

Climate change and agriculture

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Contents

Series list	x
Introduction	xvi

Part 1 The impacts of climate change on agriculture

1	The effects on crop cultivation of increased CO ₂ , temperature and ozone levels due to climate change	3
	<i>Eline Vanuytrecht, Flemish Institute for Technological Research (VITO) and KU Leuven Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences, Belgium</i>	
	1 Introduction	3
	2 The effects of elevated CO ₂ concentration on crop cultivation	4
	3 The effects of increased temperature on crop cultivation	8
	4 The effects of high ozone concentration on crop cultivation	13
	5 Interaction effects of atmospheric changes on crop cultivation	16
	6 Conclusion and future trends	21
	7 Where to look for further information	23
	8 References	24
2	Effects of climate change on agricultural soils	43
	<i>Kennedy Were, Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation, Kenya; and Bal Ram Singh, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Norway</i>	
	1 Introduction	43
	2 Effects of climate change on agricultural soil properties and processes	45
	3 Climate-smart soil management options	48
	4 Conclusion and future trends	51
	5 References	52

3	Modeling the effects of climate change on agriculture: a focus on cropping systems	55
	<i>M. Adam, CIRAD, Burkina Faso; K. J. Boote, University of Florida-Gainesville, USA; G. N. Falconnier, CIRAD, France; C. H. Porter, University of Florida-Gainesville, USA; E. Eyshi Rezaei, University of Göttingen, Germany; and H. Webber, University of Bonn and Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Research (ZALF), Germany</i>	
	1 Introduction	55
	2 Agroecosystem models: tools to simulate the effect of climate, soils, crop management practices, and crop genetics on cropping systems	56
	3 Use of crop models for climate change impact assessment	67
	4 Conclusion and future trends	75
	5 Where to look for further information	80
	6 References	81

Part 2 The contribution of agriculture to climate change

4	Quantifying the role of livestock in climate change	99
	<i>Julie Wolf, USDA-ARS, USA</i>	
	1 Introduction	99
	2 Changes in the extent, management, and efficiency of the livestock sector	101
	3 Livestock methane, global atmospheric concentrations, and the global methane cycle	107
	4 Quantifying enteric fermentation and manure management methane emissions	110
	5 Broader assessments and considerations	114
	6 Case study: evaluating livestock's contributions to global methane concentrations	122
	7 Conclusions	125
	8 Where to look for further information	127
	9 References	128
5	The role of crop cultivation in contributing to climate change	137
	<i>Sonali Shukla McDermid and David Kanter, New York University, USA</i>	
	1 Introduction	137
	2 Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from crop residues	139
	3 Cultivated organic soils and soil organic matter in cropping systems	141
	4 Nutrient applications for global croplands	146

5	Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from rice production	149
6	Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from bioenergy systems	150
7	Future trends	153
8	Conclusion	157
9	Where to look for further information	157
10	References	157
6	The role of agricultural expansion, land cover and land-use change in contributing to climate change <i>Catherine E. Scott, University of Leeds, UK</i>	167
1	Introduction	167
2	Impacts of land-use change on climate	170
3	Estimating the impacts of land-use change on climate	175
4	Role of the land sector in climate change mitigation	176
5	Future land-use trajectories	178
6	Future trends and conclusion	181
7	Where to look for further information	182
8	References	182
7	Measuring and quantifying greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural activities <i>Mohammad Ibrahim Khalil, University College Dublin & Prudence College Dublin/GSustain, Ireland; Syed Faiz-ul Islam, University College Dublin, Ireland; Macdara O'Neill, University College Dublin & Teagasc, Ireland; and Bruce Osborne, University College Dublin, Ireland</i>	195
1	Introduction	195
2	Greenhouse gas measurement techniques for arable farming	197
3	Chamber techniques for measuring emissions from arable farming: design and features	198
4	Chamber techniques for measuring emissions from arable farming: deployment and sampling techniques	205
5	Micrometeorological techniques for measuring emissions from arable farming: the eddy covariance (EC) method	218
6	Other techniques for measuring emissions from arable farming	223
7	Measuring emissions from livestock farms	227
8	Greenhouse gas measurement techniques at the herd scale	234
9	Measuring emissions on mixed farms	237
10	Alternative greenhouse gas measurement techniques	238
11	Comparison of different methods and future challenges	243
12	Conclusions	250

13	Acknowledgements	251
14	Where to look for further information	252
15	References	253
Part 3 Adaption and mitigation strategies in agriculture		
8	Climate-smart crop production: understanding complexity for achieving triple-wins <i>Katrien Descheemaeker, Pytrik Reidsma and Ken E. Giller, Plant Production Systems, Wageningen University & Research, The Netherlands</i>	275
1	Introduction	275
2	Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) cropping options	276
3	Gaps and problems in our current understanding of the climate-smart agriculture (CSA) concept and its potential	296
4	Operationalizing climate-smart agriculture (CSA)	299
5	Conclusion	305
6	Acknowledgements	306
7	References	306
9	The contribution of integrated crop–livestock systems in combatting climate change and improving resilience in agricultural production to achieve food security <i>Mark van Wijk and James Hammond, International Livestock Research Institute, Kenya; Simon Fraval, International Livestock Research Institute, Kenya and Wageningen University, The Netherlands; Jannike Wichern, Wageningen University, The Netherlands; Randall Ritzema, Olivet Nazarene University, USA; and Ben Henderson, Natural Resources Policy, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), France</i>	319
1	Introduction	319
2	A short overview of analyses and approaches focussing on climate change and mixed crop–livestock systems	321
3	Agricultural production, consumption, sale and food security	322
4	Current methods used by farmers in mixed crop–livestock systems to deal with climate variability	328
5	Possible methods of assessing climate change adaptation options	329
6	Conclusion	331
7	Where to look for further information	334
8	References	334

10	Agroforestry as a solution for multiple climate change challenges in Africa	339
	<i>C. Mbow, Future Africa at University of Pretoria, South Africa and Michigan State University, USA; E. Toensmeier, Perennial Agriculture Institute, USA; M. Brandt, University of Copenhagen, Denmark; D. Skole, Michigan State University, USA; M. Dieng, Senegalese Institute of Agricultural Research (ISRA), Senegal; D. Garrity, World Agroforestry Centre, Kenya; and B. Poulter, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, USA</i>	
	1 Introduction	339
	2 Typology and dynamics of agroforestry in Africa	341
	3 Agroforestry and climate change mitigation	343
	4 Agroforestry, biodiversity, and ecosystem-based adaptation	355
	5 Agroforestry and the bioenergy sector in Africa	358
	6 Conclusion	364
	7 Where to look for further information	365
	8 References	366
	Index	375

Introduction

It has been suggested that agriculture may account for up to 24% of the greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) contributing to climate change. Agricultural production accounts for over 80% of food system emissions, and nearly 60% of global non-CO₂ GHGs. At the same time climate change is threatening to disrupt agricultural production. This collection reviews key research addressing this challenge. Part 1 of the book reviews current research on the impacts of climate change on agriculture, such as the effects of increased temperatures, as well as the ways these impacts can be modelled. Part 2 assesses what we know about the contribution of agriculture to climate change, including the impacts of both crop and livestock production as well as land use. Part 3 surveys mitigation strategies to achieve a more 'climate-smart' agriculture such as the role of integrated crop-livestock and agroforestry systems.

Part 1 Impacts of climate change on agriculture

Atmospheric changes, including high carbon dioxide (CO₂) concentrations, air temperature and tropospheric ozone concentrations, are challenging our crop cultivation systems, with potential negative implications for global food production. Chapter 1 investigates how these atmospheric changes directly affect different physiological processes, and further modify agro-ecosystem functioning through complex interactions with other environmental factors, including nutrient or water availability. The chapter reviews current research on the impact of elevated CO₂ concentrations, higher temperatures and high ozone concentrations on crop growth and yields. This research shows, for example, that elevated CO₂ levels may have a fertilizing and positive impact on crop yield and water use in some cases, whereas heat stress and increased ozone concentrations may reduce crop yields.

As Chapter 2 indicates, the high atmospheric concentrations of GHGs such as CO₂, nitrous oxide (N₂O) and methane (CH₄) have had significant negative impacts on soil processes. The impacts range from a decline in carbon sequestration and soil health to increased soil temperatures, decomposition of soil organic matter, release and leaching of nutrients, increased microbial activity, salinization, alkalization and moisture stress. The chapter highlights current knowledge on the effects of climate change on soil properties and processes, and a set of climate-smart technologies for climate change mitigation. Climate-smart technologies include conservation agriculture, precision agriculture, integrated nutrient management, residue retention, soil and water conservation, agroforestry, controlled grazing and stocking rates, crop rotations, cover crops, biochar and improved plant varieties.

Crop models are powerful tools to explore climate change impacts on crop productivity and the effect of different agricultural management practices. Chapter 3 reviews how crop models take into consideration the effects of biotic factors such as climate variables, soils and crop genetics, and how they are used in climate change impact assessments. The chapter emphasizes how the wide use of crop models raises challenges that need to be addressed in future research, highlighting the need for model improvements to consider extreme weather events and stresses related to low input agricultural systems.

Part 2 The contribution of agriculture to climate change

Despite gains in productivity often accompanied by reduced emissions, the livestock sector remains the largest anthropogenic emitter of CH_4 and has significantly reduced global carbon storage and photosynthetic capacities as well as releasing nitrogen and phosphorus to air, water and/or soil. Chapter 4 explores some of the many facets of livestock's contributions to climate change and the difficulties involved in quantifying them. It provides a closer look into the contribution of livestock CH_4 emissions to changing atmospheric CH_4 concentrations over the last few decades. The chapter discusses the production of livestock CH_4 , global atmospheric concentrations and the global CH_4 cycle, ways of quantifying enteric fermentation and emissions from manure. It includes a case study to show measurement issues in practice.

While gains in agricultural productivity have enabled rising levels of food security, they have also made the food system a major contributor to global climate change. Chapter 5 reviews the contribution to climate change of various GHGs from global crop cultivation. Topics include fertilizer management, the effect of land use changes on peatlands, crop residue management, cropland soil organic matter changes and bioenergy production. In each case the chapter reviews the current state of knowledge and data availability as well as the outstanding uncertainties in current estimates. The chapter also considers cropland GHG emissions in the context of food security and other sustainable development goals. Finally, the chapter provides an overview of how future scenarios of agricultural development can be used to project local and regional GHG emissions within integrated assessment frameworks.

Building on the previous chapter, Chapter 6 discusses the role of agricultural expansion and the effects of land cover and land-use change in contributing to climate change. It begins by reviewing the impacts of land-use change on climate, specifically focusing on carbon emission, surface energy fluxes - such as reflection of solar radiation and evapotranspiration and hydrological impacts - and the emission of reactive gases from vegetation. It assesses current techniques to estimate the impacts of land-use change on climate. It also

reviews the role of the land sector in climate change mitigation, highlighting how the reduction of deforestation, the increase of reforestation, restoration and afforestation programmes and the growth of bioenergy crops have the potential help to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Finally, the chapter reviews future land-use trajectories and their use in assessing future potential climate change as a result of different levels of GHGs emissions. It concludes by providing future research trends and resources for further information.

Chapter 7 explores how the accurate assessment of agricultural GHGs emissions for accounting and mitigation options is still a key concern. While an extensive body of data is available, limitations of the different measuring approaches have often been ignored. Despite some constraints, chamber-based approaches have dominated annual assessments of GHGs to provide information on spatial and temporal variations. The Eddy Covariance (EC) technique has become the approach of choice and the basis of international monitoring networks. However, as the chapter points, the method has limitations such as footprint constraints, poor replicability, complexity and high cost. In the case of measuring enteric CH₄ emissions from livestock systems, respiratory chamber, tracer or GreenfeedTM techniques also have limitations for confined animals and requiring significant technical expertise can be used. An overview of other livestock-associated approaches is given in this chapter, arguing for further investment in alternative methods for routine on-farm measurements and the identification of mitigation options.

Part 3 Adaptation and mitigation strategies

Climate-smart cropping options aim to simultaneously improve crop productivity, adapt to climate change and reduce GHGs emissions. Echoing themes in Chapter 2, Chapter 8 provides a concise overview of a wide range of climate-smart cropping options and investigates in detail the potential of conservation agriculture and soil fertility management practices to contribute to the three pillars of climate-smart agriculture (CSA), taking in the issues of possible trade-offs and constraints to adoption. The chapter shows that gaps in understanding and assessing impacts may lead to an overestimation of the potential of CSA. Two contrasting case studies from intensive and low-input agriculture illustrate that reliable contextualized and quantitative information can be obtained with participatory, integrated and cross-scale assessments. Such information is key to support decision and policy making towards holistic solutions that can enable a successful transformation to CSA.

Chapter 9 illustrates through a contrasting set of examples how current crop-livestock systems contribute to the food and nutrition security of smallholder livelihoods. It highlights how farmers use these systems to cope with a variable climate. The chapter provides an overview of recent research

on climate change and mixed crop-livestock systems. It also assesses ways of quantifying how crop-livestock systems contribute to food supply, dietary diversity and income of smallholder farmers. The chapter then reviews analyses of short-term climate variability coping strategies that farmers currently apply in mixed crop-livestock systems, highlighting most effective adaptation options to climate change in mixed farming systems. It concludes by consolidating these findings to provide a review of the resilience of mixed crop-livestock systems in the face of existing and future climate variability.

With appropriate management, agroforestry contributes to the provision of food, fiber and wood products and helps maintain ecosystem services such as nutrient cycling and biodiversity. Chapter 10 reviews recent research on the role of trees in integrating climate mitigation and adaptation goals, including the development of novel bioenergy solutions based on intercropping trees and shrubs in croplands. Many perennial staple crops are native to the African continent, and expanded production of these species could make a notable contribution to supply the future food and nutrition needs of vulnerable communities. The chapter discusses how agroforestry can be seen as an effective ecosystem-based adaptation strategy and an efficient carbon sink. The chapter discusses examples such as the semi-arid Sahel region in Africa, where community-driven tree regeneration has helped increase carbon sequestration in agricultural lands.

Chapter 1

The effects on crop cultivation of increased CO₂, temperature and ozone levels due to climate change

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Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences, Belgium*

- 1 Introduction
- 2 The effects of elevated CO₂ concentration on crop cultivation
- 3 The effects of increased temperature on crop cultivation
- 4 The effects of high ozone concentration on crop cultivation
- 5 Interaction effects of atmospheric changes on crop cultivation
- 6 Conclusion and future trends
- 7 Where to look for further information
- 8 References

1 Introduction

Making our world food secure is a challenge today but nothing less in the future. A 60-100% increase in food supply is required towards 2050 to accommodate nutritional needs of the expected 9 billion people and their changing consumption pattern (Alexandratos and Bruinsma, 2012; FAO et al., 2018; Godfray et al., 2010; Ingram and Porter, 2015). Moreover, agricultural productivity has to increase sustainably, knowing its resources like water, land and fertilizers are scarce and are increasingly to be shared with other sectors (i.e. industry and households) (Keating et al., 2014). The challenge is intensified by atmospheric changes and air pollution, which are already present today and will further affect crop yield in the future (Bindi et al., 2015; Elbehri, 2015; Gornall et al., 2010; Ingram and Porter, 2015; Field et al., 2014; Tai et al., 2014; Wheeler and Braun, 2013). Weather variability is responsible for over 30-50% of yield variability of major crops (Frieler et al., 2017; Ray et al., 2015; Zampieri et al., 2017) and further atmospheric changes can have a large impact.

In this chapter, I present observed and projected future effects on crop cultivation for food production caused by three evident changes of the

atmosphere, that is atmospheric CO₂ concentration ([CO₂]), air temperature and tropospheric ozone concentration ([O₃]). They went through a notable development since the Industrial Revolution, and all three are projected to further increase. Each atmospheric phenomenon is here covered by:

- 1 a presentation of the current status and future projections of its physical conditions,
- 2 a concise description of observed physiological and agronomic consequences in experiments, and
- 3 an impact assessment at the global scale.

Thereafter, interactive effects of several (atmospheric) changes are discussed and one local-scale case study is presented. The chapter finishes with an outlook on potential future contributions of research to sustainable crop production under altered atmospheric conditions. Ultimately, recommended reading is presented for those who are hungry for more information.

2 The effects of elevated CO₂ concentration on crop cultivation

2.1 The physical phenomenon

Atmospheric [CO₂] has steadily increased since the Industrial Revolution from 280 ppm to above 400 ppm today, and is expected to continue to rise for decades by approximately 2 ppm per year, even with stringent emission reductions (Stocker et al., 2013). Projected end-of-the-century [CO₂] depends on the assumed representative concentration pathway (RCP) that denotes the approximate radiative forcing (W/m²) in 2100 relative to 1750 (van Vuuren et al., 2011). By the year 2100, [CO₂] is projected to reach 421 ppm after an earlier peak following the low RCP 2.6; a stable 538 to 670 ppm following the stabilization RCPs 4.5 and 6.0, respectively; or an intermediate 936 ppm following the high RCP 8.5 (Stocker et al., 2013). Since plants assimilate CO₂ to build biomass, these changes affect crop production.

2.2 Physiological and agronomic consequences

Major effects of elevated atmospheric [CO₂] ([CO₂]_e) on plants include improved photosynthetic efficiency and reduced stomatal conductance (Ainsworth and Long, 2005; Drake et al., 1997), resulting in improved crop water productivity, that is the ratio of crop yield over evapotranspiration (Vanuytrecht et al., 2012). In C3 plants, [CO₂]_e increases the carboxylation rate of photosynthesis and improves its efficiency by suppressing photorespiration (Ainsworth and Rogers,

2007). Within the C3 category, tubers and nitrogen-fixers respond more vigorously to CO₂ fertilization (e.g. McGrath and Lobell, 2013a; Vanuytrecht et al., 2012). C4 plants on the other hand are saturated at ambient [CO₂] and avoid photorespiration, hence little direct CO₂ stimulation is expected for those plants (Leakey, 2009). Even though Rubisco activity and content decrease at [CO₂]_e (Ainsworth et al., 2002; Ainsworth and Rogers, 2007; Wang et al., 2013), improved photosynthesis translates generally in boosted biomass production of both vegetative and reproductive plant parts (Ainsworth, 2008; Ainsworth et al., 2002; Jablonski et al., 2002; Vanuytrecht et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2013). Leaf stomata respond to (inter-cellular) [CO₂]_e by decreasing conductance (Ainsworth, 2008; Ainsworth and Rogers, 2007; Wang et al., 2013). Indirectly, this effect additionally benefits crop production, also for C4s, and more so in dry than in wet conditions (Bishop et al., 2014; van der Kooi et al., 2016).

Other effects include reduced overall plant water use (Kimball, 2016; Shimono et al., 2013; Vanuytrecht et al., 2012), increased leaf area but reduced specific leaf area hence thicker leaves (Ainsworth et al., 2002; Burkart et al., 2011; Kimball et al., 2002), changed carbon allocation (Vanuytrecht et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2014b) and altered elemental composition. Concentrations of nitrogen, proteins and nutrients decrease in general (Broberg et al., 2017; Dong et al., 2018; Myers et al., 2014; Taub et al., 2008; Walker et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2013; Zhu et al., 2018), while starch and sugar concentrations increase (Dong et al., 2018). Reduced nutrient concentrations result from an interplay of mechanisms (including dilution by additional carbon uptake, reduced stomata-mediated nutrient uptake and within-plant transport), which is yet to be fully understood (Broberg et al., 2017; McGrath and Lobell, 2013b; Taub and Wang, 2008). Notwithstanding the stimulatory effect of [CO₂]_e on quantitative biomass and yield production, altered nutrient concentrations have a serious impact on food nutrition and security. The responses at individual plant level induce changes in plant communities and ecosystems (Ziska and Bunce, 2006).

Crop responses to [CO₂]_e are being studied in fully controlled growth chambers (e.g. Leisner et al., 2018; Reddy and Zhao, 2005), as well as in the field in open-top chambers (OTC, e.g. Saha et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2018) or free air CO₂ enrichment (FACE) experiments (e.g. Bourgault et al., 2018; Gray et al., 2016; Manderscheid et al., 2018; Zhu et al., 2018). The latter mimic natural conditions more closely by ensuring free root grow, minimizing boundary effects and allowing to assess ecosystem effects (Hendrey et al., 1993). Meta-analyses summarizing the wealth of observational data contribute to our general understanding of crop responses to [CO₂]_e. For a variety of (C3) crops, meta-analysis of FACE observations confirmed biomass and yield gains by +18–19% for a typical increase in [CO₂] to 550 ppm. Evapotranspiration decreased for both C3 and C4 by –5–10% on average, resulting from the reduction in stomatal conductance but increase in leaf area (Kimball, 2016; Vanuytrecht

et al., 2012). Studies for soybean (Ainsworth et al., 2002), rice (Ainsworth, 2008) and wheat revealed +23–24% yield increase for an average increase in [CO₂] to 620–700 ppm. Associated increases in pod number but unaltered seed mass for soybean (Ainsworth et al., 2002) were reported, as well as increases in grain mass, grain and panicle/ear number for rice and wheat (Ainsworth, 2008; Wang et al., 2013). Interestingly, Ainsworth (2008) and Wang et al. (2013) found roughly half the CO₂ stimulation in free-air experiments compared to more enclosed (or pot-rooted) systems. Environmental conditions including drought and nitrogen limitation affected the response magnitude with magnified versus suppressed responses, respectively (Wang et al., 2013).

When focusing on plant nitrogen dynamics at [CO₂]_e (~ 666 ppm), Lam et al. (2012) found increased nitrogen uptake (+17%), but reduced yield nitrogen concentration (–8 to 10%) except in legumes. An equivalent effect was found for protein concentration of barley, rice and wheat grains (–10 to 15%) and potato tubers (–14%), and a smaller but nevertheless significant effect for soybean (–1.4%) (Taub et al., 2008). Also the concentration of other essential nutrients tended to change with, for example, strong negative effects for important elements including Fe, S, Zn and Mg in wheat (Broberg et al., 2017). Table 1 summarizes general impacts of [CO₂]_e on yield quantity, yield quality and water use. Note that responses depend on the magnitude of change in [CO₂] and on the interaction with other stresses determined by the environmental setting.

2.3 Global assessment of CO₂ induced impact

The global impact of [CO₂]_e and climatic changes in general, on crop cultivation has now been studied for over 20 years, by biophysical process-based crop or ecosystem models or by statistical relations. Those assessments can be made with an ensemble of impact models driven by future climate projections from multiple climate models (Challinor et al., 2013, 2014a, 2018; Rosenzweig et al., 2013; Wallach et al., 2018). An in-depth discussion of modelling methodologies for climate impact assessment on crop production can be found in Chapter 6 of this book. In this first chapter, I mainly present the large-scale projected impacts of the atmospheric changes by these studies.

Many global assessments evaluate the CO₂ effect in combination with associated climatic changes to present a realistic future scenario (e.g. Asseng et al., 2013; Challinor et al., 2014b; Rosenzweig et al., 2014). For research purposes, though, isolating the CO₂ effect in modelling exercises can nevertheless be informative. Global yield benefits of CO₂ (hence, when isolated from the integrated whole of climatic changes) were simulated for 2080 for maize (+13%), rice (+24%), wheat (+26%) and particularly soybean (+35%) under RCP 8.5 by a model ensemble of six global gridded crop models driven

Table 1 Summary of crop responses to atmospheric changes as observed in field-scale experiments (FACE, OTC and open air in general)

Atmospheric change	Impact level	Response (relative to ambient conditions)
Increased [CO₂]		
Yield		
quantity	▲▲	for C3 due to photosynthesis stimulus yet: △ for nitrogen deficient conditions △△△ for drought conditions
quality	▲	for C4 in drought conditions due to water savings
	▼	in nitrogen, protein and nutrient concentration
Water use		
	▼	in canopy-scale transpiration
	yet: ▷	for drought conditions
	▽▽▽	in stomatal conductance
Increased temperature (T)		
Yield		
quantity	▼▼	for T rise close to crop's optimal temperature range due to a distorted balance between photosynthesis and respiration
	yet: △	for moderate T increases in cooler climates
	△	for alternative cultivars with longer growing season
	△	for new crops in previously uncultivated regions
	▼▼▼▼	for extreme heat
quality	▼	due to adverse effects on yield traits (e.g. milling quality or grain chalkiness) and due to visual damage (especially horticultural crops)
Water use		
	▲	in evapotranspiration due to higher evaporative demand
	yet: ▽	in stomatal closure for drought conditions
Increased [O₃]		
Yield		
quantity	▼▼	due to molecular, biochemical and metabolic responses
quality	▲	in nitrogen, protein and nutrient concentration
	▼	due to adverse effects on yield traits (e.g. starch concentration or grain chalkiness) and visual injury
Water use		
	▼▼	in stomatal conductance as initial defence strategy
	yet: ▷ - △	due to subsequent lower stomatal sensitivity

▼ decrease; ▲ increase; ▶ status-quo.

number of ◀◀◀ indicates strength of the response: ◀ moderate; ◀◀ strong; ◀◀◀ very strong. This table summarizes general responses. In reality, responses highly depend on the magnitude of change (in [CO₂], [O₃] or T) and on the interaction with other stresses determined by the environmental setting.

by data from five global climate models (GCMs) (Deryng et al., 2016). Note that these projected CO₂ fertilization effects could not counterbalance the negative impacts of associated climatic changes for maize and rice but contributed to a break-even for soybean and a slight improvement in wheat yield. CO₂-induced yield gains and associated reductions in crop evapotranspiration further

Index

- '4 per 1000' initiative 290, 306
- Acclimation 78
- AFOLU. *see* Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector
- African Restoration Initiative (AFR100) 348
- Africa Sustainable Development Report (2018) 358
- Agricultural Model Intercomparison and Improvement Project (AgMIP) 23, 56, 63, 69, 74–76, 154, 302
- Agricultural soils 52
 - climate-smart management options 48–51
 - overview 43–45
 - properties and processes 45–48
- Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector 291
- Agro-ecological zone modeling
 - methodology 58
- Agroecosystem 44, 141, 145
- Agroecosystem models 55, 58
- Agroforestry in Africa 365
 - biodiversity and
 - ecosystem benefits and adaptation 355–356
 - human benefits and adaptation 356–358
 - and bioenergy sector
 - clean energy agenda 358–359
 - feasibility and benefits 359–364
 - carbon uptake in Sahel 345–346
 - and climate change mitigation
 - global emissions neutrality 347–348
 - perennial staple crops 348, 351–352, 354–355
 - potential 343–344
 - overview 339–341
 - typology and dynamics
 - in practice 341–342
 - woody cover changes 342–343
- Agroforestry systems 50, 51
- Air pollution 13, 16
- Albedo 172
- Alternate wetting and drying (AWD) 149
- Ammonia (NH₃) 224
- APSIM crop models 65, 67, 68, 73, 74, 79, 303
- Arable crops, chamber placement in 206–207
- Atmospheric CO₂ concentrations 43, 47, 50, 150, 170, 172, 174, 209
- Atmospheric methane
 - concentration 114, 122
- atmospheric precipitation 20, 43, 44, 46, 47, 145, 199, 219–220, 225, 300, 345
- atmospheric temperature 44, 45, 47, 69
- Atmospheric transport model 114
- Auto-injection system 212
- Auxiliary sensors 226
- AWD. *see* Alternate wetting and drying (AWD)
- 'Base-chamber' design 205
- Bayesian approach 217, 218
- BECCS. *see* Bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS)
- Beef cattle ranching 168
- Biodiversity conservation 340, 341
- Bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS) 151, 176, 178, 181
- Biofuel crop growth 169, 181
- Biogenic volatile organic compounds (BVOCs) 174–175
- Biogeochemical processes 146
- Biogeophysical effects 175, 177, 178
- Biomass production 5, 10, 14, 15, 49, 74, 127, 151, 344, 358, 359, 362

- Biophysical models 19
- 'Bookkeeping' method 171
- Bowen ratio (BR) 173, 225
- Breeding programmes 23
- Butyl rubber septa 204, 207
- BVOCs. *see* Biogenic volatile organic compounds (BVOCs)
- CA. *see* Conservation agriculture (CA)
- Carbon (C) 44–48
 - assimilation 14, 62
 - sequestration 14, 50, 51, 68, 79, 177, 284, 286, 288, 291, 294, 297, 364
 - stocks 347–348
 - translocation processes 14
- Carbon capture and storage (CCS) 178
- Carbon dioxide (CO₂) 45–48, 51, 62, 65, 69–71, 107, 115–116, 120, 138, 142, 146, 176, 177, 179, 208, 211, 223, 284, 288
- Carbon dioxide removal (CDR) 343
- Carbon footprint (CF) analysis 118–122
- Carbon monoxide (CO) 13, 142
- Carboxylation rate 4
- Carnegie Mellon University 128
- Cattle Enteric Fermentation Model (CEFM) 112
- Cavity ring-down spectroscopy (CRDS) 196, 211, 220
- CCFAS. *see* Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCFAS) program
- CCS. *see* Carbon capture and storage (CCS)
- CDR. *see* Carbon dioxide removal (CDR)
- CEFM. *see* Cattle Enteric Fermentation Model (CEFM)
- CENTURY method 67
- CERES-Maize model 73
- CF. *see* Carbon footprint (CF) analysis
- CGIAR. *see* Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)
- Chamber techniques 250
 - daily fluxes and cumulative emissions
 - chamber method 215–216
 - cumulative and total flux calculation 217–218
 - laboratory method 217
 - data processing and quantification 214–215
 - deployment 205–207
 - design and features 198–205
 - automated systems 199–201
 - chamber with plants 204–205
 - dimensions 201–202
 - installation of fan 204
 - insulation and temperature control 203–204
 - manual systems 199
 - materials 201
 - sampling port 204
 - seals 202–203
 - types 198–199
 - venting 203
- gas analysis 211
 - automated systems under field conditions 213
 - injection techniques under laboratory conditions 212–213
- gas chromatography calibration 213–214
- information and raw data for flux calculations 211
- sampling
 - air/gas samples storage 210
 - gas sampling and collection 207–208
 - sample collection and representative numbers 208
 - strategic procedures 209–210
 - time and frequency 209
- Cimate change mitigation 52, 68, 151, 157, 176–177, 181, 305, 348, 351–352, 354–355, 364, 365
- Climate adaptation 68, 157, 329–331
- Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCFAS) program 23
- Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) 306
 - concept and its potential 296–299
 - cropping options 276, 284
 - conservation agriculture (CA) 285–287
 - soil fertility management 287–288
 - operationalizing 299–305
 - farming systems analysis in case studies 304–305
 - in Flevoland, The Netherlands 300–302
 - mixed cereal-livestock farming systems in semi-arid Zimbabwe 302–304
 - overview 275–276
- Climate-smart technologies, innovations and management practices (CS-TIMPs) 47–52

- C-Lock Inc. 233
- Closed dynamic approach 200-201
- CMIP6. *see* Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 6 (CMIP6)
- CO₂, temperature, water/rainfall, and nitrogen (CTWN) analysis 72
- Cold stress 9-10
- Collar design. *see* 'Base-chamber' design
- Common Reporting Format (CRF) 111
- Conservation agriculture (CA) 48, 49, 276, 285-287
- Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) 23, 76
- Cool Farm Tool 128
- Copernicus programme 241
- Coping strategies 328-329
- Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 6 (CMIP6) 181
- CRDS. *see* Cavity ring-down spectroscopy (CRDS)
- CRF. *see* Common Reporting Format (CRF)
- Crop cultivation 22-23, 157
 - case of oil palm 143-144
 - CO₂ concentration effects on 4-8
 - global assessment 6-8
 - physical phenomenon 4
 - physiological and agronomic consequences 4-6
 - and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
 - from bioenergy systems 150-153
 - from crop residues 139-141
 - from rice production 149-150
 - using representative agricultural pathways (RAPs) 153-155
 - interaction effects of atmospheric changes on 16, 18-21
 - global and local yield impact 19-21
 - physiological and agronomic consequences 18-19
 - nutrient applications to global croplands 146-149
 - overview 3-4, 137-139
 - ozone concentration effects on 13-16
 - global assessment 16
 - physical phenomenon 13
 - physiological and agronomic consequences 14-16
 - peatlands conversion to croplands 142-143
 - soil carbon trajectories and outstanding uncertainties 145-146
 - soil organic matter content in agricultural soils 141-142
 - and sustainable development 155-156
 - temperature effects on 8-13
 - global assessment 11, 13
 - physical phenomenon 8
 - physiological and agronomic consequences 8-11
- Crop growth and modeling
 - approaches 300-301
 - agricultural data generation 76
 - biotic and abiotic stresses 77-80
 - climate change effect on agricultural production 56-58
 - for climate change impact
 - assessment 67-75
 - data requirement 67-69
 - high-input systems 69-71
 - importance of multi-model ensembles 74-75
 - low-input systems 71-74
 - CO₂ effect, temperature, heat, and frost stress 60-64
 - data for 58-60
 - nitrogen stress 66-67
 - overview 55-56
 - water stresses 64-66
- Cropland expansion 143-144
- Cropping systems 13, 49, 51, 56-58, 74, 139, 145, 146, 153, 154, 286, 287, 289, 292, 293, 364
- Crop residues 46, 51, 67, 71
- Crop simulation models 59
- CropSyst model 64
- Crop transpiration 64, 65
- Crop water productivity 4
- CSA. *see* Climate-smart agriculture (CSA)
- CSIRO 334
- CS-TIMPs. *see* Climate-smart technologies, innovations and management practices (CS-TIMPs)
- CTWN. *see* CO₂, temperature, water/rainfall, and nitrogen (CTWN) analysis
- Data harmonization methods 69
- Data loggers 222
- Deforestation 43, 99, 103, 115, 116, 120, 141, 142, 168-170, 175, 176, 284, 288, 340, 342, 343
- Denitrification processes 75, 146, 147, 149, 288, 289, 294

- DFG. *see* Difference frequency generation (DFG)
- DGGS. *see* Distillers grains with solubles (DGGS)
- DGVMs. *see* Dynamic global vegetation models (DGVMs)
- Difference frequency generation (DFG) 220
- Distillers grains with solubles (DGGS) 123
- Diversification 284, 303, 323, 326, 341
- Downwind concentration measures 236
- Drought stress 64, 65, 77
- DSSAT crop models 67, 68, 73, 74, 79, 80
- Dynamic chambers 198–199, 236, 251
- Dynamic global vegetation models (DGVMs) 171, 345
- Early pastoralism 100
- Early senescence 14
- Earth data portal 241
- Earth Online portal 241
- Earth's surface energy balance 173
- EarthStat database 157
- Earth Systems' Models 78
- EBA. *see* Ecosystem-based adaptation (EBA)
- EC. *see* Eddy covariance (EC) method
- ECD. *see* Electron capture detector (ECD)
- 'Ecological Climatology' 182
- Econometric production models 57
- Ecosystem-based adaptation (EBA) 356
- Ecosystem services 99, 157, 340, 341, 343, 357, 360, 364
- Eddy covariance (EC) method 197, 208, 218–223, 243–244, 248, 250–251
- ancillary measurements 220–221
- data acquisition 222
- instrumentation 219–220
- operation and sampling strategy 221–222
- overview 218
- post-processing 223
- principles 218–219
- raw data processing 222–223
- Eddy diffusivity 224
- EFs. *see* Emission factors (EFs)
- Electron capture detector (ECD) 212, 214
- Emission Database for Global Atmospheric Research 125
- Emission factors (EFs) 148, 198
- Enteric fermentation 108, 110–114, 118
- Environmental data 59
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 112
- EPIC model 68
- Evapotranspiration (ET) 4, 5, 64, 65, 238
- Evergreen Agriculture systems 363
- Extensive cattle grazing 103
- FACE. *see* Free air CO₂ enrichment (FACE) experiments
- FAIR Data Principles 69
- FAO. *see* Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- 'Farm-based' route 323, 326
- Farm models 57
- Farquhar-von Caemmer Rubisco kinetics 62
- Fast-box (FB) chamber 238, 248, 251
- 'Fast-economic growth' pathway (RAP5) 303, 304
- Fast-response anemometer 224
- Fast-response gas analysers 224
- Fast-response switching valves 224
- FB. *see* Fast-box (FB) chamber
- Feed storage areas, emissions from 237
- FG. *see* Flux gradient (FG)
- Flame ionization detector (FID) 211–212, 214
- Flooding 66, 225
- FLR. *see* Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR)
- Flux gradient (FG) 224
- Flux hood methodology. *see* Dynamic flux chamber
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) 112, 147, 157, 176, 355, 357
- Food quality 78
- Forest clearance 169–170
- Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) 358
- Forest management 358, 359
- Fossil fuel 43, 49, 75, 100, 107, 108, 114, 116, 118, 122, 123, 141, 151, 176–178, 343, 363
- Fourier-transformed infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) 196, 211, 220
- Free air CO₂ enrichment (FACE) experiments 5, 10, 15, 62, 65, 70, 71
- French Ministry of Agriculture 145
- Frost damage 63
- FTIR. *see* Fourier-transformed infrared spectroscopy (FTIR)
- GAEZ-IMAGE model 58
- GARDIAN web service 76
- Gas chromatography (GC) 196, 201, 210, 211, 213–214, 231, 233, 236
- GC. *see* Gas chromatography (GC)

- GCM. *see* Global climate models (GCM)
- GC-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) 196, 211
- GCMs. *see* Global climate models
- GC-MS. *see* GC-mass spectrometry (GC-MS)
- General equilibrium models 57
- Genetic data 59
- GGA. *see* Greenhouse gas analyser (GGA)
- GHG. *see* Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
- GIS data 68
- GLEAM. *see* Global Livestock Assessment Model (GLEAM)
- Gliricidia shrubs 362
- Global agroecosystem models 68
- Global Carbon Project 157
- Global climate models (GCMs) 7, 68
- Global economic losses 16
- Global Food and Nutrition Security group 334
- Global Forest Watch 182
- Global Greenhouse Gas Reference Network 127
- Global gridded modelling 290
- Global Livestock Assessment Model (GLEAM) 119, 120, 128
- Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN) 23
- Global vegetation models 57, 58
- Global warming 8, 21, 43, 107, 120, 227, 291, 340, 343, 360
- Global warming potentials (GWP) 115, 125, 149
- GODAN. *see* Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN)
- Godwin-Papran method 67
- 'Gold standard' technique. *see* Respiration chambers (RCs)
- GOSAT. *see* Greenhouse gases observing satellite (GOSAT)
- GOSAT User Interface Gateway 241
- Grazing and pasture management 50
- GreenFeed™ system 233
- Greenhouse gas analyser (GGA) 242
- Greenhouse gases observing satellite (GOSAT) 241
- Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 43, 44, 47, 68, 101, 114, 118, 138, 141, 142, 149, 150, 153, 154, 157, 181-182, 207, 226, 227, 275, 284, 286-287
- from bioenergy systems 150-153
- from crop residues 139-141
- measurement techniques 251
- alternative greenhouse gas 238-242
- for arable farming 197-198
- Bowen ratio 225
- chamber techniques 198-218
- comparison of methods and challenges 243-245, 248, 250
- eddy covariance (EC) method 218-223
- flux gradient 224
- at herd scale 234-237
- from livestock farms 227-234
- on mixed farms 237-238
- overview 195-197
- relaxed eddy accumulation 224-225
- special case of paddy rice 225-227
- from rice production 149-150
- using representative agricultural pathways (RAPs) 153-155
- Green manure 51
- Gridded modeling frameworks 68
- Ground-based Fourier transform spectrometers 240
- GWP. *see* Global warming potentials (GWP)
- HDDS. *see* Household dietary diversity score (HDDS)
- Heat stress 9, 10, 63, 77
- High-precision chemical analysers 224
- Household dietary diversity score (HDDS) 323-326
- Hydrological cycles 44, 173
- IBSNAT. *see* International Benchmark Sites Network for Agrotechnology Transfer project (IBSNAT)
- ICASA Data Dictionary 69
- ICOS. *see* Integrated carbon observation system (ICOS)
- ILRI. *see* International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)
- Incremental adaptations 295-296
- Indirect gradient methods 223-224
- Industrial Revolution 4, 8, 13, 100, 107, 168
- Inertial sublayer 219
- Infrared gas analyser (IRGA) 201, 219
- INM. *see* Integrated nutrient management (INM)
- Integrated Assessment Modeling community 154
- Integrated bio-economic models 57
- Integrated carbon observation system (ICOS) 197, 222
- Integrated crop-livestock systems 332-334

- agricultural production, consumption, sale and food security 322-327
- assessing climate change adaptation options 329-331
- climate change and 321-322
- methods used by farmers 328-329
- overview 319-321
- Integrated livestock models 57
- Integrated nutrient management (INM) 49, 50
- Integration approach 217
- Intensive grazing system 103, 106-107
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 182
 - 2006 Guidelines 344
 - 5th Assessment Report 139
 - Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories 111
- International Benchmark Sites Network for Agrotechnology Transfer project (IBSNAT) 59
- International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) 334
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 118
- InterSectoral Impact Model Improvement Project (ISIMIP) 23
- Inverse dispersion approaches 234-235
- IPCC. *see* Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- IRGA. *see* Infrared gas analyser (IRGA)
- IRIS. *see* Isotope ratio infrared spectroscopy (IRIS)
- ISIMIP. *see* InterSectoral Impact Model Improvement Project (ISIMIP)
- ISO. *see* International Organization for Standardization (ISO)
- Isoprene (C₅H₈) 174
- Isotope ratio infrared spectroscopy (IRIS) 220
- July-August-September-October (JASO) season 345
- Lagrangian stochastic dispersion model 235
- LAI. *see* Leaf area index (LAI)
- Land cover and land-use change (LULCC) 182
 - future trajectories 178-181
 - impacts on climate 170-175
 - carbon emission 170-172
 - estimating 175-176
 - evapotranspiration and hydrological impacts 173
 - reactive gases emission from vegetation 173-175
 - reflection of solar radiation 172-173
- land sector role in climate change mitigation 176-178
 - crops growth for bioenergy 178
 - reducing deforestation 177
 - reforestation, restoration and afforestation 177-178
 - overview 167-170
- Land degradation 145, 340, 346
- Latent heat 173
- LCA. *see* Life cycle analysis (LCA)
- Lead-salt lasers 220
- Leaf area 5, 15, 64, 65, 78
- Leaf area index (LAI) 62, 64, 65, 74
- LEAP. *see* Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance Partnership (LEAP)
- Legume-based cropping systems 51
- Leguminous shrubs 361-363
- Li-COR EC instruments 223
- Life cycle analysis (LCA) 118, 120, 127
- Linear approach 216
- Linear interpolation 217
- Linear regression 216
- Liquid manure management strategies 107
- Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance Partnership (LEAP) 128
- Livestock farms emissions
 - measurement 227-234
 - enteric methane emissions 229
 - GreenFeed technique 233-234, 251
 - headbox technique 231, 251
 - respiration chamber technique 230-231
 - tracer technique 232-233, 251
 - greenhouse gas from grassland 228-229
 - overview 227-228
- Livestock role 127
 - broader assessments and considerations 114-122
 - carbon footprint and life cycle analysis 118-122
 - global warming potential and associated issues 115
 - respired carbon dioxide, carbon fixation and storage 115-116, 118
 - changes in extent, management, and efficiency 101-103, 106-107

- contributions to global methane concentrations 122-125
- enteric fermentation and manure management methane emissions 110-114
 - bottom-up inventory-based estimations 111-112, 114
 - bottom-up measurements 110-111
 - disaggregation and downscaling 114
 - top-down studies 114
- methane and global atmospheric concentration 107-108, 110
- overview 99-101
- LIVSIM livestock model 303
- Log-normal distribution 217, 218
- Los Gatos Research 242
- LPJmL model 58
- LULCC. *see* Land cover and land-use change (LULCC)

- Management data 59, 119, 145
- Manure and soil fertility 289
- Manure storage areas, emissions from 236-237, 248, 251
- Marginal distribution sampling (MDS) 223
- MarkSim 68
- MASCUR. *see* Modelling European Agriculture with Climate Change for Food Security (MASCUR)
- Max Plank Institute 223
- MDC. *see* Mean diurnal course (MDC)
- MDD-W indicator. *see* Minimum Diet Diversity for Women (MDD-W) indicator
- MDS. *see* Marginal distribution sampling (MDS)
- Mean diurnal course (MDC) 223
- Methane (CH₄) 13, 107-108, 110, 118-120, 123, 142, 149, 150, 174-175, 198, 211, 225-227, 233, 286, 288, 289
- Methanogenic bacteria 108
- Micro-dosing of mineral fertilizer 50
- Micro-irrigation 50
- Micrometeorological methods 196, 236
- Micrometeorological techniques 234-235, 250, 251
- Minimum Diet Diversity for Women (MDD-W) indicator 323
- Mitigation mechanisms 284, 286
- Mixed farming systems 237-238, 320, 327
 - see also* Integrated crop-livestock systems
- ML. *see* Multifunctional landscapes (ML)
- Modelling European Agriculture with Climate Change for Food Security (MASCUR) 56
- 'Modern' agricultural policies, 339
- Modified 12" Schmidt- Cassegrain telescope 239
- Monoterpenes (C₁₀H₁₆) 174
- Multifunctional landscapes (ML) 356
- Multi-pass cells 220

- National Inventory Submissions 111
- Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) 145, 149, 177, 365
- NDIR. *see* Nondispersive infrared (NDIR) spectroscopy
- Net ecosystem exchange (NEE) 201, 223, 244
- Net primary productivity (NPP) 46, 50
- Nitrate leaching 14, 75, 151, 288, 289, 294
- Nitrification 146-147, 149, 288, 289
- Nitrogen (N) 44-47, 146, 152, 289, 330
 - cycling 14
 - fertilizer 21, 66, 73, 75, 147, 148, 150-152, 197, 198, 288, 289, 326
- Nitrogen oxides (NO_x) 13
- Nitrogen-use efficiency 294
- Nitrous oxide (N₂O) emissions 111, 115, 120, 124, 141, 142, 146-152, 198, 207, 211, 217, 226, 227, 245, 284, 286, 288, 289, 293, 294, 301-302
- Nondispersive infrared (NDIR) spectroscopy 196, 211, 219, 231
- NPP. *see* Net primary productivity (NPP)
- Nutrient-use efficiency 284

- OA-ICOS. *see* Off-axis integrated cavity output spectroscopy (OA-ICOS)
- OCCRI. *see* Oregon Climate Change Research Institute (OCCRI)
- OCO-2. *see* Orbiting carbon observatory 2 (OCO-2)
- Off-axis integrated cavity output spectroscopy (OA-ICOS) 220, 242
- Open Data Journal for Agricultural Research 23
- Open-path Fourier transform infrared (OP-FTIR) 231, 239
- Open-top chambers (OTC) 5, 15
- OP-FTIR. *see* Open-path Fourier transform infrared (OP-FTIR)

- Optical absorption techniques 220
- Orbiting carbon observatory 2
(OCO-2) 241
- Oregon Climate Change Research Institute
(OCCRI) 23
- OTC. *see* Open-top chambers (OTC)
- Ozone (O₃) concentration 174-175
- Paddock-scale micrometeorological
methods 235
- Paris Agreement on Climate (2015) 145,
176, 181
- Pegasus model 58, 63
- Penman-Montieth type equations 65
- Perennial bioenergy crops 178
- Pest and pathogen damages 78
- Phosphorus 121, 122, 146
- Photoacoustic analysers 211
- Photoacoustic methods 196
- Photoacoustic spectroscopy 231
- Photorespiration 4, 5, 8, 18
- Photosynthesis 4, 5, 8, 10, 15, 18, 62, 63
- Photosynthetic efficiency 4
- Phytotoxic ozone dose (POD_y) 15
- Plant nitrogen dynamics 6
- Plant water use 5
- Plume method 242
- PMP. *see* Positive mathematical
programming (PMP)
- POD_y. *see* Phytotoxic ozone dose
(POD_y)
- Pollution swapping 297
- Polytunnel method for semi-normal grazing
conditions 234
- Pooling/compositing techniques 208
- Pore size distribution. 47
- Positive mathematical programming
(PMP) 330
- Potassium 146
- Potsdam Institute 23
- Precision farming 48, 50
- Priestly-Taylor ET methods 74
- Process-based crop models 57
- Production system models (PSM) 154
- 'Purchased' route 323, 326
- QC. *see* Quality control (QC)
- QCLS. *see* Quantum cascade laser
spectrometry (QCLS)
- QTL. *see* Quantitative trait loci (QTL)
- Quality control (QC) 212, 214, 222
- Quantitative trait loci (QTL) 79
- Quantum cascade laser spectrometry
(QCLS) 196, 211, 220, 224
- Quasi-parallel signals 222
- Radiation-use efficiency (RUE) 61-63
- Radiation variables 220-221
- Radiative forcing 4, 8, 173, 179
- Rainfall 44, 45, 66, 69, 71, 74
- RAPs. *see* Representative agricultural
pathways (RAPs)
- RCP. *see* Representative concentration
pathway (RCP)
- RCs. *see* Respiration chambers (RCs)
- REA. *see* Relaxed eddy accumulation (REA)
- REDD. *see* Reducing Emissions from
Deforestation and forest
Degradation (REDD)
- REddyProc (BGC16) 223
- Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and
forest Degradation (REDD) 177, 285
- Regional Integrated Assessment (RIA)
approach 302
- Regression techniques 15
- Relaxed eddy accumulation (REA) 224-225
- Representative agricultural pathways
(RAPs) 153-155, 302-304
- Representative concentration pathway
(RCP) 4, 19, 154, 179-182, 322
- Respiration chambers (RCs) 229-231, 245
- Respiration rates 10-11
- RHOMIS. *see* Rural Household Multiple
Indicator Survey (RHOMIS)
- RIA. *see* Regional Integrated Assessment
(RIA) approach
- Rice-based farming systems 149
- Rice production systems 225, 226
- Risk behavior model 57
- Risk management 284
- Roughness sublayer 219
- Rubisco activity 9, 14, 62
- RUE. *see* Radiation-use efficiency (RUE)
- Rural Household Multiple Indicator Survey
(RHOMIS) 320, 326
- Satellite measurements and remote
sensing 239-241
- Scanning imaging absorption monitoring
spectrometer for atmospheric
chartography (SCIAMACHY)
240-241
- SDGs. *see* Sustainable development goals
(SDGs)

- Sensible heat 173
- Sesquiterpenes (C₁₅H₂₄) 174
- Shared Socioeconomic Pathways (SSPs) 147, 154, 178-182
- SI. *see* Sustainable intensification (SI)
- Site-based crop models 68
- Slant-open path FG technique 239, 248, 251
- SmartFlux 2 and 3 systems 223
- SOC. *see* Soil organic carbon (SOC)
- Social equity in communities 298
- Soil biology 45
- Soil chemical parameters 46
- Soil-crop models 71, 72
- Soil fertility management 287-288
- adaptation 292-293
- mitigation
- through carbon (C) sequestration 290-291
- through cutting emissions 288-290
- through land sparing 291-292
- trade-offs and constraints 293-295
- Soil for Food Security and Climate 145
- Soil moisture 45-47, 71
- Soil nitrogen mineralization 66-67
- Soil organic carbon (SOC) 46, 49, 51, 66-67, 71, 72, 75, 120, 141, 142, 145, 198, 286, 290-292
- Soil organic matter (SOM) 44-46, 48, 49, 139
- Soil physical properties 47
- Soil porosity 47
- Soil processes 46, 47
- Soil temperature 45-47, 204
- Soil water balance 58, 64
- Soil water content (SWC) 220
- SOM. *see* Soil organic matter (SOM)
- Spatial heterogeneity 245
- Special Report on Emissions Scenarios (SRES) 154
- SPEI. *see* Standardized Precipitation Evapotranspiration Index (SPEI)
- SR. *see* Surface renewal (SR) technique
- SRES. *see* Special Report on Emissions Scenarios (SRES)
- SSPs. *see* Shared Socioeconomic Pathways (SSPs)
- Standardized Precipitation Evapotranspiration Index (SPEI) 345
- Standard temperature and pressure (STP) conditions 231
- Static chambers 198, 199
- measurements 243
- techniques 236, 251
- Statistical models 57, 58
- Stomatal conductance 4, 5, 15, 65
- STP. *see* Standard temperature and pressure (STP) conditions
- Sulphur dioxide 224
- Sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆) tracer technique 110, 232-233
- Surface renewal (SR) technique 197, 238-239, 248, 250, 251
- 'Sustainability' pathway (RAP4) 303, 304
- Sustainable agriculture 340, 356
- Sustainable development goals (SDGs) 153, 156
- Sustainable intensification (SI) 284, 291-292
- SWC. *see* Soil water content (SWC)
- TCCON. *see* Total column carbon observing network (TCCON)
- TCD. *see* Thermal conductivity detector (TCD)
- TEA. *see* True eddy accumulation (TEA)
- Telecom lasers 220
- Thermal conductivity detector (TCD) 212, 214
- TILDASs. *see* Tunable infrared laser differential absorption spectrometers (TILDASs)
- Tillage 141, 146, 198
- TOA-MD. *see* Tradeoff Analysis for Multi-Dimensional Impact Assessment (TOA-MD)
- Total column carbon observing network (TCCON) 240
- TPU. *see* Triose Phosphate Utilization (TPU)
- Tracer gas approach 229, 231
- Tracer gas ratio technique for animal housing 235-236, 248, 251
- Tradeoff Analysis for Multi-Dimensional Impact Assessment (TOA-MD) 57, 303
- Transformational adaptation 295-296
- Trapezoid rule 217
- Tree cover on agricultural land 347
- TRENDY model ensemble 345, 346
- Triose Phosphate Utilization (TPU) 62
- Tropical agricultural production systems 11
- Tropical peatlands 143-144

- True eddy accumulation (TEA) 225
- Tunable infrared laser differential absorption spectrometers (TILDASs) 220
- Turbulent fluxes 218, 223
- UAVs. *see* Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)
- UNFCCC. *see* United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 111
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 363
- Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) 241–242, 251
- Venturi effect 205
- Vials 210
- Volatile organic compounds (VOC) 13
- Waterlogging 66
- Water sealing 203
- Water table depth (WTD) 220
- Wavelet analysis 245
- Wavelet transformation 245
- Weather data 11, 59, 68–69, 76
- Webb-Pearman-Leuning correction 245
- Weed pressure 287
- Wetlands 51, 108, 110, 123, 199, 201, 226
- World Agroforestry 361
- WTD. *see* Water table depth (WTD)