

# **Weather & Wheat Crop Development in Central Punjab (Faisalabad) (2014 – 2015)**



**By**

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# Contents

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<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION -----</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 Geographical Description and Climate of Pakistan and Central Punjab (Study Area)	7
1.2 Scope of the Study .....	8
1.3 Objective of the Study .....	9
1.4 Review of Agriculture Production in Pakistan .....	9
1.5 Wheat Production in Pakistan .....	9
<b>CHAPTER 2: MATERIALS AND METHOD -----</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1 Phenology .....	10
2.1.1 Phenological Observations .....	11
2.2 Methodology .....	12
<b>CHAPTER 3: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION -----</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 Rainfall and Wheat Crop Growth .....	14
3.2 Irrigation during Crop Growth .....	16
3.3 Air Temperature and Wheat Crop Growth .....	16
3.4 Soil Moisture Observations during Crop Growth .....	18
3.5 Soil Temperature and Crop Growth .....	20
3.6 Heat Units Requirements .....	21
3.7 Relative Humidity (%) .....	23
3.8 Reference Crop Evapotranspiration, ETo (mm/day) .....	24
3.9 Wind and Crop Growth.....	24
3.10 Crop Water Requirement.....	25
3.11 Agro Meteorological Summary of Crop Cycle .....	26
<b>CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS -----</b>	<b>30</b>
4.1 Conclusions .....	31
4.2 Recommendations .....	31

**REFERENCES** ..... **33**

**APPENDIX** ..... **34**

# List of Figures

		Page No.
Figure 1.1	Mean Annual Rainfall (mm) of Punjab [Normal (1981-2010)] .....	8
Figure 1.2	Monthly Mean Annual Rainfall (mm) of Faisalabad during Rabi Season .....	8
Figure 1.3	Mean daily Maximum and Minimum Temperature (°C) of Faisalabad during Rabi Season .....	8
Figure 3.1	Comparison of Monthly Observed Precipitation with Normal (1981-2010) at Faisalabad .....	13
Figure 3.2	Mean daily Minimum Temperature (°C) of Faisalabad.....	14
Figure 3.3	Mean daily Maximum Temperature (°C) of Faisalabad.....	14
Figure 3.4	Mean Monthly Temperature during 2014-15.....	14
Figure 3.5	Soil moisture chrono Isopleths for Rabi Crop at Faisalabad for the year 2014-15.....	14
Figure 3.6	Soil moisture at different depths during wheat crop 2014-5.....	15
Figure 3.7	Moisture at deep soils (90cm) during wheat crop 2014-.....	16
Figure 3.8	Soil temperature during wheat crop 2014-15.....	17
Figure 3.9	Heat units during crop life 2014-15.....	17
Figure 3.10	March of Crop Coefficient (Kc) for normal duration of Wheat growing season (Emergence to Wax- Maturity). .....	17
Figure 3.11	Crop Water Requirement (CWR) During Crop Life.....	18

# List of Tables

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		Page No.
Table 2.1	Observed Meteorological Parameters .....	10
Table 2.2	Phenological Stages of Wheat Crop .....	10
Table 3.1	Brief Summary of the Wheat Crop .....	13
Table 3.2	Daily rainfall history of the crop life 2014-15.....	15
Table 3.3	Mean Monthly Temperature during Rabi Season 2014-15 .....	18
Table 3.4	Heat Units Consumed by the Crop during Different Phenological Phases .....	23
Table 3.5	Summary of some Meteorological Parameters during Rabi Season 2014-15 .....	24

# Abstract

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This study was conducted at RAMC (Regional Agrometeorological Center) Faisalabad to investigate the impact of weather conditions on the growth and development of wheat crop. Impact of variations in the meteorological parameters on different phenological phases and hence on final yield of wheat crop was analyzed. For this purpose, both meteorological and phenological data along with soil moisture data was collected from the meteorological observatory and agricultural field of physiology section of Ayub Agriculture Research Institute, Faisalabad. Besides this record, other necessary features like sowing time, fertilizer, weeds removing operations and irrigation schedule are also included in the current report for the Rabi season 2014-15. The wheat crop variety 8068 sown in the field under observation used 1628 heat units in 144 days during its life cycle from sowing to full maturity. The water requirement of crop was fulfilled by flood irrigation method. Crop was sown slightly later than the proper time. Weather during its growth period was generally suitable for crop. Normal to slightly below normal air temperature during the grain formation stages provide the grain enough time to grow to its full size before drying. But precipitation spell at the time of flowering negatively affected the germination process and hence the yield.

# Chapter 1

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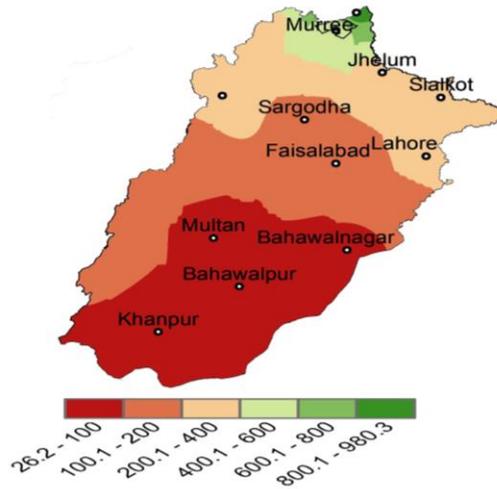
## INTRODUCTION

Wheat is the major food crop as well as one of the main agricultural products in Pakistan. This study is based upon field observations of wheat crop at Regional Agrometeorological Centre, Faisalabad cultivated in the experimental field of Ayub Agriculture research Institute, Faisalabad. Land at the study site consists of agriculture fields rotated among wheat, rice, cotton and many other seasonal crops. In experimental field wheat crop variety 8068 was cultivated. This study will help in understanding the effect of different climatic parameters on the growth and yield of wheat crop in central Punjab region.

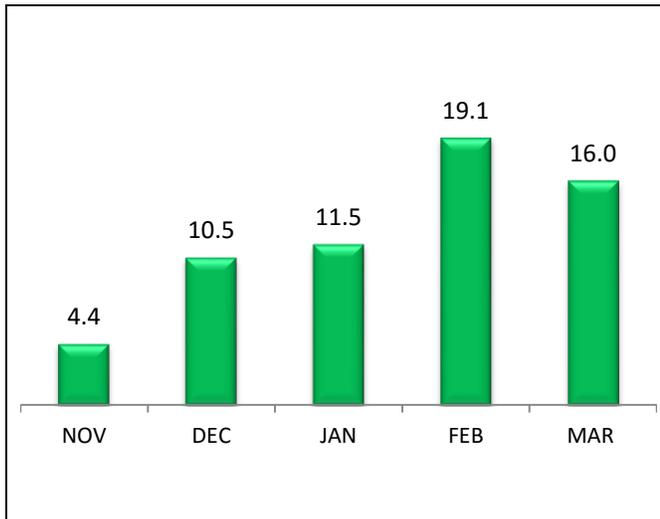
### **1.1 Geographical Description and Climate of Central Punjab (Study Area)**

Pakistan has a variable climate, ranging from arid (33-254mm annual rainfall) in the south to humid (1016-2032mm annual rainfall), sub-humid (508-1016mm annual rainfall) and semi-arid (254-508mm annual rainfall) in the north. The Indus River that originates from the north along with its tributaries irrigates the great plains of the country including Central Punjab. Chaudhry and Rasul found that about 2/3 of the total agriculture area lies in the arid climate. [1]

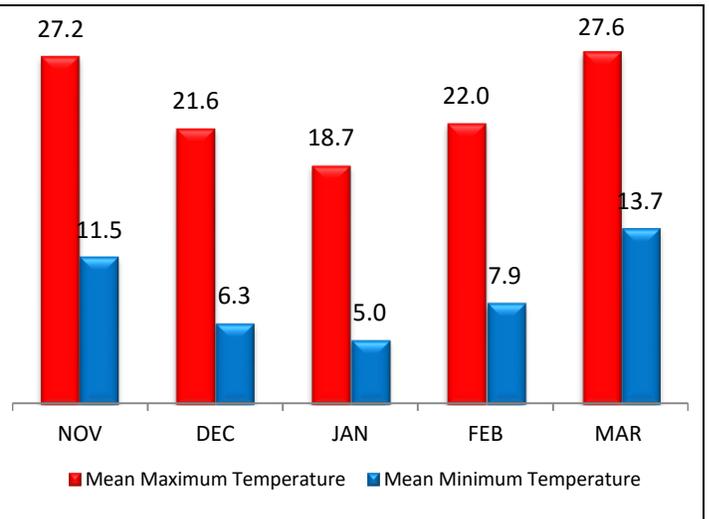
The study has been conducted for “Faisalabad District” in Central Punjab with longitude 73.1°E, latitude 31.43°N and elevation of 184.5m from mean sea level. The climate of central and southern Punjab possesses the dry semi-arid agro-climatic characteristics (Figure – 1.1) but well managed canal irrigation system has placed it among the highly productive agriculture zones. Mainly summer monsoon produces more rainfall and winter has a little contribution. Day time temperature reaches above 40°C during summer from April to September except some occasional relief from monsoon rains and decreases the evaporation demand of the atmosphere. The winter season starts from November and continues till March. December, January and February are the coldest months. In winter, night time temperature drops below 0°C [2]. More detail about the climate of Faisalabad during Rabi season is shown in the figures (1.2 & 1.3). The highest amount of rainfall occurs during Rabi season in the month of February followed by March and January. Day time mean maximum and night time mean minimum temperature gradually decrease from November upto January and then increase up to March. [3]



**Figure 1.1: Mean Annual Rainfall (mm) of Punjab**  
[Normal (1981-2010)]



**Figure 1.2: Monthly Mean Annual Rainfall (mm) of Faisalabad during Rabi Season**



**Figure 1.3: Mean daily Maximum and Minimum Temperature (°C) of Faisalabad during Rabi Season**

## 1.2 Scope of the Study

Pakistan experiences a more variable and unpredictable behavior of weather systems as compared to other countries of the region. This type of weather patterns result in the variations in the amount of available water both for irrigated and rain fed agricultural lands, which consequently results in the fluctuations in annual yield of wheat. Sometime heavy rains along with persistent cloudy conditions trigger the viral or pest attack on wheat crop and also cause rapid growth of weeds in the fields. It also prolongs the crop period, which causes delay in sowing of next Kharif crop. Rain just after sowing causes decrease in the number of germinated wheat seeds and also at the time of harvesting/threshing badly damage the final yield. Abnormal rise in day time temperature or late sowing raises crop water requirement at a particular phase. This could also cause early completion of phase and early maturity of

grains. Due to which shriveled grain is obtained. Therefore, in this study the impacts of variations of meteorological parameters along with variations in soil temperature and moisture are analyzed to understand crop growth and development throughout the crop life and their impact on final yield of the crop.

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

- To analyze and study the impact of various meteorological parameters on crop growth and development.
- To investigate the water satisfaction sensitivity of crop in Faisalabad region.
- To develop the relationship between weather parameters, crops life cycle and yield obtained.
- To determine the onset of pests and diseases related to weather elements.
- To get a step forward for formulation of yield estimation.

### **1.4 Review of Agriculture Production in Pakistan**

Pakistan is an agrarian country whose population and economy directly or indirectly (70% directly and 16% indirectly) depends upon agriculture. Agriculture is the mainstay of Pakistan's economy. It accounts for 21% of the GDP and together with agro-based products fetches 80% of the country's total export earnings. More than 43.7% of the labor force is engaged in this sector. [4] The crops is most vibrant sub-sector of agriculture, it consist of 39.6% of agriculture and 8.3% of GDP. Therefore any change in agricultural productivity creates a ripple effect throughout the rural population of Pakistan. Thus rapid agricultural growth can stimulate and sustain the pace of industrial growth, setting into motion a mutually reinforcing process of sustained economic growth. [5]

Punjab contributes about 76% to annual food grain production in the country. According to the Punjab Agriculture department "Punjab has 57% of the total cultivated and 69% of the total cropped area of Pakistan. [6] It provides about 83% of cotton, 80% of wheat, 97% fine aromatic rice, 63% of sugarcane and 51% of maize to the national food production. Among fruits, mango accounts for 66%, citrus more than 95%, guava 82% and dates 34% of total national production of these fruits. [7]

### **1.5 Wheat Production in Pakistan**

Wheat flour or "Atta" is the common food for most Pakistanis, supplying 72% of caloric energy in the average diet. It is the main food cereal crop in Pakistan and is essentially better from nutritional point of view than most of the cereals and other foods. It is estimated that in our country wheat consumption per capita is 124 kg per year, which is the highest amount over the world. [5] The above fact reflects the importance of wheat crop for our country. Therefore every year variation in the total yield of wheat due to several factors including climate and weather variations directly affects the economy and social balance of the country.

Wheat is a Rabi crop that is grown in the winter season. In Pakistan sowing of wheat takes place from October to December and harvesting during the month of March to May. In Punjab sowing months of wheat are November and December whereas harvesting period is April and May.

# Chapter 2

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## MATERIALS AND METHOD

The wheat crop variety 8068 was cultivated at Regional Agrometeorological Center, Faisalabad in central Punjab during Rabi season 2014-15. Both the meteorological and crop phenological data were recorded during the crop season. In order to compile the data of each development stage, careful, precise and timely recording of the following parameters (table 2.1) were undertaken at 0300, 0900 and 1200 (UTC) as routine practice.

**Table 2.1: Observed Meteorological Parameters**

1.	Air Temperature (°C)
2.	Maximum & Minimum Temperature (°C)
3.	Soil Temperature (°C)
4.	Relative Humidity (%)
5.	Precipitation (mm)
6.	Pan Evaporation at 0300 & 1200UTC
7.	Bright Sunshine Hours
8.	Wind Speed (km/hour)
9.	Wind Direction
10.	Soil Moisture (%)

Crop data including Phenological data and soil moisture observation was collected according to World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) standards.

### 2.1 Phenology

For a sound understanding of plant growth and development, observation and recording of phenological stages of plant is an essential element (table 2.2). The impact of precipitation, heat, drought, diseases, insects, and weeds can be more accurately predicted with a clear picture of the relationship between growth stage and plant response to stress. The optimum timing of fertilizer, irrigation, herbicide, insecticide, and fungicide applications are also best determined by crop growth or phenological stage rather than calendar date. [8]

**Table 2.2: Phenological Stages of Wheat Crop 2014-15**

	<b>Phenological stage</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.	Sowing	19-11-2014
2.	Emergence	26-11-2014 To 07-12-2014
3.	Third Leaf	08-12-2014 To 19-12-2014
4.	Tillering	20-12-2014 To 25-01-2015
5.	Shooting	26-01-2015 To 20-02-2015
6.	Heading	21-02-2015 To 03-03-2015
7.	Flowering	04-03-2015 To 22-03-2015
8.	Milk Maturity	23-03-2015 To 05-04-2015
9.	Wax Maturity	06-04-2015 To 11-04-2015
10.	Full Maturity	12-04-2015 To 18-04-2015

### 2.1.1 Phenological Observations

Generally the field selected for Phenological observations should be of one hectare in size but in this case area of field selected for observation was half acre and it was divided into 4 replications. Over all 10 plants were selected from each replication. These plants were tagged in a row in each replication. Thus phenological observations were recorded on 40 plants and continued throughout the period on the same plants.

Total number of plants in a particular phenological phase at the same time was observed from each replication on every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday and these observations were recorded on the prescribed Performa. When 10% of the selected plants were in certain phase, that particular phase was considered to be started. If 50% of the selected plants displayed a certain phase, that phase was considered to be in full swing. Similarly, 75% occurrence of certain phase displayed by the selected plants was considered as completion of that particular phase and next Phenological phase observations were started at their proper time. Thus next phenological stage is not bound to appear after the

completion of first one. It has been observed that at a time two phenological phases or no phase can exist.

## **2.2 Methodology**

In this study the impact of different meteorological/non-meteorological parameters in comparison with the normal (1981-2010), including soil temperature and soil moisture, amount of seed per acre cultivated, time of sowing, fertilizer intake, number and timing of irrigation water added and pest attack/pesticide used over crop growth, development and final yield are discussed.

# Chapter 3

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, variations in meteorological and non-meteorological parameters and their impact on the wheat crop is analyzed along with a brief summary of whole wheat crop's life cycle. Normally the wheat crop takes 100-120 days to get fully mature. The crop is cultivated in the start of November up to the mid of December. In order to investigate the chief causes about variation in the crop's growth, development and yield related to varying weather conditions and some other factors during each phenological stages of wheat crop, different meteorological parameters are studied as well.

**Table 3.1: Brief Summary of the Wheat Crop**

<b>1</b>	Field size	4 kanal
<b>2</b>	Crop variety	8068
<b>3</b>	Date of Sowing	19-11-2014
<b>4</b>	Information about any disease/pest attack,	Aphid
<b>5</b>	Pesticides And weedicides details	Bromoxynil + UNCPA + Axial
<b>6</b>	Quantity of seed per acre	50 Kg
<b>7</b>	Row spacing	25cm
<b>8</b>	Schedule and quantity of supplied dose of fertilizer	a- 1 bag SOP, 2 bag DAP at sowing b- 2 bag Urea during 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> irrigation.
<b>9</b>	Type of irrigation	Flood irrigation
<b>10</b>	Irrigation schedule	10-12-2014 (First irrigation) 03-01-2015 (Second irrigation) 02-03-2015 (Third irrigation)
<b>11</b>	Heat units consumed from sowing to full maturity	1616
<b>12</b>	Total days taken by the crop from sowing to full maturity	144
<b>13</b>	Date of harvesting	03-05-2015
<b>14</b>	Actual/ Potential yield	1400/1600 kg /acre

### 3.1 Rainfall and Wheat Crop Growth

Rainfall is one of the most important factors that affect annual wheat production in Pakistan. In time or effective rainfall i.e., before sowing and shooting to grain formation stage is greatly beneficial. In the same way, rain after sowing and before germination and at the time of full maturity negatively affect crop growth and ultimately reduce the yield. [9]

**During the crop season 2014–15**, rainfall amounting 22.0mm was reported for two days in November, no rainfall was reported in December and 12.4mm for four days in January during early to mid growing stages. Normal to above normal rainfall was reported in February and March from shooting stage till early maturity. During flowering in the month of March, rainfall amounting 40mm for 6 days badly affected the crop growth at pollination.. Almost normal rainfall was reported in April and dry weather was reported during harvesting/threshing.

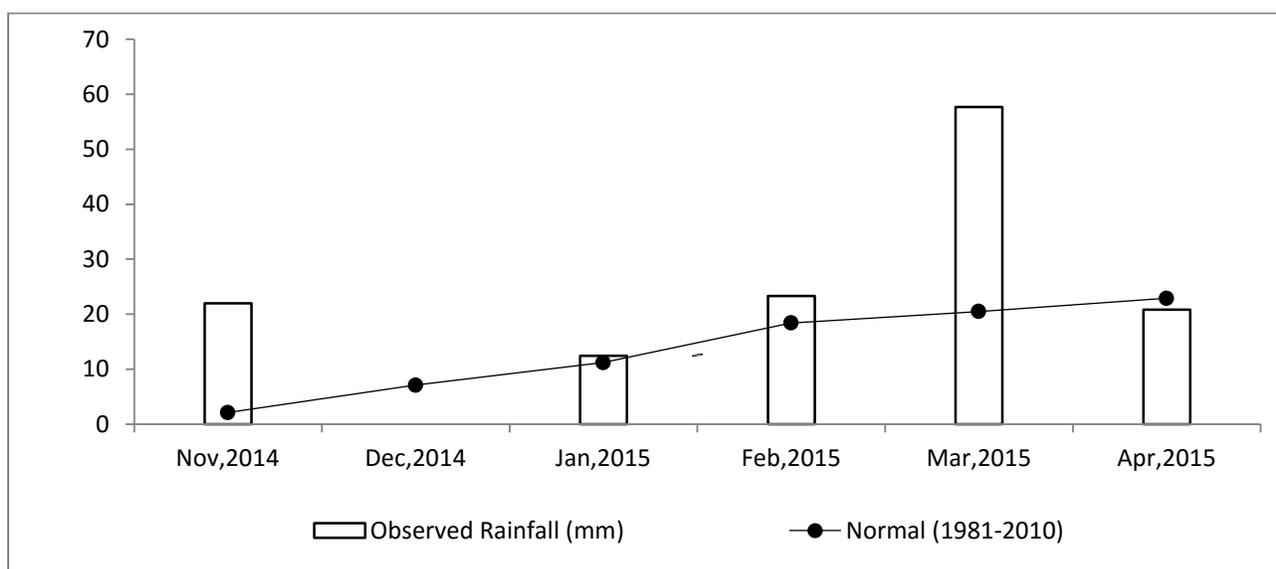


Figure 3.1: Comparison of Monthly observed rainfall with Normal (1981-2010) at Faisalabad during Rabi season 2014-14

**Table 3.2: Daily Rainfall History of the Crop Life 2014-15**

Year	Phenological stage	Month	Day	Rainfall(mm)	Monthly Total (mm)
2014	Emergence	November	3	12.00	
2014	Emergence	November	6	10.00	22
2015	Tillering	January	12	tr	
2015	Tillering	January	13	3.60	
2015	Tillering	January	20	1.80	
2015	Tillering	January	21	7.00	12.4
2015	Shooting	February	2	15.00	
2015	Shooting	February	6	tr	
2015	Shooting	February	18	tr	
2015	Shooting	February	19	5.10	
2015	Shooting	February	20	2.60	
2015	Heading	February	24	0.60	
2015	Heading	February	28	tr	23.3
2015	Heading	March	1	13.30	
2015	Heading	March	3	4.40	
2015	Flowering	March	4	2.00	
2015	Flowering	March	5	tr	
2015	Flowering	March	6	2.60	
2015	Flowering	March	7	30.20	
2015	Flowering	March	15	5.20	
2015	Flowering	March	16	tr	
2015	Milk maturity	March	28	tr	57.7

2015	Milk maturity	April	2	0.80	
2015	Milk maturity	April	5	0.40	
2015	Wax maturity	April	7	19.60	20.8

### 3.2 Irrigation during Crop Growth

The wheat crop was irrigated three times during the entire season before full maturity. First irrigation was made to the wheat crop 21 days after sowing. During the tillering stage, second irrigation was given. Third irrigation was given during the heading stage.

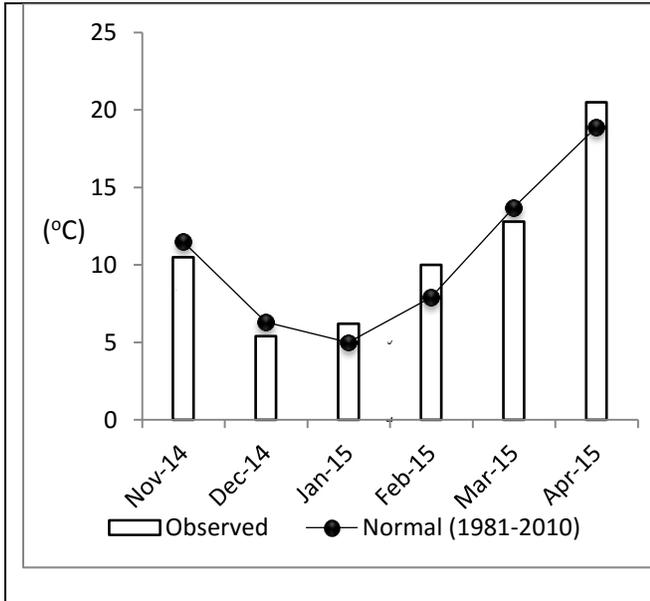
### 3.3 Air Temperature and Wheat Crop Growth

Air temperature is also one of the most important climatic variables that affect plant life. Plants growth is restricted to certain limits of air temperature. The main dry matter process i.e., photosynthesis is also temperature dependant. Hence three temperature values for a plant growth are of particular importance.

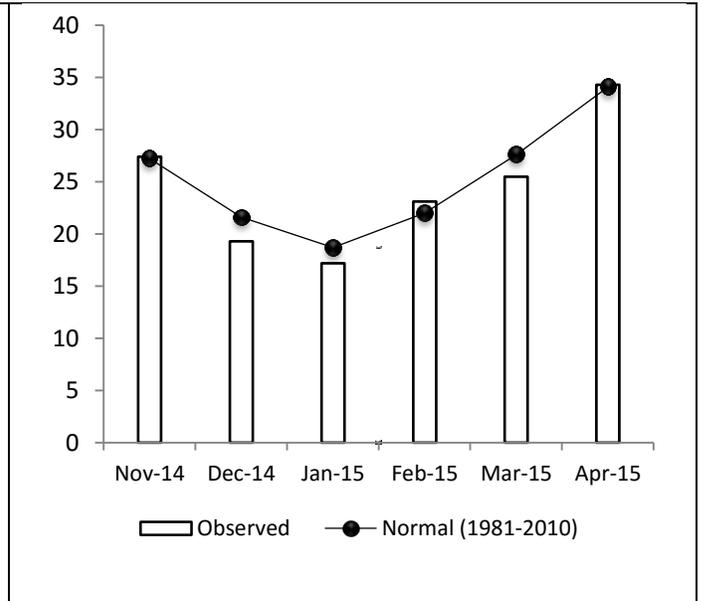
They are;

- Biological Zero: is the minimum temperature below which plant growth stops; for wheat crop it ranges between 0°C and 5°C.
  - Optimum Temperature: at which maximum plant growth occurs. For wheat crop its value is 25°C.
  - Maximum Temperature: above which the plant growth stops. For wheat crop its value is 30-32°C.
- [10]

Detail of Mean Monthly Air Temperature, Monthly Mean Maximum and Minimum Temperature and Absolute Maximum and Minimum temperature are presented in Table – 3.3 along with Normal (1981-2010) values and is also shown in following figures (3.2 – 3.4).

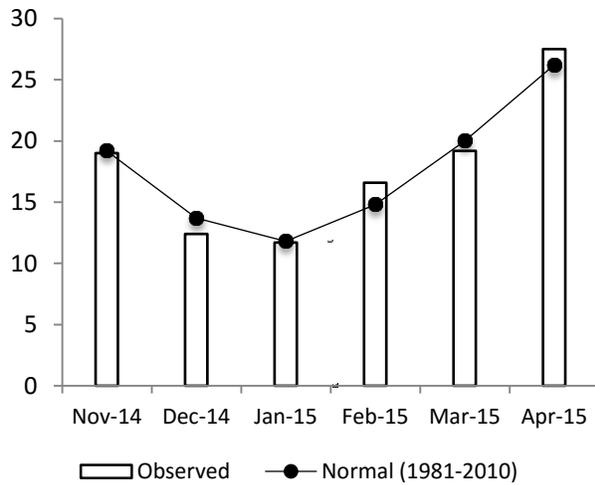


**Figure 3.2: Mean daily Minimum Temperature (°C) of Faisalabad during the Rabi Season**



**Figure 3.3: Mean daily Maximum Temperature (°C) of Faisalabad during the Rabi Season**

**Mean Temperature during 2014-15**



**Figure 3.4: Mean Monthly Temperature during 2014-15**

**During the crop season of 2014–15, mean daily and day time maximum temperature remained mostly normal throughout the crop life cycle which favored satisfactory crop growth.**

**Table 3.3: Mean Monthly Temperature during Rabi Season 2014-15**

Month	Mean Monthly (°C)	Monthly Mean Max. (°C)	Monthly Mean Min (°C)	Absolute Max. (°C)	Absolute Min. (°C)
Nov-2014	19.0 (19.2)	27.4 (27.2)	10.5 (11.5)	30.10 (34.0)	7.0 (2.5)
Dec-2014	12.4 (13.7)	19.3 (21.6)	5.4 (6.3)	29.2 (29.2)	1.5 (-1.3)
Jan-2015	11.7 (11.8)	17.2 (18.7)	6.2 (5.0)	23.6 (26.2)	2.0 (-1.0)
Feb-2015	16.6 (14.8)	23.1 (22.0)	10.0 (7.9)	27.0 (30.8)	5.8 (0.0)
Mar-2015	19.2 (20.0)	25.5 (27.6)	12.8 (13.7)	35.0 (37.0)	7.3 (3.5)
April-2015	27.5 (26.2)	34.3 (34.1)	20.5 (18.9)	42.5 (44.0)	16.0 (7.0)

( ) in Table 3.3 shows Normal values (1981-2010)

### 3.4 Soil Moisture Observations during Crop Growth

Soil moisture plays a vital role during crop's life. Soil moisture content is proportional to rainfall and intake of irrigated water and is inversely proportional to evapotranspiration from the plant and its surroundings. Variation in soil moisture during crop's life play important role in plant growth and development. Water or soil moisture requirement of wheat crop varies during different growth or Phenological stages. Highest amount is needed during flowering stage followed by grain formation stages and then vegetative stages [11].

To calculate soil moisture, soil samples are taken on 7<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of each month in four replications at 5, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 70 and 90 cm depths with the help of auger. However in case of any anomalous event on the specific date, the sample can also be taken on the next day. Soil sample is then weighed and dried in the oven for about 8 hours. The dried sample is weighed again and moisture present in the soil is then calculated by the difference of weight between wet and dry samples as illustrated below:

$$\text{Moisture}(\%) = \frac{(\text{Weight of the cane containing soil before drying} - \text{Weight of the cane containing dry soil})}{(\text{Weight of cane containing dry soil} - \text{weight of cane})} \times 100$$

Moisture contents of the soil varied due to dry and wet spells throughout the season. After each effective irrigation or rain the moisture level increased in the shallow layers as compared to deep layers of the soil.

**During the crop season 2014–15**, from the observed soil moisture data, figures (3.7 – 3.11) depicts that

soil moisture remained satisfactory during early and intermediate stages of the crop life whereas it remained slightly deficit in deep layers during maturity stages (March & April) due to seasonal rise in direct solar radiation. But due to below normal crop water requirement (figure 3.11) and in time irrigation during the crop growth remained mostly normal throughout the crop life. Rainfall reported during the crop life also fulfilled soil moisture requirement.

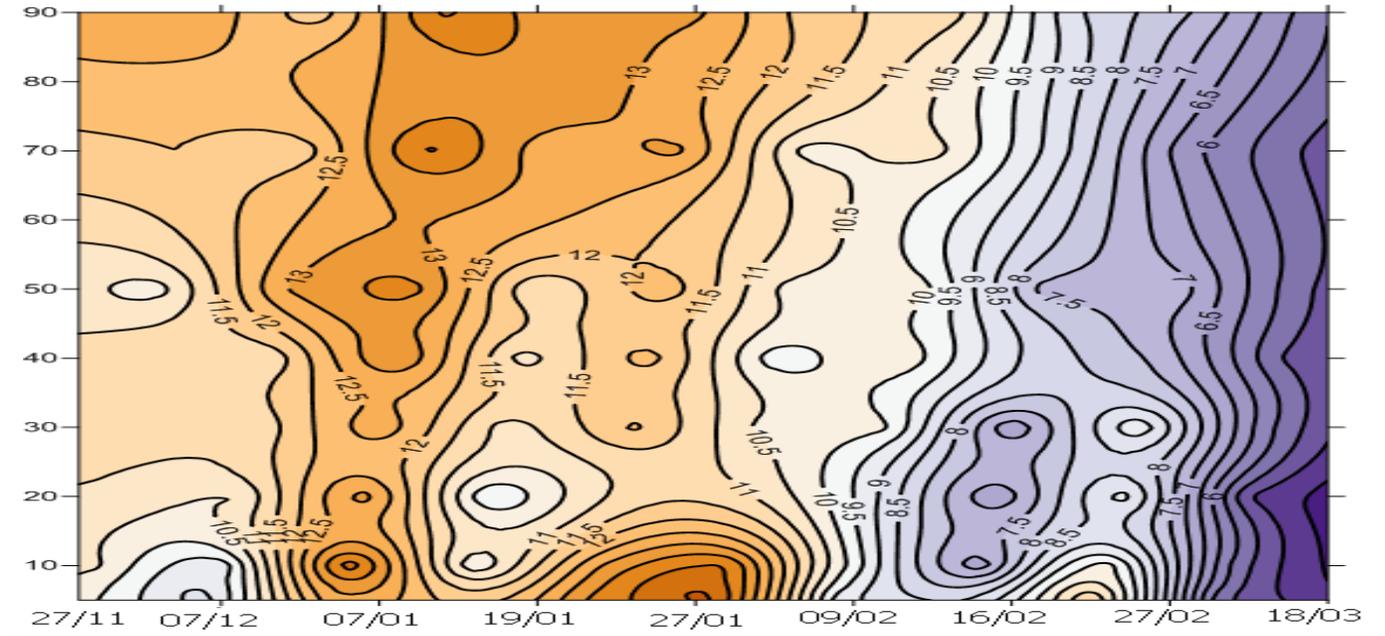


Figure 3.5: Soil moisture chrono Isopleths for Rabi Crop at Faisalabad for the year 2014-15

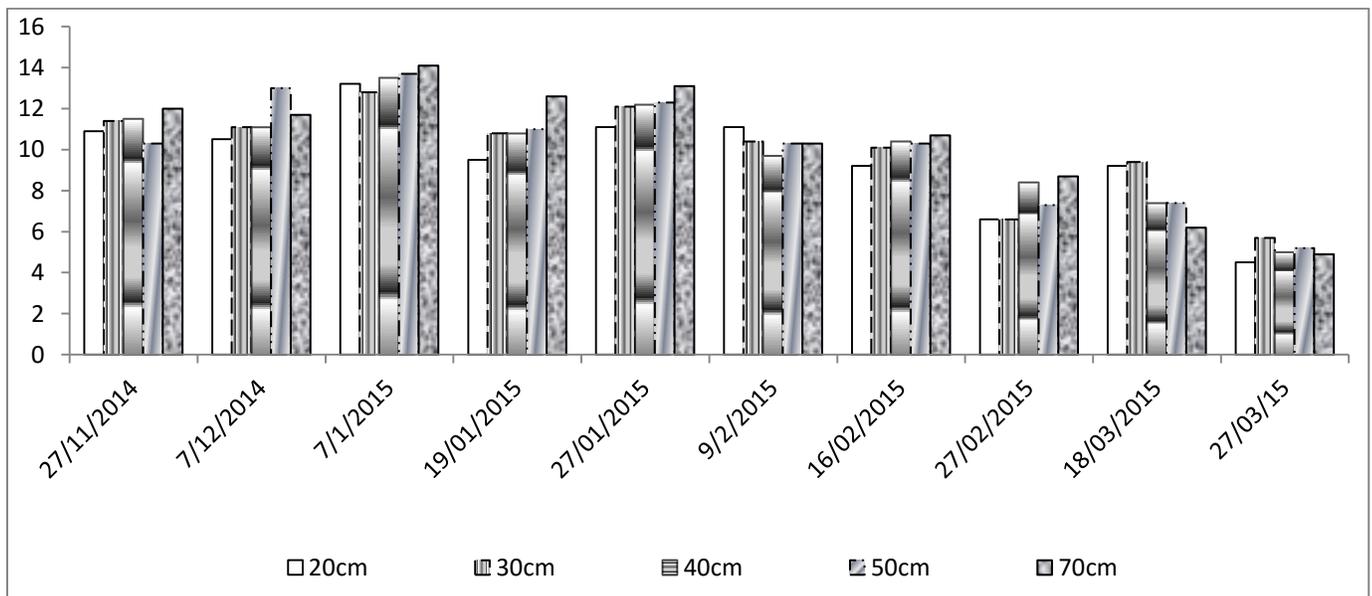


Figure 3.6: Soil moisture at different depths during wheat crop 2014-15

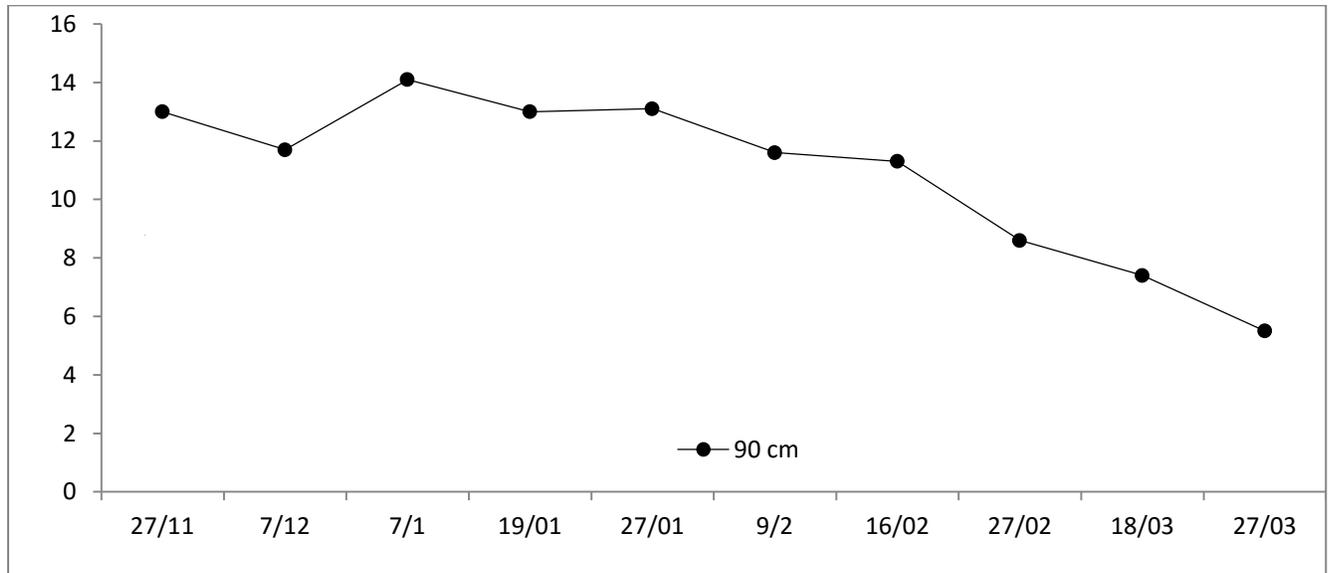


Figure 3.7: Soil moisture at deep soils (90cm) during wheat crop 2014-15

### 3.5 Soil Temperature and Crop Growth

Soil temperature is the most important parameter affecting growth of the crop. Plants roots are very sensitive to the soil temperature. In comparison to air temperature, the amplitude of variation in soil temperature is much more pronounced because of the varying characteristics, texture, composition, and organic material of soil. Soil temperature influences the germination of seeds, the functional activity of the root system, the incidence of plant diseases and the rate of plant growth. The daytime soil temperature is more important than the nighttime temperature, because it is necessary to maintain the internal crop water status to match the evaporation rate. Optimal soil temperature for growth of wheat plant roots during the vegetative stage is below 20°C and is further lower than that for the shoots. [10]

Soil temperature is also an easy tool to predict the status of soil moisture content during varying conditions of air and soil throughout crop's life. Generally above normal condition of soil temperature at a particular depth indicates deficiency of soil moisture content and below normal soil temperature indicates satisfactory condition of soil moisture content.

From the observed data, it is evident that generally, soil temperature increases gradually with increasing depths. Soil temperature varies as soil moisture varies from depth to depth and time to time. To measure soil temperature, the soil thermometers were installed at different depths to monitor the thermal regime of the soil. The soil temperatures in degree Celsius (°C) were observed and then recorded three times a day at 0300, 0900 and 1200 UTC. The depth at which the soil temperatures were observed on daily basis includes 5, 10, 20, 30, 50 and 100 cm depths. It was observed that major root concentration centered between 30cm to 40 cm.

*Note: This soil temperature data is collected from the soil observations taken at Agromet observatory of RAMC Faisalabad situated near the experimental field of wheat crop. Therefore this data tells us a general status of soil moisture of the soils of the area (which is not irrigated) and not of the crop's field particularly, which is irrigated as per requirement. It is thus important to note that any deficiency in soil moisture indicated by soil temperature data may or may not be actually experienced by the crop's soil, which was irrigated in accordance with water requirement of the crop several times during its life time.*

**During the crop season 2014-15**, soil temperature remained normal to below normal at all depths during most of the crop life except shooting and heading stages in November, during which soil temperature observed slightly above normal at intermediate and deep layers.

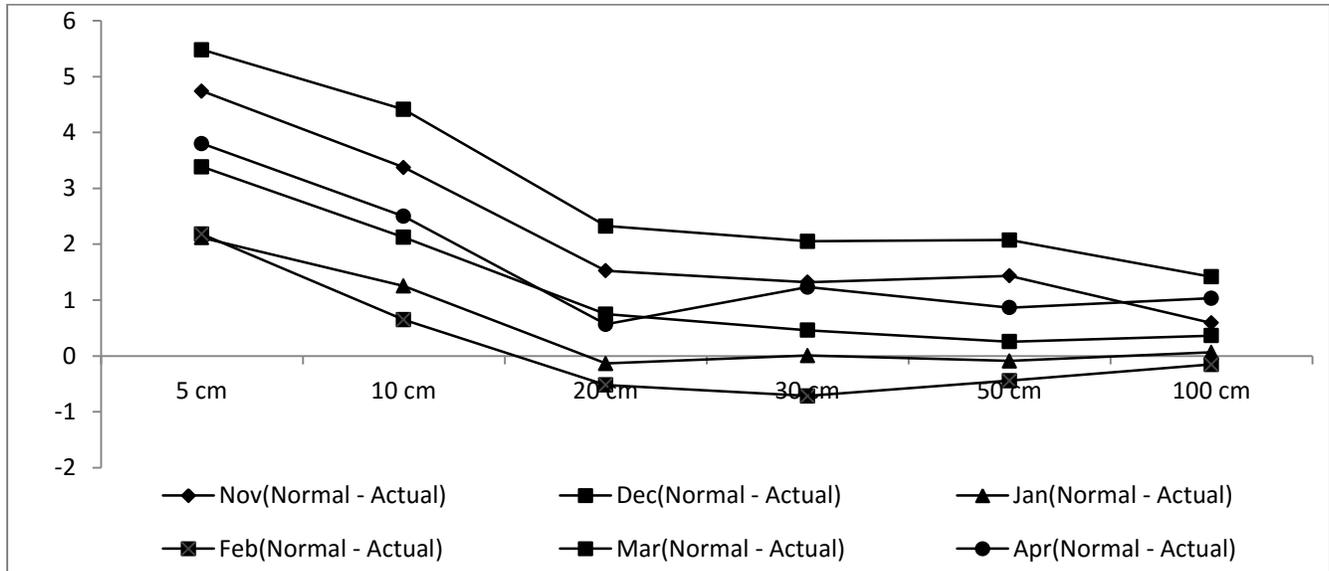


Figure 3.8: Soil temperature during wheat crop 2014-15

### 3.6 Heat Units Consumption during Crop Cycle

Heat units, Growing Degree Days, effective heat units or growth units are a simple means of relating plant growth, development, and maturity to air temperature. Heat units are often used in agronomy, essentially to estimate or predict the length of the different phases of development in crop plants.

The heat unit concept assumes a direct and linear relationship between plant growth and temperature. It starts with the assumption that total plant growth is dependent on the total amount of heat to which it is subjected during its life time. The heat units for a particular crop on any day are the difference between the daily mean temperature (T) and the base temperature (T<sub>b</sub>) of the crop. Base temperature or Biological zero is the minimum temperature below which no growth occurs. The base temperature or threshold varies with different plants, and for the majority it ranges from 4.5 to 12.5°C. Here for wheat crop base temperature is 5°C. This concept assumes that a given cultivar requires the same summation (k) of the

daily mean temperature for going one phenological stage to next stage, regardless of temperature distribution. Generally only positive values above the biological zero ( $T_b$ ) are considered. The period of negative value is termed as “dormant” because crop does not grow under such conditions.

In this study the effective method has been used for determining heat units which is represented by the following equation.

$$GDD = \sum(T - T_b) = k \quad \text{if } T > T_b \text{ and } GDD = 0 = k \quad \text{if } T < T_b$$

where  $T$  = Mean daily temperature,  $T_b$  = Biological Zero ( $5^\circ\text{C}$ ),  $k$  = Heat Unit [10].

Inter Phase period for wheat crop during 2014-15 and corresponding heat units at RAMC Faisalabad observed at different phenological stages varies from phase to phase. Heat unit requirements of different phases and cumulative heat units for the crop have been worked out, are shown in figure 3.9 and Table – 3.3. Total heat units consumed by the wheat crop were 1628 accumulated from germination to full maturity in 144 days. On average 11.3 heat units were consumed by the crop per day. Normally these heat units are consumed in 140 days at the rate of 11.6 heat units per day, which shows that the crop reached to full maturity almost in normal thermal time. From figure 3.9 it is clear that crop consumed normal to below normal heat units except two vegetative stages of emergence and shooting during which slightly above normal heat units were consumed so that these phases completed earlier than normal time. As a whole the crop took four more days (144) to reach maturity than normal time span of 140 days.

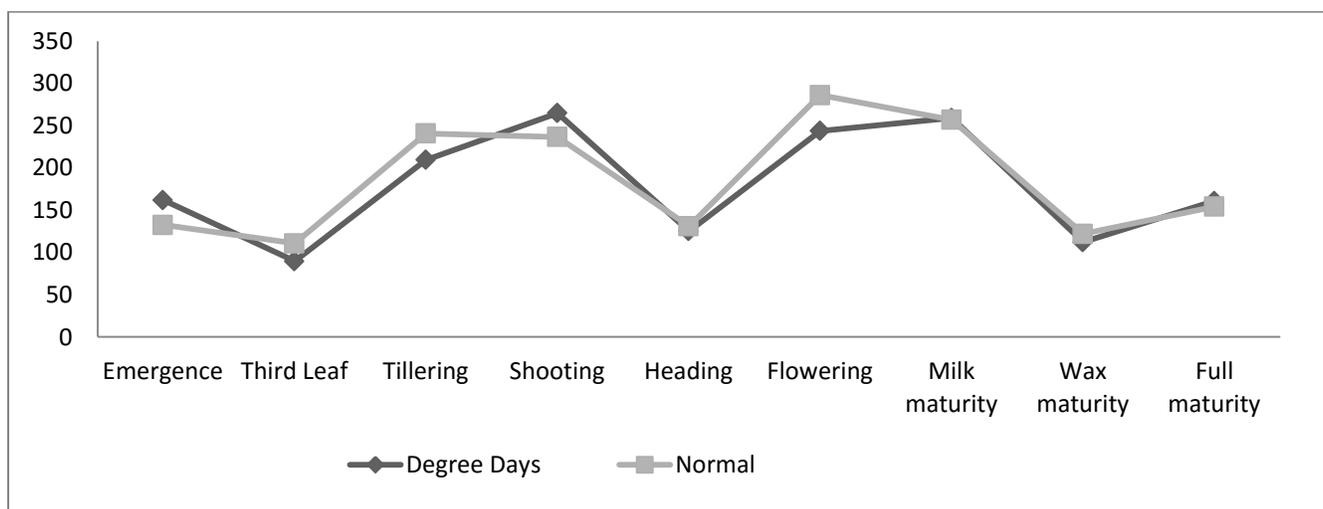


Figure 3.9: Heat units during crop life 2014-15

**Table 3.4: Heat Units Consumed by the Crop during Different Phenological Phases**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Inter Phase</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>No. of Days Taken</b>	<b>Degree Days (T-5°C)</b>	<b>Normal Degree Days</b>
2.	<b>Emergence</b>	26-11-2014 To 07-12-2014	12	162	132.5
3.	<b>Third leaf</b>	08-12-2014 To 19-12-2014	12	90	111
4.	<b>Tillering</b>	20-12-2014 To 25-01-2015	37	210	241
5.	<b>Shooting</b>	26-01-2015 To 20-02-2015	26	265	237
6.	<b>Heading</b>	21-02-2015 To 03-03-2015	11	125	131
7.	<b>Flowering</b>	04-03-2015 To 22-03-2015	19	244	286
8.	<b>Milk maturity</b>	23-03-2015 To 05-04-2015	14	259	257
9.	<b>Wax maturity</b>	06-04-2015 To 11-04-2015	6	112	122
10.	<b>Full maturity</b>	12-04-2015 To 18-04-2015	7	161	154
11	<b>Emergence to Maturity</b>	26-11-2014 To 18-04-2015	144	1628	1672

### 3.7 Relative Humidity (%)

Relative humidity (RH) is simply defined as the ratio of the actual amount of water vapor (grams) in the unit mass of air at a given temperature to the mass of water vapor in the same sample of air when it is saturated at the same temperature. RH tells us about how much a sample of air around the observing station is saturated. It is expressed in percentage. For example if relative humidity of the atmosphere is 60%. It means that 60% of the atmosphere is saturated with water vapor or moisture and 40% of the present moisture may be added more to saturate (100% RH) the atmosphere. RH is temperature and moisture dependent and may vary if moisture content or temperature of the atmosphere is changed. It is always inversely proportional to temperature and ETo. RH is calculated with the help of dry bulb and wet bulb temperatures fitted in the Stevenson screen.

### 3.8 Reference Crop Evapotranspiration, ETo (mm/day)

Reference Crop Evapotranspiration or ETo is defined as the rate of Evapotranspiration from an extended surface of 8 – 15 cm tall green grass cover of uniform height, actively growing, completely shading the ground, free from disease and not short of water. The standard method of calculating ETo is revised Penman-Monteith equation. Using this method, ETo is calculated using data of temperature (maximum and minimum), wind speed, relative humidity and solar radiation. Solar radiations are calculated with the help of total bright sunshine hour data at a particular station. Sunshine duration recorders with sunshine cards are used for sunshine hours recording [11].

**During the crop season 2014-15**, relative humidity remained normal, whereas, ETo remained normal to below normal during most of the growing period. Below normal ETo during vegetative stages of the crop did not produce any harmful effects on crop growth due to in time irrigation. Overall soil and air moisture content was favorable for crop growth.

### 3.9 Wind and Crop Growth

Wind also play significant role in plant growth besides its role in variation of ETo. Normal/gentle wind is necessary for the movement of carbon dioxide to plant canopy so that normal rate of photosynthesis continue in day time. Strong cyclonic or stormy wind accompanied by any severe weather event like hail storm, heavy shower may badly affect/damage the crop. During the Rabi crop period 2014-15, no such bad weather event was observed. Wind speed was observed mostly normal and any significant wind speed accompanied by any severe weather event was not observed throughout this period.

**Table 3.5: Summary of some Meteorological Parameters during Rabi Season 2014-15**

Month	Wind speed (km/hr)	RH (%)	Days with mean RH $\geq$ 80%	ETo (mm/day)
Nov-14	1.2	55	0	2.04
Dec-14	1.3 (1.4)	68 (67)	9	1.24
Jan-15	2.3 (2.3)	72 (66)	12	1.20
Feb-15	3.0 (3.0)	64 (61)	1	2.04
Mar-15	2.9 (3.9)	64 (58)	5	2.76
Apr-15	3.5 (3.6)	46 (47)	0	4.64

## 2.1. Crop Water Requirement (CWR)

The crop water requirement (ET crop) is defined as the depth (or amount) of water needed to meet the water loss through evapotranspiration. In other words, it is the amount of water needed by the various crops to grow optimally.

The crop water need always refers to a crop grown under optimal conditions, i.e. a uniform crop, actively growing, completely shading the ground, free of diseases, and favorable soil conditions (including fertility and water). The crop thus reaches its full production potential under the given environment.

The crop water need mainly depends on:

The climate: in a sunny and hot climate crops need more water per day than in a cloudy and cool climate.

The crop type: crops like maize or sugarcane need more water than crops like millet or sorghum.

The growth stage of the crop; fully grown crops need more water than crops that have just been planted [12].

## 3.10 Calculation of Crop Water Requirement (CWR)

After determining  $ET_o$ , the ET crop/crop water requirement (CWR) can be predicted using the appropriate crop-coefficient ( $K_c$ )

$$ET_{\text{crop}} = K_c \cdot ET_o \quad \text{or} \quad CWR = K_c \cdot ET_o$$

Crop coefficient ( $K_c$ ) is actually the ratio of maximum crop evapotranspiration to reference crop evapotranspiration. For wheat, this ratio becomes 1 during the reproductive cycle (heading to grain formation) otherwise it remains less than 1 bearing minimum values during the early age of the crop and at maturity. The crop water requirement was calculated for the period from emergence to wax maturity. After wax ripeness practically there is no need of irrigation because the hot and dry conditions are desirable to achieve rapid hard maturity. A schematic variation of the crop coefficient related to different crop development stages under normal conditions is given in figure 3.10.

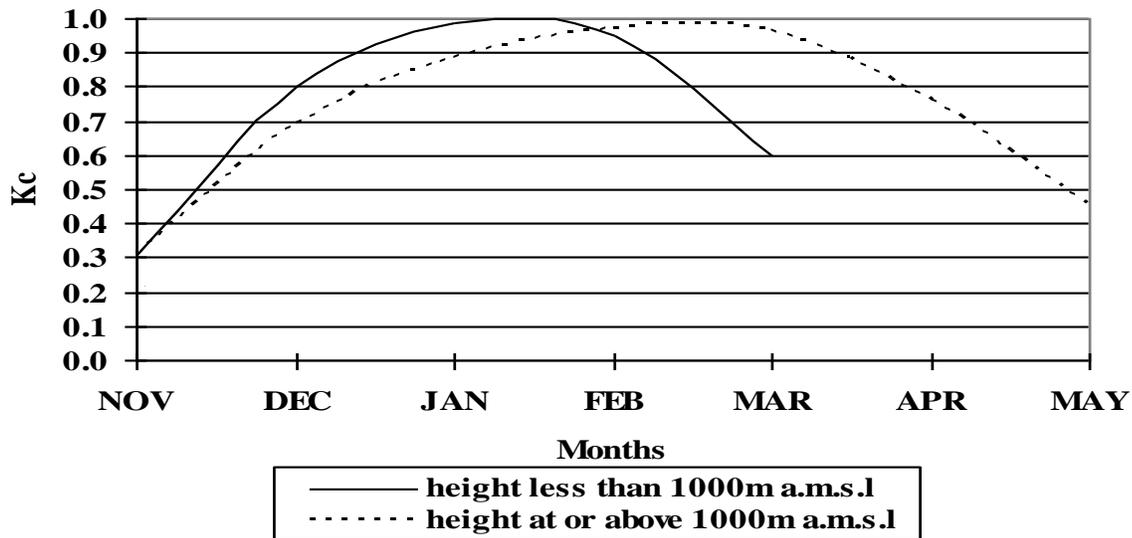


Figure 3.10: March of Crop Coefficient (Kc) for normal duration of Wheat growing season (Emergence to Wax- Maturity).

The water requirements can be calculated in millimeters and they can be converted into cubic meter per hectare by following equation:

$$10 \text{ mm} = 1 \text{ cubic meter per hectare}$$

Along with the loss of water through evaporation and transpiration, the compensation of this loss by precipitation may also be considered. Normally most of the plants grow successfully and utilize water for the soil at 50% and above available soil moisture. The maximum demand (daily or seasonal) may be equal to the reference crop evapotranspiration (ET<sub>o</sub>) which is utilized through soil moisture [13].

During the Rabi Season 2014-15 in Faisalabad, crop water requirement of wheat crop was observed normal to below normal throughout the crop growth (Fig 3.11 & Table 3.6). It means that crop growth did not suffer in any phase due to sharp rise in crop water demand. Thus the available irrigated and rain water fully satisfied moisture requirement of the crop, which resulted normal crop growth.

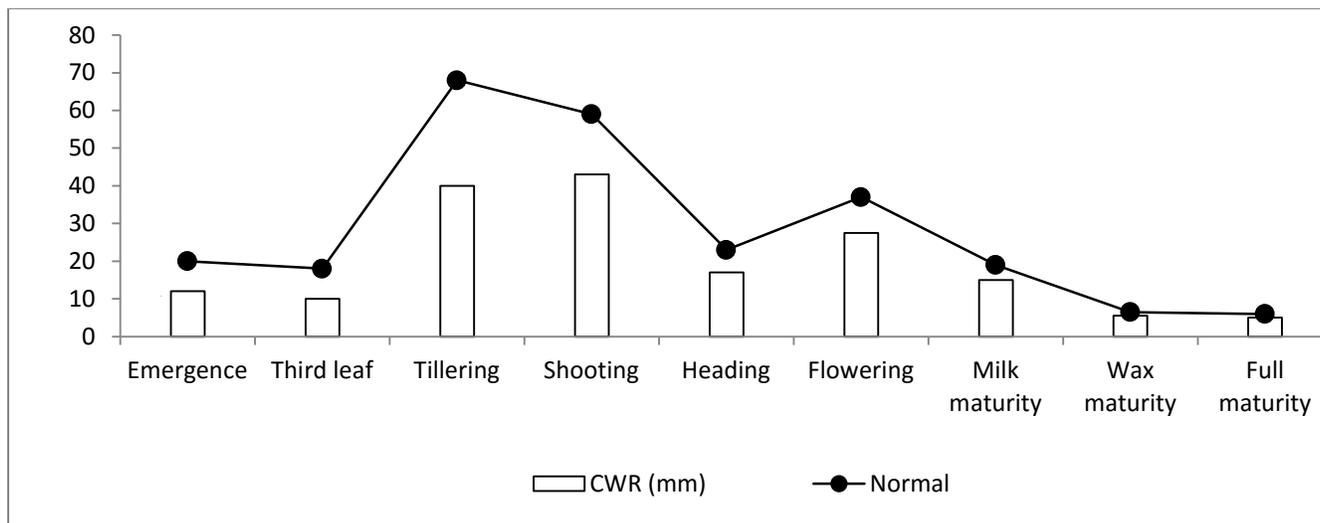


Figure 3.11: Crop Water Requirement (CWR) During Crop Life

Table 3.6: Heat Crop water requirement during different phenological phases

S. No.	Inter Phase	Period	No. of Days Taken	ETo (mm)	*ETo (mm)	CWR=Kc ETO	CWR=Kc *ETO
2.	Emergence	26-11-2014 To 07-12-2014	12	17.7	29.5	11.8	20
3.	Third leaf	08-12-2014 To 19-12-2014	12	13.2	24	10	18.2
4.	Tillering	20-12-2014 To 25-01-2015	37	43.2	74	40	68.2
5.	Shooting	26-01-2015 To 20-02-2015	26	47.2	64	43	58.6
6.	Heading	21-02-2015 To 03-03-2015	11	24.7	32.5	17.2	22.6
7.	Flowering	04-03-2015 To 22-03-2015	19	55.1	74.1	27.5	37
8.	Milk maturity	23-03-2015 To 05-04-2015	14	49.1	62.1	15	19.4
9.	Wax maturity	06-04-2015 To 11-04-2015	6	27.6	32.4	5.5	6.5
10.	Full maturity	12-04-2015 To 18-04-2015	7	32.2	37.8	4.8	5.7
11	Emergence-Full maturity	26-11-2014 To 18-04-2015	144	310	430	175	256

\*Normals based upon 1991-2010 data.

## **3.10 Agro Meteorological Summary of Crop Cycle**

Different meteorological parameters were recorded at various phases of wheat crop during 2014-15. The impact of these parameters at different phenological stages of wheat crop is discussed as under.

### **3.10.1 Sowing**

Wheat crop was sown around the mid of November which is the most suitable time for sowing. The temperature was near normal values and there was no rain after sowing so these conditions were favorable for sowing.

### **3.10.2 Emergence**

Emergence phase was distinguished by the appearance of spike above the ground. When plant emergence stage was completed; the field was divided into four replications. The mean relative humidity during this phase was 55%. Mean air temperature during emergence was 19°C. Weather reported dry during this stage. But crop growth reported satisfactory and no abnormal weather reported during emergence

### **3.10.3 Third Leaf**

This phase took 12 days to complete. The mean relative humidity was 51%; mean air temperature was 14°C. This phase also did not experience any precipitation. Normal crop growth was reported during this stage.

### **3.10.4 Tillering**

This stage of crop growth started on 20-12-2014 and 75% occurrence was completed on 31-12-2014. The mean air temperature during this phenological stage was 9°C and mean relative humidity was around 80%. Again no rain was observed during this phase.

### **3.10.5 Shooting**

During this phase stem extension occurred in the crop. The mean air temperature was 13°C and mean relative humidity was 64% during this stage. Considerable amount of rainfall received during this phase.

### **3.10.6 Heading**

It is the initiation of reproductive stage of wheat crop. The mean air temperature was 17°C during the heading phase. The relative humidity was around 65%.

### **3.10.7 Flowering**

The mean air temperature during this stage was recorded as 15°C and mean relative humidity around 73%. A significant rain spell of about 40mm for 6 days was experienced during this stage which badly affected the crop and its further growth.

### **3.10.8 Milk Maturity**

Seed formation is considered as the most important phenological stage of the plant growth. The mean air temperature was recorded as 25°C whereas mean relative humidity during this phase was 53%. This stage experienced only trace amount of rain.

### **3.10.9 Wax Maturity**

The mean air temperature was 24°C and relative humidity was recorded as 61% during wax maturity phase. The temperature range from normal to below normal during this stage proves very suitable for grain growth. This phase also experienced 20mm rainfall for 1 day.

### **3.10.10 Full Maturity**

Wheat requires high temperature at this stage for maturity. This stage took 6 days to complete. The mean air temperature recorded during this phase was 28°C and the relative humidity was 45%. No rainfall was observed during this phase which is good for crop to get full maturity.

# Chapter 4

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## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The crop variety 8068 was cultivated in the experimental field of Ayub Agriculture Research Institute Faisalabad. The sowing time of wheat is a very important factor. The time of sowing of wheat is directly related to yield and quality of grain produced.

According to Table – 3.1 and Chapter-3 (Results and Discussion), the crop was sown slightly later than the proper time. Amount of seed cultivated per acre was 50 kg which is sufficient for the crop cultivated in November. Fertilizer intake was also enough i.e., 1 bag SOP and 2 bags DAP at the time of sowing was added to the crop. Rainfall amounting 22.0mm was reported for two days in November, no rainfall was reported in December and 12.4mm for four days in January during early to mid growing stages. Above normal rainfall was reported in February and March from shooting stage till early maturity. Almost normal rainfall was reported in April. Irrigation was made 3 times during the season which mostly fulfilled the water requirement of the crop. During flowering stage in the month of March, 3<sup>rd</sup> irrigation along with rainfall amounting 40mm for 6 days badly affected the standing crop. Day and night time temperatures also observed in normal to slightly below normal range. RH was observed to be normal throughout the crop life. However ETo remained below normal during most of the crop's growth period. As a result normal moisture content of soil in major root zone was observed during most of the crop life thus contributing to normal crop's growth, development. Air and soil temperature regime remained normal to slightly below normal for most of the crop's period, which also favored crop growth at all stages. Total heat units consumed by the wheat crop were 1628 accumulated from germination to full maturity in 144 days. On average 11.3 heat units were consumed by the crop per day. Normally these heat units are consumed in 140 days at the rate of 11.6 heat units per day, which shows that the crop reached to full maturity almost in normal thermal time. From figure 3.9 it is clear that crop consumed normal to below normal heat units except two vegetative stages of emergence and shooting during which slightly above normal heat units were consumed so that these phases completed earlier than normal time. As a whole the crop took four more days (144) to reach maturity than normal time span of 140 days.

Excess of weeds also play important role in yield's reduction as weeds consume considerable amount of moisture and other soil nutrients and negatively affect crop's growth at the same time. But this issue can be resolved by proper and timely use of recommended varieties of weedicides. During 2014-15 recommended weedicides operations were performed in time, which also reinforced crop's growth and production. Aphid pest or viral attack was observed on the crop during its life cycle.

## **4.1 Conclusions**

During the Rabi season 2014-15, most of the air and soil weather parameters like air and soil temperature, rainfall, three times irrigation with suitable intervals, R.H and crop water requirement favored normal to above normal crop growth. The crop was cultivated in time with normal fertilizer doze and weeds removing spray at suitable intervals. However heavy precipitation spell at the time of flowering affected adversely the pollination of the wheat crop which eventually resulted below potential yield of the crop.

## **4.2 Recommendations**

Keeping above results and conclusions, following recommendations/suggestions are given to farmers and other related personals to enhance wheat crop yield in central Punjab as well as all over Pakistan.

1 – Farmers generally plant wheat late in rice-wheat, sugarcane-wheat, and cotton-wheat areas due to late harvesting of Kharif crop which results in drastic low yields because the crop is exposed to heat stress at grain formation stages (milk and wax maturity stages) leading to the formation of shriveled grain. Late-planted crop has lower germination, fewer tillers, smaller heads, shriveled grain and lower biomass than the timely planted crop. Any delay in planting would reduce yield drastically. To achieve good yield, sowing of wheat should be completed up to the mid of November in the irrigated planes of Punjab.

2 – Wheat plant water requirement is maximum during flowering and early grain formation stages (milk and wax maturity stages) followed by vegetative stages. Therefore farmers and other decision makers should make possible the availability of irrigation water to wheat crop keeping this order in mind to get maximum crop yield.

3 – Diseases, especially rusts (Stripe/Yellow Rust, Stem Rust, and Leaf Rust) and emerging scenario of increased incidences of Powdery Mildew and aphid are major biotic stresses of wheat crop that inflict heavy losses when in epidemic form. A simple one-year disease epidemic could cause a 2-3 billion-rupees loss to the country because of reduction in wheat yield (an example of 1977-78 epidemics). Therefore, breeders and pathologists should join hands to develop disease resistant and high yielding varieties in order to cope with threats created by ever changing rust races by using approaches like durable resistance. Farmers should use approved varieties of pesticides and insecticides.

4 – The frequency of extreme weather events like heat waves, cold waves, flash flooding, and heavy snowfall has increased globally including Pakistan in the last decade due to climate change. Pakistan has also been facing water shortages and drought conditions for the last several years due to lesser rains and high temperatures due to global warming which resulted in hampering of wheat production both in

irrigated and rainfed areas. In order to minimize the negative effects of climate change and accompanied global warming, drought and heat tolerant varieties need to be evolved in addition to the judicious use of available irrigation water. Researches should also keep focus on to update sowing dates due to late arrival of winter season and winter rainfall in most of the agricultural plains of Pakistan. Keeping in mind the available water resources, it is also indeed necessary to decide suitable crops to be cultivated in a particular region.

5 – Farmers may be advised to be in contact with local and Federal Agricultural Departments and Pakistan Meteorological Department throughout crop's life, especially at the time of sowing, adding fertilizers to crop and before irrigation. It will help the farmers to get in time weather advices to deal in better way with any present or coming water stress condition and to get best results of fertilizer and irrigated water used.

6 – Weeds being the main robbers of plant food from soil; space and even light required for wheat plants, be controlled by cultural practices and in case of heavy infestation, may be eliminated by application of recommended herbicides and weedicides. This technique will definitely increase the yield.

7 – Seed of high yielding wheat varieties resistant to rusts, smuts, etc. approved by Agricultural Department for a particular region in a particular amount must be used. Seed should be treated with a suitable insecticide carefully before sowing.

8 – Timely application of nitrogen-phosphoric fertilizers should be done.

9 – Care must be taken to check the pre and post-harvest losses of wheat. Pre-harvest damage may be checked from attack of birds, animals around wheat fields. Post-harvest losses must be checked from the attack of rodents and other insects, pests and fungi. After proper threshing, wheat grains should be placed under hygienic conditions in fields and in storage places as well. Uses of powdered neem leaves in the bags of wheat grains will also seemed to be useful, which is a traditional treatment for preservation of cereal grains.

10 – Crop rotation is an important factor that enriches the fertility of the land, which should not be ignored. Pulses are preferred as they enrich the nitrogen content of soil for the coming wheat crop.

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