

## USE OF SENSORS IN FRUIT CROPS - A REVIEW

### ABSTRACT

Fruit crops produce higher yields per hectare than other horticultural crops. Fruits are also rich source of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. It is necessary to monitor and maintain the orchard properly to increase both production and quality of fruits. But maintaining large orchards is quite difficult. Application of different sensors in fruit crops helps in precise orchard management and there by helps in sustainable production in the long run. Remote sensing tools are useful in gathering data on factors necessary and act as constraint for increasing the yield potential of fruit crops. Increase in the cost incurred in maintaining the orchards resulted in low benefit cost ratio in production of fruits. Application of sensors for the continuous monitoring of orchard facilitate in increased water use efficiency and precise orchard management strategies. This articles reviews the use of sensors in various aspects related to fruits crops management.

**Keywords:** Sensors, Fruits, Remote sensing.

### INTRODUCTION

Dependance on rainfed agriculture is not appropriate most of the times due to different climatic conditions or different fruit crop growth requirements. Most of the fruit crops need irrigation for maximizing the yield when rainfall is not sufficient for growth cycle of fruit crops.

Though deficit irrigation helps in improving water productivity (Costa *et al.*, 2007; Chai *et al.*, 2016) by utilizing deficit irrigation strategies like regulated deficit irrigation which increases water use efficiency for achieving higher yields, and partial root-zone drying which involves supplying water to half of the root zone. While former was proven to be successful in fruits and vegetable crops, later showed similar results in orange trees as that of full irrigation (Consoli *et al.*, 2017).

Estimation of water status in stem is a good measure of a crop reaction to scarcity of water (Kramer, 1988; Boyer, 1989), as compared to that of root water. Stem water potential is most reliable indicator of plant water status than leaf water potential as leaf water status will be under the control of stomata. ( $\Psi_{stem}$ ) (Shackel *et al.*, 1997).

Plant-based sensors like contact and non contact sensors are useful for calculating the plant water status data which can be further used for irrigation management in fruit crops [16-18]. Drip irrigation supplies water to the root of trees and there by saves water. Analysis of plant water before drip irrigation helps in achieving increased water use efficiency [19,20]. The use of plant based sensors helps in precise scheduling of irrigation as per the requirement of fruit crops.

#### **Leaf adapted sensors**

Estimation of water status in leaves is difficult due to their fragile nature. Some leaf adapted sensors were tested by scientists to understand the water relations of plant and leaves although water status of leaves does not represent the whole plant waters status. Abaxial leaf mounted sensors were studied for monitoring of plants.

#### **Leaf thickness sensors**

Changes in leaf thickness over a period helps in knowing the water deficit. Changes in the leaf thickness happens due to water exchange from atmosphere to plant and vice versa.

#### **Leaf thermal sensing**

Thermal imaging at the ground and from the top helps in knowing the canopy temperature ( $T_c$ ) as an index

of water stress. When water deficit exists in plant stomata closes and transpiration decrease which increases canopy temperature and thus canopy temperature is measured.

### **Sensors mounted on stem**

Amount of water in fruit trees is related to moisture availability in the soil and climate. Stems and shoots are the medium through which water will be exchanged between soil and atmosphere. Without destroying the stem and shoots stem water can be measured with the help of this sensors thereby estimating water amounts in soil and plant.

### **Stem dendrometers**

The change in the elasticity of stem tissues is related to diffusion and exchange of water in tissues of phloem. Changes in water status of plant will lead to change in the stem diameter. It's usage is not complicated and the use of low cost stem dendrometers helps in achieving precise irrigation scheduling for fruit orchards. But stem dendrometer estimations do not show accurate water status in leaf and fruit. Even in young plants stem dendrometers cannot give accurate results and also growth of new plants might not give correct data.

### **Fruit mounted sensors**

Fruit water relations are very important in achieving production and quality. Fruit volume depends up on exchange of water between the tissues of the fruit and atmosphere through skin of the fruit. During day due to fluctuations in temperature transpiration of the fruit increases and changes in the fruit volume will be seen and during night time transpiration of the fruit decreases. Nevertheless sensors attached to fruit may not estimate accurately water status in the stem. Therefore, an integration of data of fruit mounted sensors supported by data of water status acquired by sensors attached to leaves and stem are more useful.

## **REMOTE SENSING IN FRUIT CROPS**

Remote sensing is technique of gathering, processing and interpreting data of any object on earth by detecting the radiation emitting from the object with the help of different contact and contact less sensors. Sensors record the energy of the target object and there after it transmits, receives, processes and further does interpretation and analysis. Remote sensing operates through different platforms like ground based, air borne and space borne. The principle behind remote sensing is that tools of remote sensing receives energy of the target object in the form of the electromagnetic spectrum, which will be interpreted and analysed. Different sensors like active and passive sensors, vegetation indices, satellites, drone with digital cameras, thermal imagery, global positioning system (GPS) etc., are different components of remote sensing.

### **Applications:**

#### **1. Mapping of orchards.**

The mapping of orchards is useful strategy for estimating yields, efficient input use efficiency and thereby planning for effective management of the orchard for sustainable yields. Remote sensing tools are efficient in providing mapping of data. In Punjab different orchards were mapped in the Abohar Tehsil using Sentinel-2 satellite data. Kinnow orange orchard was identified from other orchards (like guava, orange, malta and ber) and also area under trees is estimated (Digra *et al.*, 2022). With remote sensing, vegetation, water stress, and diseases in citrus orchards at any time of the year can be controlled. Spectral images will be used in remote sensing to make several segmentations of trees or rows based on size, vegetation and water stress.

#### **2. Fertilizer application and nutrient estimation**

Site-specific orchard management by variable rate delivery of inputs such as fertilizers on a tree size basis could improve profitability and environmental protection. Mahajan *et al.* (2021) checked the foliar nutrients status of mango using hyperspectral imagery at India. The experiment involved normalized difference spectral index (NDSI), ratio spectral index (RSI) with multiple machine learning (ML) tools and models for prediction, calibration and validation of various nutrients in leaf of mango from 400 samples of 40 orchards. The reason might be that NDSI

and RSI are highly based on radiation emits through vegetation of a crop and nutrients status highly influence the plant vegetation which ultimately leads to better management.

### 3. Detection of water stress

Remote-sensing tools identifies water stress of fruit trees using leaf transpiration and temperature. Initially data of soil and air moisture levels can be taken and difference can be used for calculating and estimating water stress. When water stress condition exists leaf temperature increases as transpiration activity will be decreases due closure of stomata (Gates, 1964). Technologies using infrared methods have efficiency in achieving good view of orchards and also helps in gathering information about trees canopy temperature. (Lu *et al.*, 2020). Zhou *et al.* (2022) used Red Green Blue images based on infrared radiation emitted by grape vines to assess water stress. So temperature of the canopy of fruit trees can be taken as important criteria for monitoring water stress in orchards. Use of thermal camera in citrus and persimmon trees for measuring canopy temperature to detect water stress was studied by Ballester *et al.* (2013a & b). Estimation of irrigation requirement can also be calculated with remote sensing by estimating crop evapotranspiration by Normalized difference vegetation index.

### 4. Detection of disease incidence

Precision farming uses remote sensing tools for increasing efficiency in managing the input supply to orchards and also remote sensing tools are capable of monitoring the trees precisely by estimating physiological stress in trees as stress affects photosynthesis of the tree canopy and thereby affects the intake of light energy and further results in changes if reflecting patterns. Remote sensing interprets & analyses satellite and aerial images for gathering information about the spatial distribution of trees, their acreage and different characteristics of trees. This can be decoded either manually or through machines for assessment. Detection of malady among trees is possible through this assessment. Detection of citrus greening was done with the help of vegetation indices like Normalized difference vegetation index in Texas, USA (Chang *et al.*, 2020). Ye *et al.* (2021) applied remote sensing for detecting and managing banana wilt at China with vegetation indices like NDVI etc., and were able to monitor banana wilt with the help of high resolution imagery.

## CONCLUSION

The major aim of farming and scientific community is to maximize yields with efficient utilization of resources and for sustainable production patterns. Though lot of sensors have been in use for maximizing the management of orchard and input use, estimation of the water status of the plant with a single reliable method is not there for proper irrigation scheduling. With the help of remote sensing tools orchards can be monitored regularly with vegetation indices with spatial resolution which further helps in site specific management. However cost of sensors and their vulnerability to damage made them less accessible to broad spectrum of farming community. Also high resolution images are needed but the spectral images provided by some satellites don't have a very high resolution so it is difficult to get a good result in overcrowded orchard. In addition, the deep learning algorithms need huge data for more precision.

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