes filters (screen or sand) and valves to regulate pressure and discharge.
- **Main and Submain Lines:** Transport water from the source to the field.
- **Laterals:** Smaller pipes that distribute water along crop rows.



- **Emitters/Drippers:**

Deliver water directly to the root zone (typically 1–4 L/hr).

- **Fertigation Tank:** Allows application of fertilizers through irrigation water.

Advantages of Drip Irrigation

- High water use efficiency due to direct root-zone application
- Improved yield and crop quality
- Reduced water, fertilizer, and labor costs
- Suitable for saline water conditions

- Adaptable to a wide range of crops

Types of Drip Systems

- **Surface Drip System:** Emitters placed on the soil surface
- **Subsurface Drip System:** Emitters buried below the soil surface
- **Solar-Powered Drip System:** Uses solar energy for pumping water

Installation and Maintenance Tips

- Ensure proper filtration to prevent clogging
- Use pressure regulators for uniform distribution
- Conduct regular inspection and maintenance

2. Sprinkler and Micro-Sprinkler Irrigation

Sprinkler irrigation systems apply water under pressure to simulate rainfall. Micro-sprinklers distribute water in fine sprays or mist, covering a larger area than drip systems. These are ideal for orchards, lawns, and nursery crops.

Key Features

- **Application Method:** Sprayers or rotating heads distribute water over a defined radius
- **System Components:** Pump, filters, pressure regulators, valves, lateral pipes, and sprinkler heads

Advantages

- Uniform water distribution
- Suitable for high-value crops and nurseries

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- Effective on various soil types and uneven terrains
- Enables fertigation

Limitations and Maintenance

- Susceptible to clogging without proper filtration
- Wind may affect water distribution
- Higher initial installation cost

Key Takeaways

- **Drip Irrigation:** Maximizes efficiency by delivering water directly to the root zone; suitable for orchards and row crops.
- **Sprinkler Irrigation:** Provides uniform coverage and mimics natural rainfall.
- **Benefits:** Water conservation, reduced labor, higher productivity, and adaptability to diverse soils and terrains.
- **Challenges:** High initial investment and need for technical knowledge in operation and maintenance.

Conclusion

Drip and sprinkler irrigation systems play a vital role in modern agriculture by improving water efficiency and crop productivity. Their adoption is especially important in water-scarce regions. The choice between these systems depends on crop type, soil characteristics, and economic considerations. Overall, micro-irrigation technologies offer a sustainable alternative to traditional irrigation practices.

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Organic Farming: Principles and Practices

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Ritik Raushan Thakur

Student, School of Agriculture & Environmental Sciences, Shobhit University, Meerut

www.agrirootsmagazine.in

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Organic farming is a sustainable agricultural system that focuses on maintaining ecological balance, improving soil fertility, and producing safe and nutritious food. It avoids the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and genetically modified organisms, relying instead on natural inputs and biological processes. With growing concerns about environmental degradation and health hazards caused by chemical farming, organic agriculture is emerging as an important alternative worldwide.

Principles of Organic Farming

Organic farming is based on four fundamental principles proposed by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM):

- 1. Principle of Health:** Organic agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plants, animals, humans, and the planet as a whole.
- 2. Principle of Ecology:** It should be based on living ecological systems and cycles, working with them and helping to sustain them.

- 3. Principle of Fairness:** Organic farming should build relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities.

- 4. Principle of Care:** It should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well-being of present and future generations.



Practices of Organic Farming

- 1. Crop Rotation:** Growing different crops in sequence to maintain soil fertility and break pest and disease cycles.
- 2. Use of Organic Manures:** Application of farmyard manure (FYM), compost, and vermicompost to enrich soil nutrients and improve soil structure.
- 3. Green Manuring:** Incorporation of green plants (especially legumes) into the soil to increase organic matter and nitrogen content.
- 4. Biological Pest Control:** Use of natural predators, parasites, and botanical pesticides such as neem-based products.
- 5. Mulching:** Covering the soil with organic materials to conserve moisture, reduce weeds, and regulate temperature.

6. **Weed Management:** Use of manual and mechanical methods instead of chemical herbicides.
7. **Use of Indigenous Seeds:** Preference for locally adapted varieties that are resistant to pests and climatic stress.
8. **Integrated Farming Systems:** Combining crops, livestock, and other enterprises to enhance sustainability and farm income.

Advantages of Organic Farming

- Improves soil fertility and long-term productivity.
- Produces chemical-free, safe, and nutritious food.
- Conserves biodiversity and protects the environment.
- Reduces pollution and enhances ecological balance.

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Limitations of Organic Farming

- Lower yields during the initial years of transition.
- Requires more labor and management skills.
- Certification processes can be costly and complex.
- Limited availability of organic inputs in some regions.

Conclusion

Organic farming represents a holistic and environmentally friendly approach to agriculture. It not only ensures sustainable production but also protects natural resources and human health. With proper awareness, training, and institutional support, organic farming can play a vital role in achieving sustainable agricultural development.

The Future Is Up: How Vertical Farming and Hydroponics Are Revolutionizing Agriculture

ARTICLE ID: 0372

Pankaj Kumar

Student, School of Agriculture & Environmental Sciences, Shobhit University, Meerut

Vertical farming and hydroponics are transforming modern agriculture by enabling crop production in vertically stacked, controlled indoor environments without the use of soil. These innovative systems can reduce water consumption by up to 90% and require significantly less land while minimizing or eliminating the use of pesticides. Such advancements allow year-round production of fresh produce in urban areas, contributing to improved food security and sustainable agriculture.

With the rapid growth of urban populations and the continuous decline in arable land, traditional agriculture is facing unprecedented challenges. In this context, vertical farming and hydroponics are emerging as promising solutions for the future of food production.

Farming Without Soil

Hydroponics is a sustainable method of cultivating plants without soil by supplying nutrients directly

through water-based solutions. These systems are generally established in controlled environments such as greenhouses or indoor farms. Hydroponics significantly reduces water usage and enhances space

efficiency, especially when crops are cultivated vertically.

Some widely used hydroponic techniques include:

- Nutrient Film Technique (NFT)
- Deep Water Culture



(DWC)

- Aeroponics

When combined with vertical farming—the practice of growing crops in stacked layers—the productivity of agriculture increases dramatically. A single vertical farming facility can produce substantially higher yields per acre compared to conventional farming while using 90–95% less water.

Why This Technology Matters in 2026

Unmatched Water Efficiency

Hydroponic systems recirculate nutrient-rich water, reducing water consumption by up to 90% compared

to traditional soil-based farming. This is particularly valuable in regions experiencing water scarcity.

Climate Resilience and Food Security

Since crops are cultivated in controlled environments, production remains protected from droughts, floods, pests, and other climate-related challenges. This ensures a stable year-round food supply.

Sustainability and Efficient Land Use

Vertical farming maximizes productivity in limited urban spaces such as warehouses and shipping containers. It also reduces transportation requirements and lowers carbon emissions by enabling local food production.

Technological Integration (IoT and AI)

By 2026, artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT) sensors, and advanced LED lighting systems are making vertical farming more efficient and cost-effective. These technologies precisely manage nutrients, temperature, humidity, and lighting conditions.

High-Quality and Clean Produce

The controlled and soil-free environment minimizes the use of pesticides and herbicides, resulting in cleaner, healthier, and more consistent produce.

The Technology Powering the Green Shift

Modern vertical farms are highly automated systems. Artificial intelligence and IoT-based sensors continuously monitor and regulate environmental conditions such as light intensity, temperature, humidity, and nutrient supply to optimize plant growth.

Specialized LED lighting systems provide plants with the exact light spectrum required for

photosynthesis, improving both crop quality and productivity.

Core Challenges and Possible Solutions

High Initial Investment (CAPEX)

Establishing vertical farming facilities requires substantial investment in infrastructure, LED lighting, climate control systems, and automation technologies.

Solution: Adopting modular farming systems can help farmers expand operations gradually as profitability increases.

High Energy Consumption

Indoor farms depend heavily on artificial lighting and HVAC systems, which contribute significantly to operational costs.

Solution: The integration of renewable energy sources such as solar power and the adoption of energy-efficient LED technologies can reduce energy expenses.

Limited Crop Diversity

Currently, vertical farming is economically suitable mainly for high-value and fast-growing crops such as leafy vegetables, herbs, and microgreens. Staple crops like wheat and rice are still difficult to cultivate profitably in such systems.

Solution: Continuous research in biotechnology and plant breeding may help develop crop varieties better suited for controlled-environment agriculture.

Need for Technical Expertise

Managing hydroponic and vertical farming systems requires knowledge of plant science, engineering, and data management.

Solution: Workforce training programs and AI-driven automation can simplify system management and improve operational efficiency.

System Vulnerability

Power failures or mechanical breakdowns can rapidly damage crops because plants depend entirely on controlled environmental systems.

Solution: Backup power systems and smart IoT-based monitoring technologies can help detect and address issues in real time.

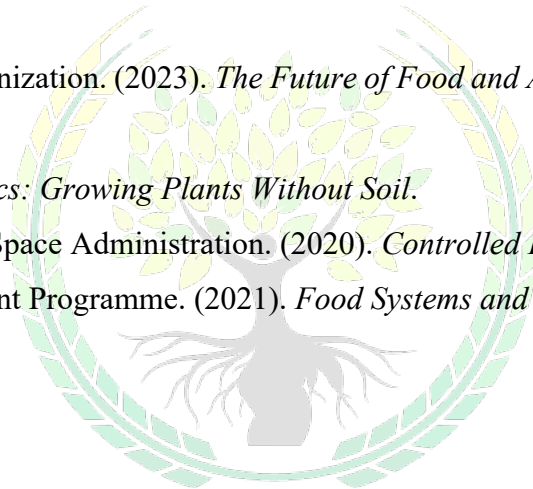
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Conclusion

Vertical farming and hydroponics are not intended to replace conventional agriculture entirely; rather, they are designed to complement traditional farming systems. These technologies are especially effective for producing high-demand crops such as leafy greens, herbs, and soft fruits close to urban consumers.

As technological advancements continue, vertical farming offers a sustainable pathway toward ensuring food security, resource conservation, and access to fresh produce in increasingly crowded urban environments.



Role of Startups in Agricultural Innovation

ARTICLE ID: 0373

Amaan

Student, School of Agriculture & Environmental Sciences, Shobhit University, Meerut

Agriculture, one of the oldest and most important sectors of the economy, is undergoing a major transformation due to innovation and technological advancements. In recent years, startups have emerged as key drivers of agricultural innovation by introducing new ideas, advanced equipment, and efficient farming practices. These agri-startups are utilizing modern technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), drones, and data analytics to improve farm productivity, reduce risks, and ensure better resource management.

Startups play a significant role in promoting precision farming, which enables efficient use of inputs such as water, fertilizers, and pesticides through real-time data analysis. They also develop digital platforms that directly connect farmers with buyers, thereby eliminating intermediaries and ensuring fair prices. In addition, many startups focus on reducing post-harvest losses, improving storage facilities, and strengthening

supply chain management, all of which are critical concerns in agriculture.

Another important contribution of startups is their emphasis on sustainability. They encourage organic farming, climate-smart agriculture, and eco-friendly practices to address environmental challenges. By providing innovative financial services, advisory support, and access to modern



technologies, startups enable small and marginal farmers to adopt advanced agricultural methods. Furthermore, agri-startups create employment opportunities in rural areas and attract youth toward agriculture, making the sector more dynamic and progressive. Overall, startups act as catalysts for agricultural innovation by enhancing productivity, profitability, and sustainability while contributing to the overall growth of the agricultural sector.

1. Need for Innovation in Agriculture

By 2050, global food demand is expected to increase by nearly 70% due to rapid population growth. Despite

advancements in agriculture, approximately 9.9% of the world's population still suffers from hunger. Feeding nearly 10 billion people remains a major challenge, particularly under changing climatic conditions and limited natural resources. Therefore, innovation and technology in agriculture have become essential for improving productivity, sustainability, and food security.

Modern agricultural technologies are transforming the ways farmers grow, manage, store, and transport crops, offering promising solutions for the future.

1.1 Bee Vectoring Technology (BVT)

Bee Vectoring Technology uses bees to deliver natural pest-control agents directly to crops during pollination. This method reduces the need for chemical pesticides, supports environmental sustainability, and improves crop yield and soil health. It is particularly suitable for crops such as apples, tomatoes, and sunflowers.



Fig. 1: Bee Vectoring Technology

1.2 Precision Agriculture

Precision agriculture utilizes sensors, drones, automation, and data analysis to monitor soil, weather, and crop conditions. It helps farmers optimize resource utilization, increase productivity, and improve crop quality while ensuring sustainability and profitability.

1.3 Indoor Vertical Farming

Vertical farming involves cultivating crops in stacked layers within controlled environments using hydroponics or aeroponics. This technology increases crop yield, saves up to 70% water, reduces labor requirements, and allows year-round crop production.



Fig. 2: Indoor Vertical Farming

1.4 Livestock Farming Technology

Modern livestock technologies include automated milking systems, smart feeders, and health-monitoring sensors. These innovations improve animal welfare, productivity, and farm management efficiency.

1.5 Laser Scarecrows

Laser scarecrows use green laser beams to deter birds from damaging crops. This modern technology can reduce crop losses by 70–90% without harming wildlife.

1.6 Farm Automation

Farm automation employs robotics, drones, and autonomous machinery for activities such as planting, harvesting, and weeding. It reduces labor dependency, saves time, and increases operational efficiency and crop yield.

1.7 Real-Time Kinematic (RTK) Technology

RTK technology provides highly accurate GPS data for agricultural machinery. It enables precise field

mapping and controlled-traffic farming, thereby improving soil health and farm productivity.

1.8 Minichromosome Technology

This genetic innovation enhances crop traits such as drought tolerance and pest resistance without altering the plant's natural genes. It reduces dependence on harmful chemicals and improves nutritional quality.

1.9 Farm Management Software

Farm management software helps farmers monitor operations, manage resources, and make informed decisions using real-time data. It integrates various farm activities such as finance, production, and supply chain management.

1.10 Water Management Technology

Advanced irrigation systems, such as drip irrigation, deliver water directly to plant roots. These systems reduce water usage by up to 50%, improve crop quality, and conserve valuable resources.

2. Technology Integration (AI, IoT, and Drones) in Agriculture

Precision agriculture is a modern farming approach that uses advanced technologies to increase productivity while minimizing environmental impact. Drone technology plays a major role in this transformation by providing accurate real-time data and improving farm management practices.



Fig. 3: Technology Integration (AI, IoT, and Drones)

Technological Innovations in Agriculture

Precision Agriculture and IoT

IoT sensors, satellite imagery, and drones provide real-time information on soil health, crop conditions, and weather patterns. This allows precise application of water, fertilizers, and pesticides, reducing resource wastage. Some technologies can reduce water consumption by 30–50%.

AI and Robotics

Artificial Intelligence and robotic systems are used for automated weeding, harvesting, and pest control. These technologies help overcome labor shortages and reduce production costs. Examples include AI-powered robotic weeders and automated stem cutters.

Advanced Genetics and Biotechnology

Technologies such as CRISPR-Cas9 and minichromosome technology improve crop traits including drought resistance and pest tolerance. These innovations reduce dependence on chemical inputs and enhance agricultural sustainability.

Vertical and Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA)

Controlled environment agriculture involves growing crops indoors or in vertical farms to optimize space utilization and support year-round cultivation, especially in urban areas.

Digital Platforms and Blockchain

Farm management software assists in monitoring farm operations, while blockchain technology improves food traceability and supply chain transparency.

Smart Irrigation Systems

Smart irrigation systems use soil-moisture sensors to provide precise irrigation based on crop needs, saving up to 50% water.

3. Impact of Agri-Startups

Online Marketplaces

Startups provide mobile applications and digital platforms that enable farmers to purchase inputs and equipment conveniently. They also offer solutions for crop-related problems, making farming more efficient.

Data-Driven Farming

By using AI and data analytics, startups predict market demand and weather-related risks. This enables farmers to make informed decisions and reduce potential losses.

Supply Chain Technology

Digital platforms connect farmers directly with consumers and buyers, reducing the role of intermediaries. This increases farmers' income and improves market transparency.

Machine-Based Quality Management

Technologies such as image analysis and blockchain are used to assess product quality and provide traceability information to consumers.

Employment Generation

Agri-tech startups generate employment opportunities in areas such as farm management, logistics, technical services, and data analysis, especially for rural youth.

4. Challenges Faced by Agricultural Startups

1. High initial investment and limited access to venture capital.
2. Resistance among farmers toward adopting new technologies.

3. Complex government regulations and policy barriers.
4. Uncertain returns on technology investments.
5. Requirement of skill development and training for advanced technologies.
6. Slow adoption and penetration of agricultural technologies, reducing investor interest.

5. Future Prospects in Agricultural Innovation

5.1 Precision Farming and Automation

Startups are increasingly deploying IoT sensors and AI-driven platforms for soil monitoring and automated irrigation systems. Autonomous machinery, drones, and robotics are being used for weed detection and crop monitoring to improve productivity.

5.2 Digital Marketplaces and Supply Chains

Digital platforms are eliminating intermediaries by directly connecting farmers with buyers through mobile applications. This enhances farmers' income and reduces post-harvest losses.

5.3 Biotechnology and Sustainability

Innovations include eco-friendly biopesticides, biodegradable bioplastics, and gene-editing technologies such as CRISPR for developing drought-resistant and nutrient-rich crop varieties.

5.4 Financial and Advisory Services

Agri-startups are improving farmers' access to agricultural financing and providing data-based advisory services related to weather, soil health, and crop management.

Conclusion

Agriculture is experiencing a significant transformation driven by innovation and technology, with startups playing a vital role in this evolution. By

integrating advanced technologies such as AI, IoT, drones, and data analytics, agri-startups are improving productivity, optimizing resource use, and promoting sustainable farming practices.

These innovations help address major global challenges including food security, climate change, and resource scarcity while increasing farmers' income and reducing agricultural risks. Startups are also strengthening supply chains, reducing post-harvest losses, and creating employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas.

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Although challenges such as high investment costs, slow technology adoption, and policy barriers remain, the future of agriculture appears promising with continuous technological advancement. Innovation-driven agriculture supported by startups has the potential to create a more efficient, sustainable, and resilient agricultural system capable of ensuring food security and economic growth for the expanding global population.

Role of Growth Regulators in Horticultural Crops

ARTICLE ID: 0374

Shivam Kumar

Student, School of Agriculture and Environmental Science, Shobhit University, Meerut

Growth regulators, also known as plant hormones, play a crucial role in the growth, development, and productivity of horticultural crops. These naturally occurring compounds or synthetic analogues influence various physiological processes, including cell division, cell elongation, flowering, fruit setting, and ripening. Proper understanding and utilization of growth regulators can significantly improve horticultural practices by enhancing crop yield, quality, and uniformity. This article discusses the major types of growth regulators, their effects on horticultural crops, and their importance in sustainable agriculture.

Types of Growth Regulators

Growth regulators are classified into different groups based on their functions and chemical nature. The major types are as follows:

1. Auxins

Auxins are essential for cell elongation and differentiation. They promote root initiation and

development and are widely used in rooting powders for vegetative propagation through cuttings.

2. Gibberellins (GAs)

Gibberellins stimulate stem elongation, seed germination, and flowering. They are commonly used to induce parthenocarpy (seedless fruit formation) and

improve fruit size and quality.

3. Cytokinins

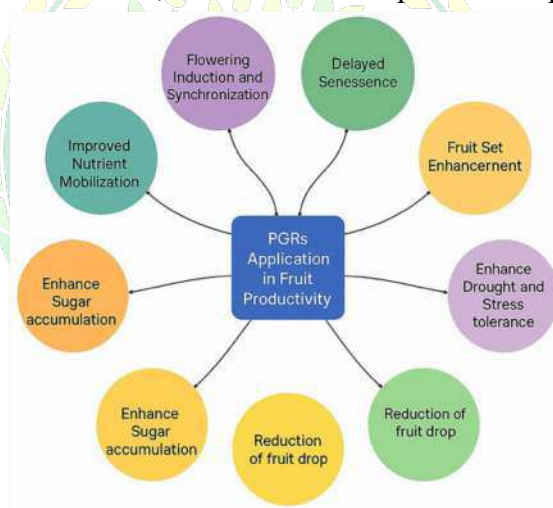
Cytokinins promote cell division and delay senescence (aging) in plants. They are useful in extending the shelf life of fruits and vegetables after harvest.

4. Ethylene

Ethylene is a gaseous plant hormone responsible for fruit ripening and senescence. It is widely used for synchronized ripening and better harvest management.

5. Abscisic Acid (ABA)

Abscisic acid plays an important role in stress tolerance, especially under drought conditions. It regulates stomatal closure and helps plants reduce water loss.



Effects of Growth Regulators on Horticultural Crops

The application of growth regulators produces several beneficial effects in horticultural crops.

Auxins promote root development, improving the establishment of young plants and enhancing nutrient absorption. They are widely used in the propagation of ornamental and vegetable crops.

Gibberellins improve fruit size and quality in crops such as grapes and citrus. They are also used to induce flowering in crops like pineapple, ensuring synchronized harvesting.

Cytokinins help maintain post-harvest quality by delaying senescence, thereby increasing the storage life and market value of fruits and vegetables.

Ethylene management is particularly important in climacteric fruits such as banana, tomato, and apple. Controlled ethylene application helps regulate ripening and ensures fruits reach consumers at optimum quality. ABA improves drought tolerance by reducing water loss through stomatal regulation, thereby increasing plant resilience under water-stressed conditions.

Role of Technology in Applying Growth Regulators

Advancements in agricultural technology have improved the application and monitoring of growth regulators in horticulture.

Tissue Culture

Tissue culture techniques allow precise application of growth regulators during plant propagation. Optimized hormone concentrations help in producing healthy and uniform planting material.

Precision Agriculture

Precision agriculture tools such as soil moisture sensors and weather-monitoring systems assist in determining the ideal timing and dosage of growth regulator application. This improves efficiency and reduces environmental impact.

Remote Sensing

Remote sensing technologies, including drones and imaging sensors, help monitor plant health and crop responses in real time. Such data support informed decision-making regarding growth regulator management.

Challenges in the Use of Growth Regulators

Despite their advantages, the use of growth regulators presents several challenges.

One major issue is overdosing, which may result in abnormal growth, poor quality, or phytotoxicity. Therefore, proper knowledge regarding application rates and methods is essential.

Crop responses to growth regulators vary depending on species, environmental conditions, and growth stages. This variability makes it difficult to develop universal recommendations.

Regulatory restrictions regarding the use of growth regulators differ among countries, requiring growers to comply with safety standards and agricultural regulations.

In recent years, there has also been growing interest in organic and eco-friendly alternatives to synthetic growth regulators. Research on natural biostimulants and plant-based growth promoters is increasing to ensure environmental sustainability.

Impact on the Horticultural Sector

Growth regulators have significantly contributed to increased productivity, quality, and sustainability in horticulture. By controlling plant growth and development, they help produce high-quality fruits and vegetables that meet market demands.

For example, gibberellin application in grape cultivation improves berry size, uniformity, and market value. Similarly, cytokinins reduce post-harvest losses by extending shelf life.

Growth regulators also promote uniformity in crop production, which is essential in commercial horticulture. Consistency in fruit size, colour, flavour, and ripening improves marketability and reduces wastage.

Moreover, these regulators support sustainable farming practices by improving crop tolerance to environmental stresses, thereby reducing dependence on excessive chemical inputs.

Impact on the Economy

The use of growth regulators positively influences the economy by improving agricultural productivity and profitability. Higher yields and better-quality produce increase farmers' income and contribute to rural development.

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Enhanced horticultural production also supports export opportunities, contributing to national economic growth. Increased demand for fresh fruits and vegetables creates employment in farming, packaging, transportation, and marketing sectors.

As the global population continues to rise, growth regulators can help meet the increasing food demand sustainably while maintaining environmental balance.

Additionally, research and innovation in growth regulator technology encourage investment in modern agriculture, fostering collaboration among scientists, agronomists, and farmers.

Conclusion

Growth regulators are essential tools in modern horticulture, significantly influencing plant growth, yield, quality, and stress tolerance. Their proper use improves productivity, profitability, and sustainability in horticultural crop production. Technological advancements and ongoing research continue to enhance their effectiveness and environmental safety.

In the future, growth regulators will play an increasingly important role in ensuring food security and sustainable agricultural development.

Rainwater Harvesting in Agriculture

ARTICLE ID: 0375

Sumant Kumar

Student, School of Agriculture and Environmental Science, Shobhit University, Meerut

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Rainwater harvesting (RWH) is an important technique for collecting, storing, and utilizing rainwater for agricultural purposes.

It involves the management and conservation of rainwater either *in situ* (where it falls) or through the storage of runoff for later use. In the context of increasing water scarcity, unpredictable rainfall, and climate change, rainwater harvesting has emerged as a sustainable solution for improving agricultural productivity and water security.

Agriculture is one of the largest consumers of freshwater resources globally, utilizing nearly 60–90% of available water. Therefore, efficient water management practices such as rainwater harvesting are essential for sustainable farming systems.

Rainwater harvesting plays a vital role in enhancing agricultural sustainability, especially in arid and semi-arid regions. It helps farmers cope with irregular rainfall and drought conditions by providing a reliable source of water for crops. Stored rainwater can be used for supplementary irrigation during critical

crop growth stages, thereby improving crop yield and reducing the risk of crop failure.

Additionally, rainwater harvesting reduces

dependence on groundwater resources, which are rapidly depleting in many agricultural regions. It also minimizes soil erosion and nutrient loss by controlling surface runoff.

This method involves

conserving rainwater directly in the field where it falls.

Common techniques include:

- Contour bunding
- Mulching
- Terracing
- Broad bed and furrow system

These practices improve soil moisture retention and reduce runoff losses.

In this method, runoff water is collected and stored in structures such as:

- Farm ponds
- Check dams
- Percolation tanks



- Reservoirs

The stored water is later used for irrigation during dry periods.

Although more common in urban areas, rooftop rainwater harvesting can also be adopted in farm buildings to collect water for irrigation and livestock use.

Rainwater harvesting provides water during dry spells, ensuring continuous crop growth. Studies have shown that crop yields can increase significantly when supplementary irrigation is available.

By storing and utilizing rainwater efficiently, farmers can maximize water productivity and reduce water wastage.

Harvested rainwater helps recharge underground aquifers, thereby maintaining long-term water availability.

Importance of Rainwater Harvesting in Agriculture

Methods of Rainwater Harvesting in Agriculture

1. In-situ Water Harvesting
2. Ex-situ Water Harvesting
3. Rooftop Rainwater Harvesting

Benefits of Rainwater Harvesting

1. Increased Crop Productivity
2. Improved Water Use Efficiency
3. Groundwater Recharge

4. Soil Conservation

Rainwater harvesting reduces soil erosion by minimizing runoff and helps maintain soil fertility.

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5. Climate Change Adaptation

Rainwater harvesting increases resilience against climate variability by reducing dependence on erratic rainfall patterns.

Challenges of Rainwater Harvesting

Despite its numerous benefits, rainwater harvesting faces several challenges, including:

- High initial investment for constructing storage structures
- Lack of technical knowledge among farmers
- Regular maintenance requirements
- Limited storage capacity in low-rainfall areas

Furthermore, the adoption of rainwater harvesting practices depends on factors such as farm size, economic conditions, and access to technical support.

Conclusion

Rainwater harvesting is a sustainable and efficient water management practice that plays a crucial role in modern agriculture. It not only enhances crop productivity and water availability but also contributes to environmental conservation and climate resilience.

With proper planning, government support, and increased farmer awareness, rainwater harvesting can significantly improve agricultural sustainability and food security in water-scarce regions.

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Seed Quality Enhancement Techniques

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Janvi Bakshi

Student, School of Agriculture and Environmental Science, Shobhit University, Meerut

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Seed is the primary input in agriculture and acts as the foundation of crop production. The use of high-quality seeds results in better germination, uniform plant growth, and higher crop yields. However, seed quality often deteriorates during storage due to environmental factors such as temperature, moisture, and microbial activity. To overcome these challenges, seed enhancement techniques are widely used to improve seed performance before sowing.

Seed enhancement refers to a range of pre-sowing treatments that improve germination, seedling growth, and planting efficiency without altering the genetic makeup of the seed. These techniques are essential for enhancing seed vigour and ensuring successful crop establishment, especially under stress conditions.

Concept of Seed Quality Enhancement

Seed quality enhancement involves improving the physiological and physical characteristics of seeds to maximize their field performance. It focuses on increasing germination rate, seedling vigour, and stress

tolerance. Seed enhancement treatments are generally applied after harvest but before sowing to improve seed performance and facilitate efficient planting.

The main objective is to modify the seed's physiological state and provide additional support such as nutrients or protective coatings to ensure better crop establishment.

Major Seed Quality Enhancement Techniques

1. Seed Priming

Seed priming is one of the most effective and widely used techniques for enhancing seed quality. It involves controlled hydration of seeds to initiate metabolic processes required for germination without allowing radicle emergence. This results in faster and more uniform germination.

Priming techniques such as hydropriming, osmopriming, halopriming, and biopriming significantly improve seedling vigour and stress tolerance. Primed seeds exhibit enhanced enzymatic activity, improved nutrient mobilization, and better performance under adverse environmental conditions. Recent advancements include nanopriming and



hormonal priming, which further enhance germination and stress resistance by improving water uptake and activating biochemical pathways in seeds.

2. Seed Coating and Pelleting

Seed coating and pelleting involve covering seeds with materials such as polymers, nutrients, or protective agents. These techniques improve seed size, shape, and handling, making them suitable for precision sowing.

In addition, coating allows the delivery of essential nutrients and beneficial microorganisms directly to the seed, thereby supporting early seedling growth and establishment. Studies have shown that coated seeds enhance sustainability and improve crop performance under various environmental conditions.

3. Seed Fortification

Seed fortification involves soaking seeds in nutrient solutions containing micronutrients such as zinc, boron, or iron. This process enhances nutrient availability during the early stages of growth and improves germination and seedling development.

Fortified seeds are particularly beneficial in nutrient-deficient soils, as they ensure better crop establishment and productivity.

4. Seed Hardening

Seed hardening is a pre-sowing treatment in which seeds are soaked and then dried before sowing. This technique improves the seed's ability to withstand environmental stresses such as drought and temperature fluctuations.

Studies have shown that hardening treatments enhance seedling survival and improve crop performance under stress conditions.

5. Seed Grading and Sorting

Seed grading involves separating seeds based on size, weight, and density to ensure uniformity. High-quality seeds selected through grading show better germination and produce uniform crop stands.

Advanced sorting techniques, including density separation and optical sorting, are used to remove weak or damaged seeds and improve overall seed quality.

6. Seed Drying and Storage

Proper seed drying and storage are essential for maintaining seed viability and longevity. Reducing seed moisture content prevents fungal growth and seed deterioration.

Maintaining optimal storage conditions such as low temperature and humidity significantly enhances seed lifespan and preserves quality over time.

7. Use of Growth Regulators

Plant growth regulators such as gibberellic acid (GA_3), auxins, and cytokinins are used to improve germination and seedling growth. These substances help break seed dormancy and enhance metabolic activities within the seed.

Hormonal priming activates enzymes responsible for germination and improves overall seed performance.

8. Biotechnological and Advanced Techniques

Modern seed enhancement technologies include nanotechnology, plasma treatment, and magneto-priming. These techniques improve seed vigour by enhancing water uptake, enzyme activity, and stress tolerance.

For example, nanoprimering improves seed metabolism and increases resistance to environmental stress, while

plasma treatments enhance water absorption and germination speed.

Advantages of Seed Quality Enhancement

Seed enhancement techniques significantly improve germination, seedling vigour, and crop establishment. They enhance tolerance to abiotic stresses such as drought and salinity and reduce the requirement for higher seed rates. These techniques also contribute to higher crop yields and improved resource-use efficiency.

Challenges and Limitations

Despite their benefits, seed enhancement techniques face certain challenges. High costs, lack of awareness among farmers, and the need for technical expertise

limit their widespread adoption. Additionally, improper application of treatments may negatively affect seed viability.

Conclusion

Seed quality enhancement techniques are essential tools in modern agriculture for improving crop productivity and sustainability. From traditional methods such as priming and coating to advanced technologies like nanoprimering and plasma treatments, these techniques help achieve better germination, vigour, and stress tolerance. Promoting awareness and adoption of these practices among farmers can significantly contribute to food security and sustainable agricultural development.

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Apiculture (Beekeeping) and Pollination Services

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Pooja Singh

Student, School of Agriculture and Environmental Studies, Shobhit University, Meerut

The word *apiculture* is derived from the Latin word *apis*, meaning bee. Apiculture, or beekeeping, refers to the care and management of honey bees for the production of honey, beeswax, royal jelly, and other hive products.

In this practice, bees are reared commercially in apiaries, which are areas where multiple beehives are maintained.

Pollination is the transfer of pollen grains from the male part of a flower (anther) to the female part (stigma), enabling

fertilization and the formation of fruits and seeds. Managed beekeeping and pollination services together play a significant role in modern agriculture, biodiversity conservation, and global food security.

Apiculture: Concept and Practices

Apiculture involves rearing honey bees in artificial hives under controlled conditions. The most commonly domesticated species are *Apis mellifera* and *Apis cerana indica*. Beekeepers manage colonies by providing suitable hive structures, ensuring food

availability, protecting bees from pests and diseases, and harvesting hive products.

Modern beekeeping commonly uses movable-frame hives, which allow easy inspection and honey extraction without damaging the colony. According to



the Food and Agriculture Organization, apiculture is an important agricultural enterprise that supports rural livelihoods and generates income through the sale of honey and other bee products (FAO, 2018). Additionally, beekeeping requires comparatively low investment

and land, making it suitable for small and marginal farmers.

Common Species of Honey Bees

The commonly reared species of honey bees are as follows:

1. *Apis dorsata*: Commonly known as the rock bee, it is a giant species that produces about 38–40 kg of honey per colony.
2. *Apis cerana indica*: Commonly referred to as the Indian bee, it can be easily domesticated and is

widely used for honey production. The annual honey yield ranges from 2–5 kg per colony.

3. ***Apis florea***: Also known as the little bee, it rarely stings, making honey extraction easier. It produces about 1 kg of honey per colony annually.
4. ***Apis mellifera***: Commonly called the Italian bee, this species is highly productive and widely reared by beekeepers due to its high honey-yielding capacity. It is also known for its characteristic dance communication behavior indicating food sources.

Importance of Pollination Services

1. Pollination is essential for the reproduction of many flowering plants.
2. A large proportion of pollination depends on insects, especially bees. Honey bees are among the most efficient pollinators because they visit flowers systematically while collecting nectar and pollen.
3. Beekeeping provides honey, which is a highly nutritious natural food.
4. Beeswax obtained from hives is used in cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, candle making, and polishing industries.
5. Honey bees play an important role in increasing the yield and quality of several agricultural crops through effective pollination.
6. Recent studies suggest that honey bee venom contains bioactive compounds with potential medicinal applications, including antimicrobial and therapeutic properties.

Role of Beekeeping in Agriculture

Beekeeping enhances agricultural productivity by improving both the quantity and quality of crops. When bees visit flowers, they efficiently transfer

pollen, resulting in better fruit set, uniform fruit shape, and higher yields. Crops such as almonds, apples, mustard, sunflower, and cucurbits show increased production when adequately pollinated by bees.

Farmers often place beehives near crop fields to ensure proper pollination. This practice, known as *managed pollination*, has become an essential component of commercial agriculture. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, managed honey bee colonies are widely used in large-scale farming systems to improve crop productivity (USDA, 2020).

Economic and Environmental Benefits

Apiculture provides several economic and ecological benefits:

- **Income Generation:** Sale of honey, beeswax, pollen, propolis, and royal jelly supports rural livelihoods.
- **Low Investment:** Beekeeping requires minimal land and infrastructure.
- **Biodiversity Conservation:** Bees support the reproduction of wild plants and help maintain ecological balance.
- **Sustainable Agriculture:** Natural pollination reduces dependence on chemical inputs and enhances crop productivity.

The Food and Agriculture Organization highlights that pollinators are essential for maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem stability, as they support the regeneration of forests and natural vegetation (FAO, 2018).

Challenges in Apiculture and Pollination

Despite its importance, apiculture faces several challenges:

- **Pesticide Use:** Harmful chemicals can kill bees or disturb their foraging behavior.
- **Habitat Loss:** Urbanization and deforestation reduce the availability of flowering plants and nesting sites.
- **Climate Change:** Changes in temperature and rainfall patterns affect flowering seasons and bee activity.
- **Diseases and Pests:** Problems such as Varroa mite infestation weaken bee colonies and reduce productivity.

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The Food and Agriculture Organization warns that pollinator decline poses a serious threat to global food production and ecosystem health (FAO, 2018).

Conclusion

Apiculture and pollination services are integral components of sustainable agriculture. While beekeeping provides valuable hive products and additional income to farmers, its greater contribution lies in enhancing crop productivity and maintaining ecological balance through pollination. Promoting scientific beekeeping practices and protecting pollinator populations are essential for ensuring food security, supporting rural livelihoods, and conserving biodiversity. With proper management, awareness, and policy support, apiculture can play a transformative role in future agricultural systems.

