

# Key crops are focus of farming research

December 19 2016

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Precision farming could improve crop yields. Credit: University of Edinburgh

Farmers could be helped to grow crops more sustainably, thanks to research involving scientists at the University of Edinburgh.

A four-year project, in partnership with the Scotland's Rural College, is seeking to improve [sustainable agriculture](#) in the UK, by enabling small-scale precision farming.

Researchers aim to help farmers manage wheat and [potato crops](#) in the most productive way.

## Yield impact

The £1 million study will use large-scale computing power to interpret data from a range of technologies.

These will include satellite and drone monitoring of crop states, identifying where crops lack water and key nutrients.

This would help generate maps of crop stress and likely impact on yields.

These could identify for farmers areas on their land where yields are falling short, by how much, and what could be done to improve yields.

## Optimal management

Farmers could be helped to target their efforts on soil improvement in areas where it is needed most, and to optimise the use of irrigation and fertilisers.

The project is taking place under the Sustainable Agriculture Research & Innovation Club (SARIC) initiative.

This is jointly managed and funded by NERC and Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) to support projects targeting efficiency, productivity and sustainability in the UK crop and livestock sectors.

"New technology enables us to develop ways to help farmers optimise yields of important [crops](#). Managing agricultural resources sustainably will benefit [farmers](#), the environment and ultimately the consumer," says Professor Mathew Williams of the School of GeoSciences.

Provided by University of Edinburgh

Citation: Key crops are focus of farming research (2016, December 19) retrieved 10 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-12-key-crops-focus-farming.html>

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