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# Evapotranspiration Mapping Using METRIC™ for a Region with Highly Advective Conditions

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***Abstract.*** *Agriculture in the Texas High Plains accounts for approximately 92% of groundwater withdrawals. Because, groundwater levels are declining in the region, efficient agricultural water use is imperative for sustainability and regional economic viability. Accurate regional evapotranspiration (ET) maps would provide valuable information on crop water demand and usage. In this study, a regional ET map was produced for an 11-county area in the Texas High Plains, using METRIC™ [a/] (Mapping Evapotranspiration at High Resolution using Internalized Calibration), a remote sensing based ET algorithm, and meteorological data measured at four ET weather stations maintained by the Texas High Plains Evapotranspiration Network (TXHPET). For this purpose, a Landsat 5 Thematic Mapper image acquired on 27 June 2005 was used. Performance of the ET model was evaluated by comparing predicted daily ET with values derived from a soil water budget at four different commercial irrigated fields. Good agreement was found between the remote sensing based ET and soil water budget ET for low to moderate ET rates. Less agreement resulted for higher ET rates. Use of METRIC™ for advective conditions of the Texas High Plains is promising; however, further evaluation is needed using lysimeter or Scintillometer derived ET measurements for different agroclimatological conditions and/or a larger number of image scenes.*

***Keywords.*** *Ogallala Aquifer Region; Texas Panhandle; Regional ET; semi-arid environment*

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## Introduction

The Ogallala Aquifer has been the main source of water supply for the High Plains population and is being depleted at an unsustainable rate (Axtell, 2006). Irrigation alone uses approximately 89% of the water pumped from the Ogallala aquifer, where the High Plains area represents 27% of the total irrigated land in the United States (Dennehy, 2000). For this reason and considering the trends in population growth, there is a tremendous emphasis for greater efficiency in irrigation water management for agriculture in the Texas High Plains.

Improvement in irrigation water management is achieved when beneficial crop water use is accurately quantified in time and space in order to provide a useful tool for decision making in terms of proper timing and amounts of water to apply. In this regard, remote sensing (RS) based evapotranspiration (ET) methods may have a fundamental role in the improvement of irrigation efficiency and management. Numerous RS algorithms have been developed in an effort to spatially estimate crop water consumption or ET and are being tested around the world. Most of these algorithms mainly solve the energy balance of the land surface for latent heat flux (LE) at the time of satellite or airborne RS system overpass, and use different techniques to extrapolate the instantaneous values to daily values (Chávez, 2005).

The Texas High Plains is a semi-arid region with a heterogeneous landscape in which irrigated fields are surrounded by dryland crops, fallow land, and/or rangeland. Therefore, advection of sensible heat flux from dry surfaces is a significant source of energy that has a major impact on ET from crop growing areas. For example, Tolk et al. (2006) reported an average ET rate of 11.3 mm $d^{-1}$ for an irrigated alfalfa in Bushland, TX with ET for some days exceeding 15 mm $d^{-1}$ due to regional advection. Trezza (2002) observed that the RS methodology based on the alfalfa reference ET fraction ($ET_rF$), for estimating daily ET for a variety of crops (potatoes, snap beans, wheat, sugar beets, etc.) at Kimberly, Idaho, worked better under advective conditions than the evaporative fraction (EF) suggested by Bastiaanssen et al. (1998) in the Surface Energy Balance Algorithm for Land (SEBAL). The energy balance method that uses $ET_rF$ was further refined and incorporated in METRIC™ (Mapping ET at High Resolution using Internalized Calibration), a RS ET algorithm based on SEBAL, to estimate daily and seasonal ET. A full description of the METRIC™ can be found in Allen et al. (2005a)

The main objective of this study was to assess the ability and usefulness of METRIC™ for mapping regional ET on the Texas High Plains. METRIC™ was selected as an ET mapping tool to be applied and evaluated in the Texas High Plains since it could be an algorithm that performs better under advective conditions and requires minimal ground data.

## Materials and Methods

### *Study Area*

This study was focused on the portion of the Texas High Plains Region (Panhandle counties) covered by Landsat 5 Thematic Mapper (TM) scene with a path/row of 30/35. The TM scene comprised 11 counties, underlain by the diminishing Ogallala aquifer (Fig. 1). Soils are mainly Pullman clay loam and Sherm silty clay loam (NCSS Web Soil Survey, 2006). Land use/cover in the study area consists of crops (described later), mesquite shrubs (grassland), mesquite brush, sandsage (Harvard Shin oak brush), buffalo grass (grassland), cottonwood-hackberry-salt cedar brush/wood, and mesquite-juniper brushes (Frye et al., 2000). More detailed analysis was concentrated in Ochiltree County located at the center of the scene, where ground truth data were acquired as part of another study. The Ochiltree County area is

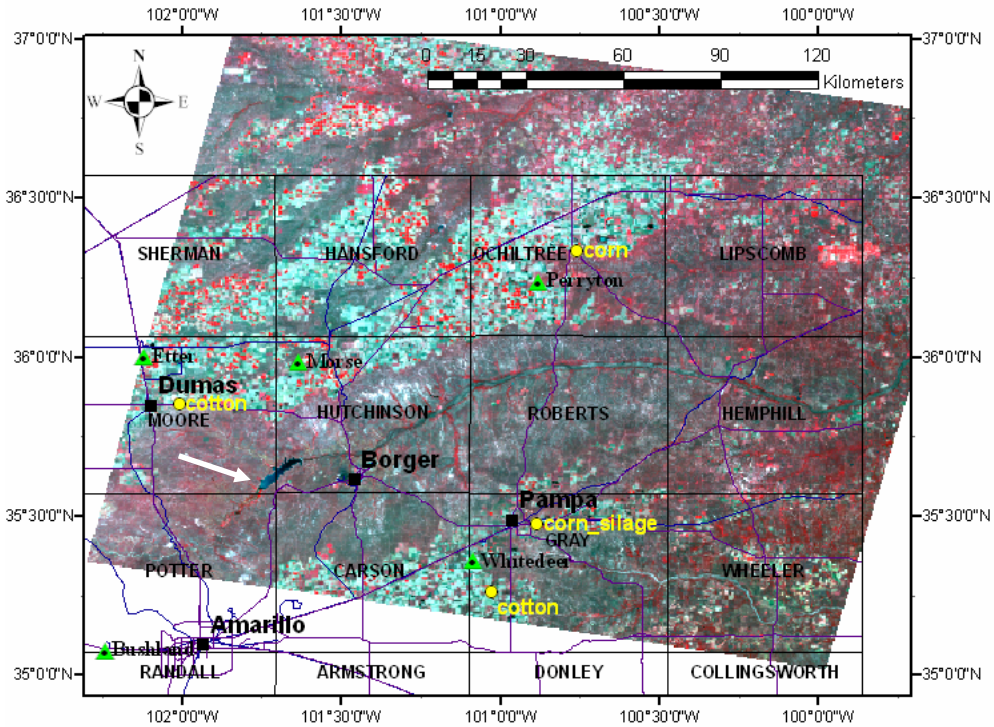


Figure 1. False color Landsat 5 TM image acquired on June 27 2005 covering several Counties of the Texas Panhandle.

about 234,911 ha with 44% of the land in row crop production. Annual average precipitation is approximately 562 mm, and about 11% of the cropland is irrigated with Ogallala Aquifer water. Sorghum, wheat and corn are the major crops in the county. Sherm silty clay soils with nearly level to gently sloping fields occupy most of the cropland. Wind direction is predominantly from the southwest direction.

### *Metric™*

In METRIC™, ET is computed as a residual from the surface energy balance equation as an instantaneous ET or latent heat flux (LE) for the time of the satellite overpass, as in Eqn. (1).

$$LE = R_n - G - H \tag{1}$$

where $R_n$ is net radiation (W m$^{-2}$), G is the soil heat flux (W m$^{-2}$), and H is the sensible heat flux (W m$^{-2}$). LE is converted to ET (mm h$^{-1}$ or mm d$^{-1}$) by dividing it by the latent heat of vaporization ($\lambda_{LE}$; ~2.45 MJ kg$^{-1}$) and the density of water ($\rho_w$; ~1.0 Mg m$^3$). The sign convention for the different flux terms in Equation (1) is positive away from the surface (towards the atmosphere) for LE and H and positive towards the surface for $R_n$ and G. $R_n$ is calculated using surface reflectance and surface temperature ($T_s$) derived from the satellite imagery, near surface vapor pressure from a near-by weather station (WS), and $R_s$ as explained below. $R_n$ is the result of the surface energy budget between short and long wave radiation terms described as:

$$R_n = R_s\downarrow - \alpha R_s\downarrow + R_L\downarrow - R_L\uparrow - (1-\varepsilon_o)R_L\downarrow \tag{2}$$

where: $R_s\downarrow$ is incoming shortwave radiation (W m$^{-2}$), α is surface albedo (unitless), $R_L\downarrow$ is incoming long wave radiation (W m$^{-2}$) or downward thermal radiation flux originated from the atmosphere which can be estimated using the Stefan-Boltzmann equation and near surface air temperature as well as vapor pressure for air emissivity. In METRIC, $R_L\downarrow$ is estimated using $T_s$

and the broad band atmospheric transmissivity for short wave radiation. $R_L\uparrow$ is outgoing long wave radiation (W $m^{-2}$), and $\varepsilon_o$ is broad-band surface thermal emissivity (unitless). The $(1-\varepsilon_o)R_L\downarrow$ term represents the fraction of incoming long wave radiation reflected from the surface. Surface albedo is the term that is a function of reflectance values in the shortwave portion of the electro-magnetic spectrum and $R_L\uparrow$ is the term that depends on $T_s$.

Soil heat flux (G) was modeled as a function of $R_n$, vegetation index, surface temperature, and surface albedo for near midday values according to the Bastiaanssen (2000) model. In METRIC™, H is estimated using a temperature difference (dT), function of $T_s$:

$$H = \rho_a Cp_a \frac{dT}{r_{ah}} \tag{3}$$

where: $\rho_a$ is air density (kg $m^{-3}$), $Cp_a$ is specific heat of dry air (1004 J $kg^{-1}$ $K^{-1}$), $r_{ah}$ is calculated between two near surface heights, $z_1$ and $z_2$ (generally 0.1 and 2 m) using a wind speed extrapolated from some blending height above the ground surface (typically 100 to 200 m) and an iterative stability correction scheme for atmospheric heat transfer based on the Monin-Obhukov stability length scale ($L_{MO}$, similarity theory; Foken, 2006). In this study, a height of 200 m was used in the calculation of distributed friction velocity (u*), a term utilized in the estimation of H. The expression [$dT = a + b\ T_s$] characterizes the relationship of dT to $T_s$ where *a* and *b* are empirically determined constants.

Determination of coefficients *a* and *b* involves locating a hot (dry) pixel with a high $T_s$ value and a cold (wet) pixel with a low $T_s$ value (typically one in an irrigated agricultural setting) in the remote sensing image. Once these pixels have been identified, the energy balance of Equation (1) can be solved for $H_{cold}$ and $H_{hot}$ as $H_{cold} = (R_n - G)_{cold} - LE_{cold}$ and $H_{hot} = (R_n - G)_{hot} - LE_{hot}$. Where $H_{hot}$ and $H_{cold}$ are the sensible heat fluxes for the hot and cold pixels respectively. The hot pixel is defined as having no latent heat flux (i.e., all available energy is partitioned to H), although $LE_{hot}$ may be calculated according to a soil water budget, for the hot pixel, if rainfall has occurred in the last couple of weeks before the image acquisition date. The cold pixel is assumed to have latent heat flux equal to 1.05 times that expected for a tall reference crop (i.e., alfalfa), thus $LE_{cold}$ is set equal to 1.05 $ET_r\ \lambda_{LE}$, where $ET_r$ is the hourly (or shorter time interval) tall reference (like alfalfa) ET calculated using the standardized ASCE Penman-Monteith equation. A 1.05 coefficient was used to estimate $LE_{cold}$ as the cold pixels typically have an ET rate 5% larger than that for the reference ET ($ET_r$) due to wet soil surface beneath a full vegetation canopy that will tend to increase the total ET rate Allen et al. (2005b).

A hot pixel was chosen after careful screening of fallow/bare agricultural fields displaying high temperatures, high albedo and low biomass (leaf area index, LAI). Similarly, the cold pixel was determined on the basis of low temperature, high biomass, and albedo of approximately 0.18-0.24. With the calculation of $H_{hot}$ and $H_{cold,}$ Equation 3 was inverted to compute $dT_{hot}$ and $dT_{cold}$. The *a* and *b* coefficients were then determined by fitting a line through the two pairs of values for dT and $T_s$ from the hot and cold pixels. These *a* and *b* values were initial values that were used in an iterative stability correction scheme programmed in an Excel™ spreadsheet, which after some iterations shows numerical convergence and the *a* and *b* coefficient for each iteration were then exported to a model in ERDAS Imagine to obtain the final stability corrected H image.

Instantaneous LE image was obtained using Eqn. 1, and it was converted to $ET_i$ in mm $h^{-1}$ by dividing it by $\lambda_{LE}$ and $\rho_w$as shown in Eqn. 4:

$$ET_i = 3600\ LE\ /\ \{[2.501 - 0.00236\ (T_s - 273.15)]\ (10^6)\ (1.0)] \tag{4}$$

The reference ET fraction ($ET_rF$) is the ratio of $ET_i$ to the reference $ET_r$ that is computed from WS data at overpass time. The WS information is explained in a subsequent section. Finally, the computation of daily ET ($ET_{24}$), for each pixel, is performed as shown in Equation (5):

$$ET_{24} = ET_rF \times ET_r24 \quad (5)$$

where: $ET_r24$ is the cumulative 24-h $ET_r$ for the day (mm $d^{-1}$).

### *Data*

A Landsat 5 TM satellite image was obtained for DOY 178 (June 27) of 2005; the overpass time was 17:07 GMT. The satellite path/row was 30/35 where the image scene center coordinates were Latitude 36.048º N and Longitude 100.910º W. Image pixel size was 30 m for TM bands 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 and 120 m for TM band 6 (thermal band). However, the image supplier resampled TM band 6 to a 30 m pixel size. Figure 1 shows the satellite image in false color.

Ground truth data for Ochiltree County consisted of GPS readings taken in 29 fields to identify cover crops during the 2005 cropping season. This information was utilized in the un-supervised classification using the ERDAS Imagine 9.0 (Leica Geosystems Geospatial Imaging, LLC, Norcross, GA) to produce a land use map. The land use map was used to show the type of existing vegetation/crop cover as well as their spatial distribution, and ultimately to report actual water use (ET) by land use class.

For the calculation of alfalfa based $ET_r$ and $ET_r24$, data from four reference WS (Perryton, Etter, White Deer, and Morse; Fig. 1) identified within the geographic coverage of the satellite scene were used. These WS are part of the Texas High Plains ET Network (TXHPET) and the Texas North Plains ET Network (TNPET). The TXHPET and TNPET reports hourly and daily weather data as well as grass ($ET_o$) and alfalfa ($ET_r$) reference ET calculated using the standardized ASCE Penman-Monteith method. The WS grass cover types were: native pasture (Perryton), Buffalo grass (Etter), native pasture (White Deer), and native grass (Morse). These grasses were rainfed with the exception of the Etter grass that was irrigated (limited).

Soil water content measurements from four commercial fields: 1) fully irrigated corn 2) irrigated silage corn, 3) irrigated cotton, and 4) on a cotton field under limited irrigation were used to derive ET for comparison with RS estimates. These measurements were taken as a part of the Agripartners Program (New, 2005). Soil water was monitored by means of a KS-D1 Gypsum block meter (Delmhorst Instruments Company, Towaco, NY) connected to GB-1 Gypsum blocks sensors. The blocks were installed at a depth of 0.3, 0.6, and 0.9 m, respectively, and readings were recorded twice each week. Although Gypsum block sensors are considered unreliable (Gardner, 1986), they perform well in fine texture soils (Yoder et al., 1998, Evans et al., 1996). In our case, most soils were clay loam and thus it is expected the sensors to perform better than reported in the literature. The date, number and amount of individual irrigations were recorded and calculated using deep well water flow deliveries (New, 2005). Rainfall data measured at the site were used.

Satellite image calibration involved conversion of digital number (DN) into radiance ($L_b$), for each band by means of calibration coefficients ($L_b$= (gain x DN) + bias). Then, to obtain “at-satellite” or at “Top-of-the-Atmosphere” (TOA) reflectance values, for the short-wave bands, the detected radiance at the satellite (for each band) was divided by the incoming energy (radiance) in the same short-wave band. In the case of the thermal band, the spectral radiance values were converted into effective at-satellite temperatures of the viewed Earth-atmosphere system under an assumption of unity surface emissivity and using pre-launch calibration constants by means of an inverted logarithmic formula. Detailed steps on the Landsat 5 TM radiometric calibration procedures can be found in Chander and Markham (2003). Subsequently, the at-surface

reflectance values were computed after applying atmospheric interference corrections, on the TOA reflectance image, for short- wave absorption and scattering using narrowband transmittance values for each band as calibrated by Tasumi et al. (2005).

### *METRIC™ ET Evaluation*

METRIC™ ET estimates were compared with ET derived from soil water content readings ($ET_c$) at four different locations (Fig. 1) by means of the soil water balance (SWB):

$$ET_c = \theta_{i-1} - \theta_i + I + P \quad (6)$$

where: $\theta_i$ is the soil water (depth equivalent) in the root zone at the beginning of day "i", $\theta_{i-1}$ is the soil water equivalent in the root zone at the beginning of day "i-1", i.e. the previous day, *I* is net irrigation depth, and P is the rainfall. In this study, *I* was estimated from measured volumetric water deliveries, center pivot area and by assuming two water application efficiencies ($E_a$), 80 and 90%; these $E_a$ values were published by New and Fipps (2000) for LESA center pivot irrigation systems as common for the Texas High Plains area. The SWB calculations were performed over a period of 3 or 4 days depending on the number of readings per week.

Results stemming from the comparison of ET using the METRIC™ and the ET from soil water content measurements, for each field, were reported as absolute differences and in percent errors relative to $ET_r$ as: Difference (%) = (ET_estimated – ET_observed) x 100 / $ET_r$. Where ET_estimated is the ET by METRIC™ and ET_observed is ET derived from the soil water content balance. A more comprehensive evaluation of ET estimation errors (comparison of estimated/measured $ET_c$) was carried out comparing Mean Bias Error (MBE) and Root Mean Square Error (RMSE), expressed in percent. These are the mean and standard deviation errors respectively. Also, linear least squares regression method was utilized in evaluating estimated ET.

## Results and Discussion

### *Cropping Conditions, Net radiation and heat fluxes*

A land use map was derived from the Landsat 5 TM image. A subset of the land use map, comprising most of Ochiltree County, was analyzed. In this map, total area was 57,487.2 ha, of which most of the area was not irrigated, 58.4% of the area was either fallow fields/bare soils and/or natural vegetation (pasture, grass, shrubs, bushes) while the cropped land accounted for 39.5% of the area: 11.2% for irrigated corn (6,468 ha), 15% for irrigated soybean (8,664 ha), 8% for irrigated sorghum (4,615 ha), and 5.2% for both irrigated/non-irrigated cotton (3,004 ha). These results were matched well with corn and cotton crop acreage reported in the 2005 National Agricultural Statistics Report (USDA-NASS, 2006).

Surface temperatures derived from Landsat 5 TM scene ranged from 18.6 to 34.9°C. This variation highlights the uniqueness of cropping conditions in the Texas High Plains where irrigated/non-irrigated crop fields intermix with fallow/bare soil lands and where local and regional advection may increase ET rates by augmenting sensible heat flux. Tolk et al. (2006) found that an average of 61% of total ET could be attributed to advective sensible heat in Bushland, TX (Fig. 1), for average wind speeds of 4.4 m $s^{-1}$. In our study, wind speed (u) at the time of satellite overpass was 7.0 m $s^{-1}$ (Perryton WS), i.e. higher than the values reported in Tolk et al (2006) and ranged between 7.5 and 8.5 m $s^{-1}$ from noon to about 7:00 PM CST. In addition, more than half of the area was not irrigated and some irrigated cotton, soybean and sorghum fields were at very early growth stage (LAI<1.5) with partial canopy cover, a situation that may have contributed to local advective conditions for DOY 178.

Average $R_n$ was 616.0 W $m^{-2}$ for the entire scene with water bodies and recently irrigated fields having higher $R_n$ values (690-750 W $m^{-2}$), non-water stress high biomass (LAI > 3.0) fields with similar $R_n$ (600-650 W $m^{-2}$), and bare soils having lower $R_n$ (500-550 W $m^{-2}$).

Average G value was 87 W $m^{-2}$: 370-380 W $m^{-2}$ for Lake Meredith (water heat flux, WHF, Fig. 1), 80-100 W $m^{-2}$ for bare soils, 50-60 W $m^{-2}$ for shallow water bodies (playa lakes; WHF), and 25-40 W $m^{-2}$ for high biomass crops.

In the determination of H, the colder (wet) pixel was located in a recently irrigated corn field that had surface temperature of 18.6ºC (291.7 K). It is about half a degree higher than the water temperature in Lake Meredith, thus the corn field was using available energy (AE = $R_n$-G) entirely in the ET process. The hotter (dry) pixel was found in a nearby fallow dry field. Table 1 reports $ET_rF$, $T_s$, $R_n$, G, roughness length for momentum transfer ($Z_{om}$), and wind speed at a blending height of 200 m for wet and dry pixels. Maximum wind speed at a height of 200 m was 14.4 m $s^{-1}$. For the hot pixel, $ET_rF$ was assumed to be zero (0), i.e. no ET, since the last "significant" rainfall event occurred on June 12 (15 days prior to the satellite overpass) and the amount of daily rainfall varied from 7-44 mm in the study area.

Values in Table 1 were used in the initial estimation of dT and H, for both hot and cold pixels under neutral atmospheric conditions. Initial H and dT values were subsequently adjusted for the unstable atmospheric conditions encountered for DOY 178 using the Monin-Obukhov length scale iterative method. After four iterations, changes in $r_{ah}$, for the hot pixel, were below 0.5% thus meeting the convergence criteria of 5% difference in $r_{ah}$ in each iteration cycle. Table 2 reports the resulting final values for $r_{ah}$, horizontal friction velocity ($u_*$), $L_{MO}$, dT, LE, and H for both cold and hot pixels.

Setting $ET_rF$ to 1.05 for the cold pixel resulted in a negative H value, meaning that the air temperate was higher than the corn canopy temperature, thus extra heat was brought in by local and regional advection. This extra heat produced an H (cold pixel) that enhanced LE beyond available energy (633.9 W $m^{-2}$) by 24.4%. These results are in agreement with results reported by Tolk et al. (2006).

In Table 2, H for hot pixel was 425.6 W $m^{-2}$ for a dT of 4.4 K (or ∘C). The (dT, H) pairs for both cold and hot pixels were used in the determination of the coefficients for Eqn. 3, which were *a* = 0.353 and *b* = -104.41. These coefficients, along with the intermediary coefficients found during

Table 1. Input data for H determination.

| Variable | Units | Cold Pixel | Hot Pixel |
|---|---|---|---|
| Coordinates | X (UTM), m | 320629.3 | 322235.2 |
| Coordinates | Y (UTM), m | 4005875.7 | 4006151.0 |
| Elevation | m | 907 | 907 |
| $ET_rF$ | unit less | 1.05 | 0 |
| $T_s$ | K | 291.7 | 308.0 |
| $R_n$ | W $m^{-2}$ | 695.0 | 532.0 |
| G | W $m^{-2}$ | 61.1 | 106.4 |
| $Z_{om}$ | M | 0.13 | 0.01 |
| u(200 m) | m $s^{-1}$ | 14.4 | 14.4 |

Table 2. Atmospheric stability adjusted H

| Variable | Unit | Cold Pixel | Hot Pixel |
|---|---|---|---|
| $r_{ah}$ | s $m^{-1}$ | 9.5 | 10.7 |
| $u_*$ | m $s^{-1}$ | 0.78 | 0.62 |
| $L_{MO}$ | m | 241.2 | -44.2 |
| dT | K | -1.36 | 4.43 |
| LE | W $m^{-2}$ | 788.4 | 0 |
| H | W $m^{-2}$ | -154.5 | 425.6 |

the atmospheric stability correction process, were used in ERDAS Imagine modeler to get the H image.

### *Daily ET Estimation*

Average daily ET ($ET_{24}$) was 5.7 mm $d^{-1}$ with a mode and maximum values of 6.9 and 14.5 mm $d^{-1}$, respectively, for the entire satellite scene. Using all four WS in Table 3, the average $ET_r$ was 13.5 mm $d^{-1}$ for the day, and $ET_r$ was 1.1 mm $h^{-1}$ at the time of satellite overpass.

According to the $ET_rF$ results in Table 3, the WS grasses had an ET rate that was only 43 to 51% of $ET_r24$ and 60 to 76% of the "potential" grass $ET_o$, i.e., to that rate of a non-water limited clipped grass; assuming that the calculated reference ET, with the weather parameters that incorporate advection, represent ET that otherwise would have been attained had the grass been fully irrigated (Howell, 2000).

Considering $E_a$ of 90% for ET derivation through the SWB procedure, METRIC™ $ET_{24}$ estimation for a fully irrigated corn compared reasonably with the crop ET ($ET_c$) derived from the soil water balance for the same corn field (Table 4). There was an overestimation error of 2.0 mm $d^{-1}$ or a bias of 14.7% (relative to the four WS average $ET_r$). For the irrigated silage corn field, the error was 8.1%, 1.5% for irrigated cotton and –7.4% for the limited irrigated cotton field; with an average (overall) error of 1.1±0.9 mm $d^{-1}$ or 8.0±6.5%, MBE±RMSE, respectively.

In the case of the soil water balance based $ET_c$, values obtained assuming an $E_a$ of 80% resulted in $ET_c$ average estimation errors of 2.1±1.3 mm $d^{-1}$ or 15.2±9.5 %, MBE±RMSE respectively. Figure 2 shows the graphical comparison of estimated versus measured ET values for an $E_a$ of 90 and 80%.

In general, the relative higher ET estimation error was found in the fully irrigated corn field, which had an ET rate closer to the reference crop ET rate. The higher discrepancy in ET may be due to the fact that the cold pixel(s) should be selected in a field with a crop with bio-physical characteristics similar to the alfalfa reference crop, i.e., similar biomass, height and fully-irrigated crop ET. However, errors could be introduced when the satellite image does not contain such crop conditions. Moreover, $ET_{cold}$ is assumed by METRIC as 1.05 $ET_r$ and it may happen that the selected cold pixel belongs to a crop with a crop coefficient ($K_c$) that is greater than 1.0 at the time of the image acquisition, which will increase its ET value beyond the 5% proposed for a crop with characteristics similar to the alfalfa reference crop hence resulting on an overestimation of ET for colder highly evapotranspirating pixels (crops). In our case, the cold pixel was located on a well irrigated corn field. Other crop fields had lower LAI values than most corn fields, had not reached full cover conditions, had higher $T_s$ values and consequently were not candidates to be selected as cold pixels.

**Table 3. Weather Stations reference ET and METRIC™ grass ET estimation.**

| Site | Weather Station | | METRIC™ | | | $ET_o$ Difference | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $ET_o$ | $ET_r$ | $ET_{24}$ | $ET_rF$ | $ET_i$ | WS vs METRIC | |
| | mm $d^{-1}$ | mm $d^{-1}$ | mm $d^{-1}$ | | mm $h^{-1}$ | mm $d^{-1}$ | fraction |
| Perryton | 9.9 | 14.4 | 5.9 | 0.43 | 0.47 | -4.0 | 0.60 |
| Etter | 9.3 | 13.3 | 6.0 | 0.44 | 0.48 | -3.3 | 0.65 |
| White Deer | 9.8 | 13.8 | 7.0 | 0.51 | 0.56 | -2.8 | 0.71 |
| Morse | 9.2 | 12.9 | 7.0 | 0.51 | 0.56 | -2.2 | 0.76 |

Note: $ET_o$ has the same connotation as $ET_{24}$ in this table.

**Table 4. Corn and Cotton METRIC™ and soil water content balance based ET assuming an irrigation system application efficiency of 90%.**

| Crop | Soil water balance | | METRIC™ | | | $ET_c$ Difference | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $ET_c$ (mm $d^{-1}$) | $K_c$[1] | $ET_{24}$ (mm $d^{-1}$) | $ET_rF$ | $ET_i$ (mm $h^{-1}$) | bias (mm $d^{-1}$) | bias (%) |
| Fully irrigated corn | 11.7 | 0.81 | 13.7 | 1.01 | 1.11 | 2.0 | 14.5 |
| Irrigated silage corn | 6.2 | 0.45 | 7.3 | 0.53 | 0.58 | 1.1 | 8.0 |
| Limited irrigated cotton | 1.4 | 0.10 | 0.4 | 0.03 | 0.03 | -1.0 | -7.2 |
| Irrigated cotton | 5.9 | 0.44 | 6.1 | 0.45 | 0.50 | 0.2 | 1.4 |
| | | | | | MBE = | 1.1 | 8.0 |
| | | | | | RMSE = | 0.9 | 6.5 |

Note: $ET_c$ has the same connotation as $ET_{24}$ in this table. [1]$K_c$ – Based on WS $ET_r$

The underestimation error for $ET_c$ of -7.4% for the cotton field that had limited irrigation may be due to that it was planted later in the season, had low biomass with partial canopy cover and surface temperatures were high (dT ~ 4 K).

METRIC™ captured the difference in water management between fully irrigated corn and somewhat water stressed silage corn as per the ET rates (Table 4), where the fully irrigated grain corn ET was almost double of that for silage corn. This result was supported by New (2005) where he showed that the amount of water applied to the grain corn as irrigation and rainfall was in excess of the corn potential ET (PET) as calculated by TXHPET.

Regional $ET_{24}$ for the entire satellite scene are shown in Fig. 3, where darker dots are high ET rates mainly for center pivot irrigated corn and soybean fields. Irrigated corn had the greatest ET rate, 10.7±3.4 mm $d^{-1}$, i.e. from 7.3 to 14.1 mm $d^{-1}$. This result is in excellent agreement with a 3-yr study by Howell et al. (1996) and Howell et al. (1998) in Bushland-TX, where the authors

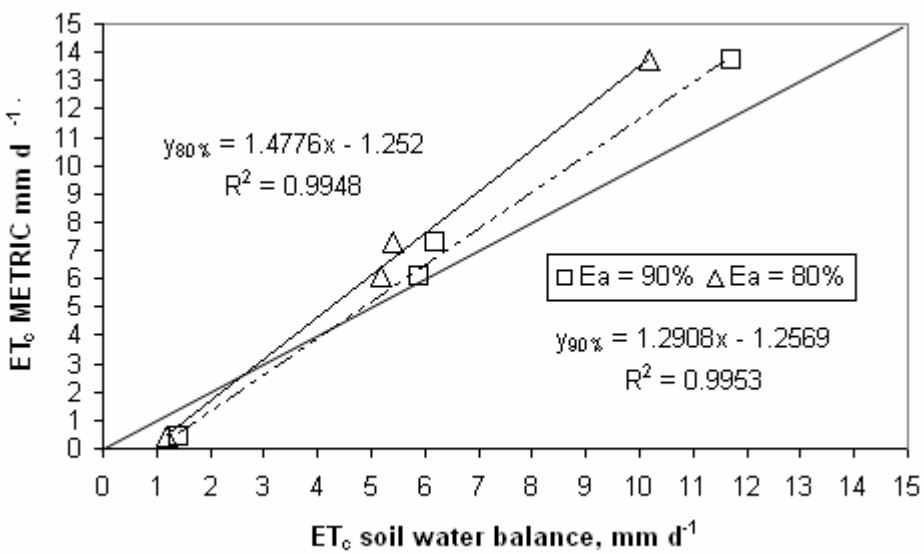


**Figure 2. Comparison between METRIC™ and soil water balance based $ET_c$.**

reported that the average ET for well irrigated corn on lysimeters, exceeded 10 mm $d^{-1}$ (with a maximum ET slightly exceeding 14 mm $d^{-1}$) in mid and late June, when monthly average wind speeds were 4.0-5.5 m $s^{-1}$. They indicated that crop growth and yields were similar on both the lysimeters and in the fields and were representative of normal regional corn production. Irrigated corn ET values were closely followed by evaporation rates from open water bodies, mainly playas and ponds with 10.2±3.1 mm $d^{-1}$. Differences in the water and cropped surface (roughness length, heat storage and aerodynamic resistance) produce differences in water loss from an open water surface and the crop.

Overall, the daily ET results indicate that METRIC™ performs well for the advective conditions of the Texas High Plains with prediction errors of 4-20%. Some errors in the evaluation may have been introduced by the soil water content balance procedure and by the weather data. According to Wright and Jensen (1978), a common standard error for ET prediction equations based on weather data using Penman or Penman-Monteith type equations is as much as 10% of daily estimates.

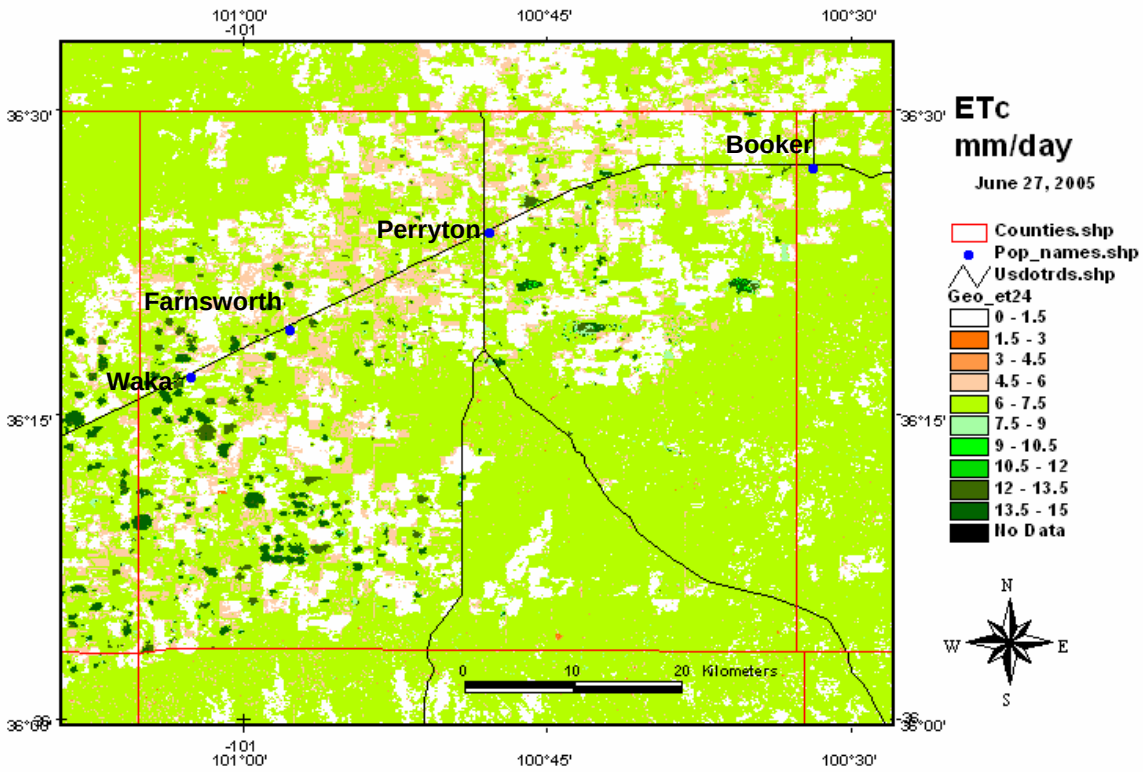


**Figure 3. Spatially distributed daily ET for Ochiltree County on DOY 187**

## Conclusion

METRIC™ algorithm was applied on the Texas High Plains using a Landsat 5 TM image acquired on DOY 178. Estimated ET for well-irrigated crops and high biomass vegetation was estimated with errors below 15%. Errors were less than 9% for lower biomass-higher temperature surfaces. It is believed that the 5% increment over $ET_r$ suggested in METRIC for the instantaneous ET estimation on the cold pixel, might have caused the overestimation of ET

on well watered crops with high ET with bio-physical characteristics that were different from the reference crop, i.e., with a crop coefficient greater than unity at the time of the remote sensing system imagery acquisition. However, ET estimates were compared with ET derived from soil water measurements using gypsum blocks that may have errors around 20% (Gardner, 1986)

Nevertheless, it appears that METRIC™ is a promising tool in estimating ET for well irrigated, medium to high biomass crops, natural vegetation and open water bodies as well as for low/drier biomass vegetation covers. Further, METRIC™ does not need ground information in terms of accurate surface and air temperature, planting date, land use and land cover. The only ground measured input needed is horizontal wind speed and dew point temperature.

Additional evaluation of METRIC™ is needed under a variety of crop/weather conditions to fully assess its capability to accurately estimate spatially distributed ET values, including evaluations with lysimetric data and/or a large number of satellite imagery scenes.

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