Soybean yield in future climate scenarios for the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Jossana Ceolin Cera(1), Nereu Augusto Streck(1), Cesar Augusto Jarutais Fensterseifer(1), Simone Erotildes Teleginski Ferraz(1), Kelin Pribs Bexaira(1), Waleska Bolzon Silveira(1) and Anthony Paz Cardoso(1)

(1)Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Avenida Roraima, n.º 1.000, CEP 97105-900 Santa Maria, RS, Brazil. E-mail: jossana.cera@gmail.com, nstreck2@yahoo.com.br, eng.cesar-augusto@hotmail.com, simonetfe@gmail.com, kelin_bexaira@hotmail.com, waleskabsilveira@gmail.com, anthony.tupa@gmail.com

Abstract – The objective of this work was to estimate the yield potential and the water-limited yield of soybean (Glycine max) in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, in two future climate scenarios, SRES A1B and RCP4.5, using the SoySim and Cropgro-Soybean simulation models. In both models, three maturity groups (4.8, 5.5, and 6.0) and six sowing dates (09/01, 10/01, 11/01, 12/01, 01/01, and 02/01) were considered in the SRES A1B-CMIP3 and RCP4.5-CMIP5 scenarios. The analyzed variable was grain yield at 13% moisture (Mg ha⁻¹). Soybean yield potential in Rio Grande do Sul should increase up to the end of the 21st century, according to both scenarios. Water-limited yield of soybean also increases up to the end of the 21st century, by the SRES A1B-CMIP3 scenario; however, it will decrease in future periods, by the RCP4.5-CMIP5 scenario because of limited soil water.

Index terms: Glycine max, climate change, Cropgro-Soybean model, RCP4.5, SoySim model, SRES A1B.

Introduction

Soybean is a global commodity, and the United States, Brazil, and Argentina production amounts to about 78% of the world soybean (FAO, 2016). Among the Brazilian states, Rio Grande do Sul is the third in production, with almost 15,000 Gg of soybean harvested in the 2014/2015 growing season, and 2.8 Mg ha⁻¹ mean yield (IBGE, 2016).

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the human effect on the climate system is real, and recent greenhouse gas emissions are the highest in history (Solomon et al., 2007; Stocker et al., 2013). The global temperature increased 0.85°C from 1880 to 2012, and the atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) concentration increased from 270 ppm in the industrial era to 404 in February, 2016 (Stock et al., 2013; NOAA, 2016). Anomalies in the world seasonal mean temperature increased in the 1981–2010 period, in comparison with the 1951–1980 period, mainly during summer (Hansen et al., 2012).

Variations in air temperature, CO₂, and precipitation directly affect soybean yield. Heinemann et al. (2006), in a controlled environment experiment (three different temperatures, and two CO₂ concentrations), in Georgia, observed an increase of soybean yield at an elevated temperature and CO₂; however, the increase rate of yield lowered as the air temperature increased.
Similar results were found when CO\textsubscript{2} concentration was doubled, and soybean yield increased 50%; nevertheless, the positive effect of the CO\textsubscript{2} increase was offset by the air temperature increase of 3°C, and the final combined effect between CO\textsubscript{2} increase and temperature resulted in 36% increase of soybean yield (Lal et al., 1999).

Yield potential (also called potential yield by some authors) of an agricultural crop is the yield of plants grown under neither biotic (pests, diseases, and weeds) nor abiotic (water and nutrients) stress; therefore, yield is determined only by temperature, solar radiation, and CO\textsubscript{2} during the growing season (Evans & Fischer, 1999). In the field, actual yield is lower than the potential one because biotic and abiotic factors affect the yield potential (Ittersum et al., 2013). The future of food production and global food security will depend on the capacity of farmers to reduce the gap between actual and potential yield, considering that yield potential may decrease due to climate change (Lobell et al., 2009).

Studies on the impact of climate change on soybean in Brazil, particularly in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, have been conducted using crop models, such as Soygro and Cropgro-Soybean, forced by synthetic climate scenarios, and by the SRES A1 and A2 scenarios of CMIP3, considering few sowing dates (Siqueira et al., 1994, 2000; Streck & Alberto, 2006; Justino et al., 2013; Rio et al., 2016). With the update of CMIP5 scenarios (Stocker et al., 2013), new soybean cultivars released annually, and the development of new crop simulation models as SoySim (Setiyono et al., 2010), studies on the impact of future scenarios on soybean in Rio Grande do Sul should be continued, taking into consideration these new tools and technologies.

The objective of this work was to estimate the yield potential and the water-limited yield of soybean in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, in two future climate scenarios, SRES A1B and RCP4.5, using the SoySim and Cropgro-Soybean agricultural models.

**Materials and Methods**

Two dynamic process-based soybean models were used: the SoySim model (Setiyono et al., 2010), on the potential yield conditions; and the Cropgro-Soybean model (Boote et al., 1998), on the potential and water-limited conditions. SoySim is the latest model for soybean, and it requires daily meteorological data such as solar radiation, minimum and maximum temperatures, relative humidity, precipitation, evapotranspiration, and only two genetic parameters: maturity group (MG) from 0.0 to 8.0; and stem termination (indeterminate and determinate). The Cropgro-Soybean model, under the DSSAT platform, is older than SoySim, and it is widely used in numerical studies worldwide, including those with climate change scenarios. To run the Cropgro-Soybean model, the user needs to input daily data of minimum and maximum temperatures, solar radiation, and precipitation (Boote et al., 1998; Ruiz-Nogueira et al., 2001). Cropgro-Soybean differs from SoySim by the greater number of genetic specific coefficients used, which requires five development parameters and seven growth parameters. When water balance is activated, the Cropgro-Soybean model uses the volumetric soil-water content that varies between saturation, field capacity, and permanent wilting points. These physic parameters are calculated based on information regarding the texture of each soil layer. From these data, the model performs the dynamic simulation of water among soil layers, according to the daily hydraulic conductivity, as described in the Ritchie method.

The soybean cultivars used in the present study were NS 4823 RR (MG=4.8), BMX Energia RR (MG=5.5), and BMX Turbo RR (MG=6.0). These cultivars have indeterminate stem termination, are transgenic, and were selected because they represent around 50% of the soybean area in the state of Rio Grande do Sul; during the last five years. The SoySim model was used in the generic mode, in which the MG is informed. The 4.5 version of the Cropgro-Soybean model was used with the calibration of the following genetic-specific parameters for the three soybean cultivars: maximum leaf area, maximum photosynthetic rate, specific leaf area, node number, date of emergence and reproductive stages R1, R3, R5, R7, and yield components (seed number per square meter, and mean weight of grain). Data for the calibration were from field experiments conducted during four growing seasons (2010/2011, 2011/2012, 2012/2013, and 2013/2014), in different locations in Rio Grande do Sul state. The cross-validation method (Baigorria et al., 2010) was used with 21 sowing dates, and consisted of the first date calibration and of the validation with the 20 remaining dates, then the second date calibration, and validation.
with the remaining 20 dates, and so on, until all sowing
dates were used in the calibration and validation.

Two future climate scenarios were used: SRES
A1B (SRES-Special Report on Emissions Scenarios)
(CMIP3), and RCP4.5 (RCP- Representative Concentra-
tion Pathway) (CMIP5), from the fourth and fifth
IPCC reports, respectively. The SRES A1B-CMIP3
scenario takes on a balance between the energetic
sources in the future, with a peak of the greenhouse
gas emissions until a half of the 21st century (Solomon et al.,
2007). This method describes an economic scenario of
fast growth, with a global population reaching a peak
in the first half of the century and that would decline in
the next half, and a fast insertion of new and efficient
technologies. In this scenario, at the end of the 21st
century, CO2 concentrations would reach 717 ppm,
and the mean surface temperature of the planet would
be between 1.7 and 4.4°C higher in 2100, compared
with the present climate, that is, a scenario of the
type “business as usual”. These data were generated
by the coupled atmosphere-ocean model ECHAM/
MPI-OM, with 250 km spatial resolution (Roeckner,
2005), regionalized to the state of Rio Grande do Sul
by dynamic downscaling (Hostetler et al., 2011) with
the Regional Climate Model version 3 (RegCM3)
(Pal et al., 2007), with a 100x100 km grid of latitude/longitude.

With lower emission than SRES A1B-CMIP3,
the RCP4.5-CMIP5 scenario of AR5 is also an
intermediate scenario, where CO2 concentration
would reach 538 ppm in 2100, and the global surface
mean temperature would be between 1.1 and 2.6°C
warmer at the end of the century, compared with
the present climate. Data were created by the HadGEM-
ES global ocean-atmosphere model (Jones et al., 2011),
with 250 km of spatial resolution (Roeckner, 2005),
regionalized to the state of Rio Grande do Sul
by dynamic downscaling (Hostetler et al., 2011) with
the Regional Climate Model version 3 (RegCM3)
(Pal et al., 2007), with a 100x100 km grid of latitude/longitude.

Results and Discussion

The soybean mean grain yield in the five growing
Soybean yield in future climate scenarios

and 2013/2014) ranged between 2 and 3 Mg ha\(^{-1}\), in most of Rio Grande do Sul, with a small part in the northeastern region of the state where yield reached 3 to 4 Mg ha\(^{-1}\); in the western region, with shallow soils and small holding capacity, yields were the lowest ones (1 to 2 Mg ha\(^{-1}\)). The yield simulated by the SoySim model, forced by the two scenarios, was on average 1 Mg ha\(^{-1}\) above the observed values because this model does not consider the effects of low-soil humidity on the crop. The Cropgro-Soybean, forced by the SRES A1B-CMIP3 scenario in the water-limited condition, captured the variation of the observed yield between the regions. These results indicate that the crop models and the climate scenarios are appropriate for this study.

The anomalies of soybean potential yield, simulated with the SoySim model in the two future climate scenarios SRES A1B-CMIP3 and RCP4.5-CMIP5, were positive (from 1.5 to 2 Mg ha\(^{-1}\)) until the end of the 20\(^{th}\) century (Figure 1 and 2), with a greater increase in the sowing dates of 09/01 and 12/01, mainly in the north and northeast regions of the state, while in the 01/01 and 02/01 sowing dates the yield anomalies were low, as a consequence of the shortening of the crop developmental cycle. In late sowings, soybean tends to benefit from the increase of temperature and CO\(_2\) concentration in future scenarios, despite the shortening of the cycle (Bao et al., 2015a). In some years and sowing dates (09/01, 01/01, and 02/01), the SoySim model interrupted the simulation because it reached low-freezing temperatures. The percentage of years that SoySim did not complete the simulation in the SRES A1B-CMIP3 and RCP4.5-CMIP5, respectively, were as follows: for the baseline period, 76.6 and 83.3%, in the 09/01 sowing date; 3.3 and 0.0% in 10/01; 0.0 and 3.3% in 11/01; 0.0 and 6.6% in 12/01; 3.3 and 13.3% in 01/01, and 3.3 and 26.6% in 02/01. For the future periods, these percentages were for 2010–2099 as follows: 12.2 and 22.2%, in 09/01; 0.0 and 8.8%, in 10/01; 5.5 and 10.0%, in 11/01; 11.1 and 21.1%, in 12/01; 13.3 and 43.3%, in 01/01; and 15.5 e 27.7%, in 02/01. These cases were not used for the calculation of the mean yield because the goal was to analyze the potential yield for each period.

Comparing the results of SoySim and Cropgro-Soybean, for the potential condition, and using the scenario SRES A1B-CMIP3, we observed that yield anomalies in the baseline period are greater with the Cropgro-Soybean (Figure 3 A, E, I, M, Q, and U) than with the SoySim model (Figure 1 A, E, I, M, Q, and U). However, for the three future periods, the increase of yield anomalies is greater with SoySim (Figure 1). The yield in the baseline period is greater for the potential conditions (Figure 3), for sowing on 09/01, 10/01, and 11/01, than for yield under water-limited conditions (Figure 4). In the future period of 2070-2099, the 10/01 and 12/01 sowings showed yield anomalies higher for water-limited conditions, and these results are similar to those reported by Bao et al. (2015b), who obtained an increase from 8 to 12% of yield until 2050, in the southeast of the United States, where the climate is similar to that of Rio Grande do Sul state, Brazil.

The yields with the Cropgro-Soybean model in potential condition, for the baseline of the RCP4.5-CMIP5 scenario, vary between 6 and 7 Mg ha\(^{-1}\) in almost all the state, for sowings on 09/01, 10/01, and 11/01 (Figure 5). Yield in the same period, simulated with the SoySim model (Figure 2), reaches the maximum of 5 Mg ha\(^{-1}\) for sowing on 09/01 and 10/01. This difference probably occurred by the fact that the Cropgro-Soybean model has been calibrated for soybean cultivars currently used in Rio Grande do Sul, while the SoySim model was run from its generic mode with no calibration of the genetic coefficients. The results of yield in the future periods agree with the ones reported by Justino et al. (2013), who found 60% increase for potential yield of soybean in the states of Pará and Mato Grosso, until the end of the 20\(^{th}\) century.

The RCP4.5-CMIP5 scenario is drier than the SRES A1B-CMIP3 scenario, and this was well evidenced by comparing simulations by the Cropgro-Soybean, in the potential condition, with the simulations when the model was run with the water balance activated (Figures 5 and 6). For both baseline and the three future periods, under the potential condition the yields would be high (until 7 Mg ha\(^{-1}\)); however, under the water-limited condition, yields in the baseline period are below 1 Mg ha\(^{-1}\), in most of the state and in all sowing dates (Figure 6). Yield decrease occurs because of the

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Figure 1. Soybean (*Glycine max*) yield potential at 13% moisture (Mg ha⁻¹), in the baseline period (A, E, I, M, Q, and U), and yield potential anomalies (Mg ha⁻¹) across the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, simulated with the SoySim model for three future climate scenarios (2010–2039, 2040–2069, and 2070–2099) of the SRES A1B-CMIP3, in six sowing dates 09/01 (B, C, D), 10/01 (F, G, H), 11/01 (J, K, L), 12/01 (N, O, P), 01/01 (R, S, T), and 02/01 (V, X, and Z). Yield is the average of three maturity groups (4.8, 5.5, and 6.0), and the baseline is the period 1980–2009. Areas 1, 2, and 3 are the Campanha, Tupanciretã, and Cachoeira do Sul regions, respectively, with the largest cultivated areas with soybean, and area 4 (dotted line) represents the area with the highest-soybean yield in Rio Grande do Sul, calculated as an average of five growing seasons (2008/2009, 2009/2010, 2010/2011, 2012/2013, and 2013/2014), according to IBGE (2016). The colored ruler on the left-hand side is for yields in the baseline and, on the right-hand side, for yield anomalies.
Figure 2. Soybean (*Glycine max*) yield potential at 13% moisture (Mg ha⁻¹) in the baseline period (A, E, I, M, Q, U), and yield potential anomalies (Mg ha⁻¹) across the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, simulated with the SoySim model for three future climate scenarios (2010–2039, 2040–2069, and 2070–2099) of the RCP4.5-CMIP5, in six sowing dates 09/01 (B, C, D), 10/01 (F, G, H), 11/01 (J, K, L), 12/01 (N, O, P), 01/01 (R, S, T), and 02/01 (V, X, and Z). Yield is the average of three maturity groups (4.8, 5.5, and 6.0), and the baseline is the period 1980-2009. Areas 1, 2, and 3 are Campanha, Tupanciretã, and Cachoeira do Sul regions, respectively, with the largest cultivated areas with soybean, and area 4 (dotted line) represents the area with the highest-soybean yield in Rio Grande do Sul, calculated as an average of five growing seasons (2008/2009, 2009/2010, 2010/2011, 2012/2013, and 2013/2014), according to IBGE (2016). The colored ruler on the left-hand side is for the yields in the baseline and, on the right-hand side, for the yield anomalies.
Figure 3. Soybean (Glycine max) yield potential at 13% moisture (Mg ha⁻¹) in the baseline period (A, E, I, M, Q, and U), and yield potential anomalies (Mg ha⁻¹) across the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, simulated with the Cropgro-Soybean model for three future climate scenarios (2010–2039, 2040–2069, and 2070–2099) of the SRES A1B-CMIP3, in six sowing dates 09/01 (B, C, D), 10/01 (F, G, H), 11/01 (J, K, L), 12/01 (N, O, P), 01/01 (R, S, T), and 02/01 (V, X, and Z). Yield is the average of three maturity groups (4.8, 5.5, and 6.0), and the baseline is the period 1980-2009. Areas 1, 2, and 3 are Campanha, Tupanciretã, and Cachoeira do Sul regions, respectively, with the largest cultivated areas with soybean, and area 4 (dotted line) represents the area with the highest-soybean yield in Rio Grande do Sul, calculated as an average of five growing seasons (2008/2009, 2009/2010, 2010/2011, 2012/2013, and 2013/2014), according to IBGE (2016). The colored ruler on the left-hand side is for the yields in the baseline and, on the right-hand side, for the yield anomalies.
Figure 4. Soybean (Glycine max) water-limited yield at 13% moisture (Mg ha⁻¹) in the baseline period (A, E, I, M, Q, and U), and anomalies in soybean water-limited yield (Mg ha⁻¹) across the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, simulated with the Cropgro-Soybean model for three future climate scenarios (2010–2039, 2040–2069, and 2070–2099) of the SRES A1B-CMIP3, in six sowing dates 09/01 (B, C, D), 10/01 (F, G, H), 11/01 (I, K, L), 12/01 (N, O, P), 01/01 (R, S, T), and 02/01 (V, X, and Z). Yield is the average of three maturity groups (4.8, 5.5, and 6.0), and the baseline is the period 1980-2009. Areas 1, 2, and 3 are Campanha, Tupanciretã, and Cachoeira do Sul regions, respectively, with the largest cultivated areas with soybean, and area 4 (dotted line) represents the area with the highest-soybean yield in Rio Grande do Sul, calculated as an average of five growing seasons (2008/2009, 2009/2010, 2010/2011, 2012/2013, and 2013/2014), according to IBGE (2016). The colored ruler on the left-hand side is for the yields in the baseline and, on the right-hand side, for the yield anomalies.
Figure 5. Soybean (Glycine max) yield potential at 13% moisture (Mg ha⁻¹) in the baseline period (A, E, I, M, Q, U), and yield potential anomalies (Mg ha⁻¹) across the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, simulated with the Cropgro-Soybean model for three future climate scenarios (2010–2039, 2040–2069, and 2070–2099) of the RCP4.5-CMIP5, in six sowing dates 09/01 (B, C, D), 10/01 (F, G, H), 11/01 (J, K, L), 12/01 (N, O, P), 01/01 (R, S, T), and 02/01 (V, X, Z). Yield is the average of three maturity groups (4.8, 5.5, and 6.0), and the baseline is the period 1980-2009. Areas 1, 2, and 3 are Campanha, Tupancireta, and Cachoeira do Sul regions, respectively, with the largest cultivated areas with soybean, and area 4 (dotted line) represents the area with the highest-soybean yield in Rio Grande do Sul, calculated as an average of five growing seasons (2008/2009, 2009/2010, 2010/2011, 2012/2013, and 2013/2014), according to IBGE (2016). The colored ruler on the left-hand side is for the yields in the baseline and, on the right-hand side, for the yield anomalies.
Figure 6. Soybean (*Glycine max*) water-limited yield at 13% moisture (Mg ha\(^{-1}\)) in the baseline period (A, E, I, M, Q, and U), and anomalies of soybean water-limited yield (Mg ha\(^{-1}\)) across the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, simulated with the Cropgro-Soybean model for three future climate scenarios (2010–2039, 2040–2069, and 2070–2099) of the RCP4.5-CMIP5, in six sowing dates 09/01 (B, C, D), 10/01 (F, G, H), 11/01 (J, K, L), 12/01 (N, O, P), 01/01 (R, S, T), and 02/01 (V, X, and Z). Yield is the average of three maturity groups (4.8, 5.5, and 6.0), and the baseline is the period 1980-2009. Areas 1, 2, and 3 are Campanha, Tupanciretã, and Cachoeira do Sul regions, respectively, with the largest cultivated areas with soybean, and area 4 (dotted line) represents the area with the highest-soybean yield in Rio Grande do Sul, calculated as an average of five growing seasons (2008/2009, 2009/2010, 2010/2011, 2012/2013, and 2013/2014), according to IBGE (2016). The colored ruler on the left-hand side is for the yields in the baseline and, on the right-hand side, for the yield anomalies.
lowest-available water content for the plants which is, for instance, 20–40% lowest in the RCP4.5-CMIP5 scenario than in SRES A1B-CMIP3, at 0–15 cm soil depth, in Passo Fundo region, in the northeastern of the state. Rio et al. (2016) also found a yield decrease for the 2041–2071 scenario, for the South of Brazil, with the Cropgro-Soybean forced by the SRES A2 and B2 scenarios, without considering the effect of elevated CO₂. In the RCP4.5-CMIP5 scenario, there are periods without rain during the critical stages of soybean development, R1 and R3, that caused yield reduction during the period of 1980–2099, which agrees with Dogan et al. (2007), who showed that the highest soybean yield losses occur when the irrigation cease in the R3, R5, and R6 stages.

Atmospheric CO₂ is the primary substrate for photosynthesis, and an increase in its concentration has a positive effect on crop yield, mainly in C3 plants such as soybean (Streck, 2005). The largest increase of soybean yield due to elevated CO₂ concentration was simulated with the SoySim model, mainly in the RCP4.5-CMIP5 (Table 1). With the Cropgro-Soybean in the potential condition, the largest increases of yield were also simulated in the RCP4.5-CMIP5 scenario; however, when the model was used with the water balance activated, negative yield anomalies were simulated in the same scenario, even with the increase of CO₂ concentration, as a consequence of limited water in the soil. The lowest increase in yield potential per unity of CO₂ increase in the SRES A1B-CMIP3 scenario is associated with the elevation of higher temperature in this scenario (Table 1), in comparison to the RCP4.5-CMIP5, that is, higher temperatures offset the benefit of the CO₂ concentration increase (Lal et al., 1999; Streck, 2005; Hao et al., 2014).

### Table 1. Trends of increase of yield potential (YPOT) and water-limited yield (WLY) in soybean (Glycine max), per unity of CO₂ increase (kg ha⁻¹ ppm⁻¹), simulated by SoySim and Cropgro-Soybean models in two future climate scenarios – SRES A1B-CMIP3 and RCP4.5-CMIP5 –, during the 2010–2099 period. Areas 1, 2, 3 and 4 are indicated in Figures 2 A and 2 B.

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Conclusions

1. Soybean (Glycine max) yield potential, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, should increase until the end of the 21st century, according to the SRES A1B-CMIP3 and RCP4.5-CMIP5 future climate scenarios.

2. The water-limited soybean yield, in Rio Grande do Sul, should increase until the end of the 21st century in the SRES A1B-CMIP3 scenario; however, in the RCP4.5-CMIP5 scenario, the soybean yield should decrease, due to limited water in the soil.

References


max until the end of the 21th century, according to the SRES A1B - CMIP3 and RCP4.5 - CMIP5 future climate decrease, due to limited water in the soil.


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