

Uncertainty flourishes in a warming climate

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JOHANNESBURG: A recent study of the projected impacts of differing climate change scenarios on maize and wheat production in South Africa shows that the scientific community is still far from being able to predict the effect of global warming on food production with accuracy.



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Lyndon Estes, a researcher with Princeton University, and his co-authors found a vast difference in the results between studies using mechanistic or mathematical models (MM) and those using empirical models (EM), based on data from direct observation.

Researchers generally use either one or the other to make forecasts. The Princeton study used both kinds of models together to forecast how climate change might impact maize and wheat in South Africa in 2055, and found that EMs indicated larger yield losses or smaller gains than MMs.

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