Major comments:

"VIC-CropSyst: A regional-scale modeling platform to simulate the nexus of climate, hydrology, cropping systems, and human decisions" by Malek et al. In this paper the authors describe a simulation platform that captures the nexus of land, atmosphere, and human processes in one model. To this end, they have coupled the macroscale Variable Infiltration Capacity (VIC) hydrologic model and the CropSyst agricultural model. The paper is well written, good to understand and the results are well described. The topic of the study is of interest for scientists and natural resources decision makers.

However, there are some shortcomings, and the major in my view is that they ignore the huge amount of literature and work which already has been done in this direction. The authors present the topic of the study, to fully couple hydrological and agricultural models in one system considering feedbacks, as if this is an entirely new field. Cited are only global scale studies with comparable approaches but not so far developed. But the case studies given in this paper are at the regional and even local scale. And at the regional scale, first attempts to couple hydrological and crop models started already in the late 70ties. A prominent example is SWAT (Soil and Water Assessment tool), nowadays also applied at the continental and global scale, and many other exist. At the global scale, the models ORCHIDEE and LPJmL have coupled water and crop modules etc.

First and foremost, the authors would like to thank Reviewer #1 for this constructive feedback of the article.

The authors thank the reviewer for this insightful comment. The authors agree that the incorporation of agricultural processes in hydrologic models such as SWAT dates back to the early stages of computer models, and this was not acknowledged in the manuscript. VIC and CropSyst are well-established large-scale hydrology and cropping systems models, respectively. The original intent was to present VIC-CropSyst as a contribution to large-scale land surface models due to its versatility and combined mechanistic simulation of crop and agricultural management processes as well as hydrologic processes. To address the reviewer's concern, in the revised manuscript, we incorporated a more comprehensive literature review that takes various types of hydrologic models into account.

Added/Modified

Bierkens (2015) reviewed twenty three global/large-scale hydrological models (GHMs; e.g. WaterGAP, Verzano et al., 2012; WBMPlus, Wisser et al., 2010; Mac-PDM.09, Gosling and Arnell, 2011; and H08, Hanasaki et al., 2010), LSMs (VIC, Liang et al., 1994; MATSIRO, Takata et al., 2003; LM3, Milly et al., 2014; NOAH, Liu et al., 2016; JULES, Best et al., 2011; CLM, Fisher et al., 2015; SiB, Baker et al., 2008; and ORCHIDEE, Vérant et al., 2004) and dynamic vegetation models (DVMs; e.g. LPJmL, Fader et al., 2015). Among these models H08, MATSIRO, JULES, ORCHIDEE, and SiB use simple crop growth modules to simulate natural vegetation or generic C3 and/or C4 crops. NOAH, CLM, and LPJmL have more sophisticated crop growth schemes; these are further discussed below.

Using prescribed seasonally and spatially variable leaf area index (LAI) and root density, Wei et al. (2013) modified aerodynamic and soil deficit thresholds in the NOAH land surface model, thereby improving the simulation of warm season processes. In their model, however, crop growth and

development does not mechanistically respond to climate, CO2 concentrations, and soil moisture; this limits the accuracy of model simulation over agricultural areas where the feedback between agricultural processes and hydro-climatic conditions is significant. Liu et al. (2016) improved simulation of crop processes in the NOAH-MP-Crop model but their model could only simulate corn and soybean and did not capture irrigation processes.

Drewniak et al. (2013) enhanced the Community Land Model (CLM) in agricultural areas by using an improved representation of crop processes, but CO2 fertilization effects, irrigation, and other common management activities were neglected. In their simulations, they considered only three crop species (wheat, corn and soybean) and used a fixed planting date, which can lead to a discrepancy with observations in that actual planting dates vary in time as a function of weather (Zeng et al., 2013), and can result in an over-estimation of the negative impacts of warming on crop yield, as an earlier planting date is a viable adaptation strategy in many regions of the world (Waha et al., 2013). While a newer version of CLM (CLM4-Crop; Lu et al., 2015) simulates irrigation events and CO2 fertilization as well as biomass and vegetation growth processes, its application is also limited to three crop types (Chen et al., 2015) and is not able to mechanistically simulate irrigation efficiency.

Elliott et al. (2014) compared ten GHMs and six global gridded crop models (GGCMs); they reported that the performance of GHMs is generally poor in the simulation of future irrigation water demand. Many of them use prescribed crop growth parameters and did not capture CO2 fertilization nor sensitivity to heat and water stresses; the only exception was the Lund-Potsdam-Jena Managed Land Dynamic Global Vegetation and Water Balance Model (LPJmL), which is a hydrologic model that can mechanistically simulates both hydrologic and agricultural processes. However, LPJmL simulates a limited number of crops (Elliott et al., 2014) and, as compared to specialized crop models (e.g. CropSyst; the Decision Support System for Agrotechnology Transfer; DSSAT, Jones et al., 2003; and the Environmental Policy Integrated Climate Model; EPIC, Williams et al., 1989, 1983), uses more simplistic methods to simulate crop processes such as LAI development, root distribution, and the number of stressors considered (Rosenzweig et al., 2014; Stöckle et al., 2003). Moreover, although LPJmL is a grid-based model, so far it has been used to address global scale issues at coarse scale (0.5 °), and has not been tested and used for regional studies. Also LPJmL uses prescribed country-specific irrigation efficiency (Biemans et al., 2011; Fader et al., 2015; Rosenzweig et al., 2014), which can cause biases when LPJmL is applied at finer spatial scales. It is also worth mentioning that the scientific community has already benefited from watershed-scale hydrologic-agricultural models. For example the Soil Water Assessment Tool (SWAT Arnold et al., 1998; Neitsch et al., 2011) is coupled to a simplified version of the EPIC model (Williams et al., 1989, 1983) and is able to capture agricultural processes and management decisions. SWAT's shortcoming is the fact that it has seven crop classes and does not differentiate among crops within a class (e.g., tree fruits). Furthermore, SWAT uses predefined irrigation losses and does not simulate irrigation processes mechanistically.

Answer to minor comments:

Page 3, last para: How do you define return flow?

In this study, we are referring to the USBR (2010) definition of return flow as a non-evaporative, reusable loss of water through conveyance systems and the field-level application of irrigation water. In the revised manuscript, we added some explanation to clarify this return flow definition.

Added/Modified:

In many agricultural basins, the availability of water for downstream users depends greatly on the return flow from upstream lands, which mainly .comes from non-evaporative, reusable loss of water through conveyance systems and field-level application of irrigation water.

Page 4, second para: ": : :the current state of LSMs is not capable of capturing agricultural processes in a detailed manner". However, the literature cited is mostly older than 2010, and the most recent 2014. This is not the current state.

Authors' response: In our new submission, we have done an up-to-date literature review and added more information about recently published works on this topic.

Page 6, first para: Does VIC consider reservoirs and other water management measures?

Authors' response: While VIC-CropSyst does not simulate reservoir directly nor the potential management decisions in operating these waterbody compartment, our research team often connects the regional simulations of VIC-CropSyst to river system and water management models (e.g., ColSim and Yak-RW). These research efforts usually focus on understanding the dynamics between large-scale water supply, agricultural water demand, and the operation of dams and reservoirs. We provided more information about these applications in the manuscript.

Added/Modified:

VIC-CropSyst has also been used in conjunction with reservoir models (e.g. ColSim; Wittwer et al., 2001 and YAK-RW; Zagona et al., 2001) to calculate the deficit irrigation fraction (e.g. Barik et al., 2017; Malek, et al., in preparation; Rajagopalan et al., in preparation). In general, the following six steps can be used to calculate and apply a deficit fraction: 1) VIC-CropSyst simulates the hydrologic states such as runoff and base flow as well as the irrigation water demand, 2) a routing model (i.e. Lohmann et al., 1998) is used to simulate streamflow, 3) simulated flow is bias corrected against observed flow, 4) a river system model is used to include operation of dams and reservoir and estimate water availability, 5) the availability of water is compared with demand, and 6)a deficit fraction is calculated and VIC-CropSyst is run to simulate the impacts of irrigation deficit on the hydrologic cycle and crop yields.

Page 10, last para: "As with other hydrological models, the VIC model needs to be calibrated : : :". This is only part of the story: State of the art is to calibrate AND validate in a split-sample approach. So, are the results shown in Figures 5-10 from the calibration or from the validation period? If, for example, the results in Figure 7 are from the calibration period, I would expect them to be good.

Authors' response: We thank the reviewer for this observation. The authors agree that this section of the original manuscript was not written in a clear and understandable fashion. We will make sure that this part is more explicitly explained in our revised submission. To answer the reviewer's question, we did not calibrate the VIC-CropSyst at the flux tower sites in this study. We used calibrated parameters developed

in a separate study by Maurer et al. (2002). They calibrated a standalone version of the VIC model over the entire United States in 1/8th resolution. We selected the grid cells that overlap with our study sites.

Added/Modified:

As with other hydrological models, the VIC model needs to be calibrated for optimized performance over a specific region. Table 3 shows VIC's key calibration parameters; more information on calibration parameters and methods can be found in past VIC studies (e.g. Elsner et al., 2010; Liang et al., 1994; Maurer et al., 2002). We used calibrated parameters determined by Maurer et al. (2002) for each flux tower station (the last two columns of Table 3).. We also tested the sensitivity of soil moisture content, crop growth, and irrigation demand and losses to different calibration parameters using the ranges available in Column 3 of Table 3 and differences were negligible..

In this paper the authors present a regional version of a coupled model system, the VIC hydrological model and the CropSyst crop model. The objective of the coupled system is a.o. to evaluate the potential impact of adaptation measures taken by farmers on basin scale hydrology.

The authors would like to thank the reviewer # 2 for all the constructive comments. The following addresses the general and specific comments.

General comments

The authors could elaborate a little more on the potential applications of this coupled model system, as they make not clear what is the added value of the coupled system versus the individual models.

Potential application

The primary focus of VIC-CropSyst model was to combine in a tightly-integrated framework the strengths of an existing mechanistic large-scale hydrologic model with a mechanistic crop growth, phenology, and management model, with some potential applications being around adaptation, but other applications as well such as understanding the role that agricultural processes have in driving larger-scale water and energy cycles. This model predominantly targets large river basins with significant agricultural activities. Also because VIC-CropSyst mechanistically simulates irrigation demand and losses, it can be used over regions with intensive irrigation (e.g. agricultural river basins of the western U.S). VIC-CropSyst can be applied at regional, continental or global scales and can provide the scientific community and policy makers with helpful information about the impact of management decisions and climatic factors on agricultural productivity, and water supply and demand.

VIC-CropSyst can also be used to understand impacts of agricultural management practices (e.g. switching to a new irrigation system or a new crop variety), under historic and future climate, on evapotranspiration and surface characteristics such as LAI, soil moisture and return flow from irrigated lands. The model is already being used within earth system models to serve two main purposes i) feed socioeconomic and river system management tools with water supply, yield and irrigation demand; and ii) improve boundary conditions of atmospheric models over agricultural areas.

Added/Modified

VIC-CropSyst is used in conjunction with reservoir operation models in the CRB, and accounting for the process of water rights curtailment under shortages in Washington State and farmer response to curtailment, to identify the indirect impacts on climate change on agricultural production though changes in water availability (Rajagopalan et al., in preparation). The current version of VIC-CropSyst (v2, as described herein) was also used in the most recent Columbia River Basin water supply and demand projection for the 2030s (Barik et al., 2017; Hall et al., 2017). These water supply and demand studies were submitted to the Washington State Legislature in the years of 2011 and 2016 and provide detailed information for each watershed in eastern Washington to the entire CRB as a whole. This information is being used by the Legislature for long-term water supply planning.

VIC-CropSyst has been used to investigate different scenarios for renegotiation of the Columbia River Treaty (Rushi et al. 2017). Existing modeling efforts to date have focused primarily on the impact that treaty renegotiation would have on flood risk, hydropower generation, and environmental flows (Cosens,

2010; Hamlet and Lettenmaier, 1999a); assessment of the impact of CRT changes on irrigated agriculture along the Columbia Mainstem is a knowledge gap. Rushi et al. (2017), therefore applied VIC-CropSyst linked to ColSim to simulate the complex impacts of climate change and the Columbia River Treaty on hydrology and agriculture in the river basin and concluded that climate change i) shifts water supply towards earlier in the season, ii) reduces flood risk in the upper CRB while increases frequency and magnitude of floods in the middle and lower parts of the basin, iii) shifts water demand towards earlier in the season in some locations with mixed effects on water rights curtailment risk, and iv) reduces hydropower generation. The authors found that the considered CRT scenarios can improve power generation and agricultural water demand while preventing floods in an altered climate.

VIC-CropSyst is an effective tool for studying the large-scale aggregated impacts of local management decisions and phenomena. For example, VIC-CropSyst was applied by Malek et al. (in review) who found that climate change-induced increases in evaporative (consumptive) losses from irrigation systems and decreases in non-evaporative irrigation losses (i.e., runoff and deep percolation) would lead to a decrease in reusable return flow, which would negatively affect basin-wide water availability and productivity.

VIC-CropSyst has also been used over the Yakima River basin (YRB) to evaluate the impacts of climate change on decisions related to investment in irrigation technology (Malek et al., 2016; in prep.). Economic damages of future more frequent droughts (Vano et al., 2010) are considered the main incentive to invest in more efficient irrigation technology (Berger and Troost, 2014). To analyze future changes in regional irrigation patterns, Malek et al. (in prep.) used VIC-CropSyst in conjunction with an economic model and the RiverWare model (Zagona et al., 2001). Figure 11 shows a result of this integration to simulate historical (1981-2006) drought frequency and severity, and the percentage of the YRB's perennial crop growers who are simulated to switch to more efficient irrigation systems to minimize the negative consequences of droughts during the two decades of 1990-2000 and 2050-2060. Also, any changes in agricultural activities (e.g., switching to a new irrigation system) directly impacts the hydrology of agricultural fields, thus changing return flow timing and magnitude and the availability of water for downstream users; these downstream consequences can also be simulated by this modeling platform. This is an example of how the human-land-climate nexus can be captured through a modeling framework that simulates large-scale hydrologic processes and regional water availability in a highly cultivated basin, while capturing the dynamics of farm-level irrigation decisions.

what is the added value of the coupled system versus the individual models.

1-VIC:

VIC simulates one crop type and growth stages of that crop type is simulated through monthly prescribed LAIs, which means that VIC does not mechanistically simulate agricultural processes such as crop development, biomass production, the impact of water heat and nutrient stresses on crop growth, and many other details provided by CropSyst in the VIC-CropSyst coupled version. Also VIC does not mechanistically simulate irrigation losses and only includes one irrigation type (sprinkler). Lack of these processes makes any estimation of irrigation water demand, transpiration and crop growth questionable and can lead to inaccuracy in simulation of water and energy cycles over agricultural areas. VIC-CropSyst responds to these shortcomings as it is an implementation of a well-established mechanistic crop model that simulates agricultural processes in a sophisticated manner. In VIC-CropSyst crop growth is

controlled by environmental conditions such as radiation, water availability, temperature, nutrient and CO_2 concentration.

2- CropSyst

CropSyst is a cropping system model that is able to simulate agricultural processes mechanistically. Although the primary purpose of this study was to improve simulation of land surface processes through adding a cropping system (CropSyst) to a widely used hydrologic model (VIC), simulation of agriculture processes in CropSyst can also benefit from this coupling. CropSyst has been already used to simulate local-scale hydrologic processes, but it has not been developed to simulate regional water and energy cycles. VIC has a more sophisticated and mechanistic way of handling regional hydrologic cycle. Many studies (e.g. Elsner et al., 2010; Hamlet and Lettenmaier, 1999; Maurer et al., 2002) have used VIC to simulate runoff, baseflow, soil moisture and cold season processes to eventually estimate availability of water for irrigation. Also, the stand-alone CropSyst does not have a mechanistic irrigation module. Therefore, we argue that the coupled model can improve the usefulness and applicability of CropSyst especially over irrigated areas.

Added/Modified

We coupled the VIC version 4.1.2-e with CropSyst-v4.15, although the coupled model will be updated with new versions of VIC and CropSyst as they become available. In a spatially-explicit manner, VIC-CropSyst is able to capture a large variety of crop groups: 1- cereal grains (e.g. winter and spring wheat, corn, barley, oats, sorghum), 2- vegetables and melons (e.g. dill, radish, mint, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, carrot, onion, cucumber and pumpkins, watermelon), 3- fruits and nuts (e.g. plum, apricot, cherry, grape, walnut, pear, peaches, apples, blubbery, strawberry, cranberry), 4- root crops (e.g. potato, sugar beet), 5- leguminous crops (e.g. green and dry bean, lentil, chickpea, pea), 6- forages (e.g. pasture, alfalfa, hay, grass, clover, grass), and 7- oil seeds (e.g. soybean, mustard, sunflower).

- The authors claim that the coupled model system can be used to evaluate the impact of certain agriculture related adaptation measures over the region or river basin, but I was surprised to see that this impact is only modelled in one way. The way I understand the model from this manuscript, is that irrigation water is assumed to be always available, but the source of this irrigation water is not discussed. Unless water is always extracted from deep confined groundwater layers, there should be an effect of water withdrawals for irrigation on streamflow and water availability downstream. Since VIC explicitly calculates streamflow, I think it is a missed opportunity not to include this interaction, especially since irrigation withdrawals have been implemented before eg. by Haddeland et al. To my understanding there is no consideration of water shortage for irrigation.

We would like to thank the reviewer for this observation. We added a new section to the main body of the paper to clarify this.

VIC-CropSyst is being used in a variety of projects following these steps (as documented by Malek et al., in preparation): 1) VIC-CropSyst simulates the hydrologic states such as runoff and base flow as well as the irrigation water demand, 2) a routing model (i.e. Lohmann et al., 1998) is used to simulate streamflow, 3) simulated flow is bias corrected against observed flow, 4) a river system model is used to include operation of dams and reservoir and estimate water availability, 5) availability of water is compared with demand, and 6) deficit fraction is calculated and VIC-CropSyst is run to simulate the deficit scenarios. Malek et al. (in preparation) discussed the implementation of VIC-CropSyst in these six steps as a part of the Agricultural Spatial Economic Analysis Platform (ASEAP) to investigate how farmers should invest on more efficient irrigation systems as climate changes.

Haddeland et al. (2006) used a similar process using a simple reservoir management module within the routing code of Lohmann et al. (1998). However, Haddeland et al. (2006) used the VIC model in isolation of a cropping system model (that captures all of the crop-specific characteristics and management that influence irrigation demand), and developers of VIC-CropSyst believe that a crop model is important for accurate simulation of irrigation demand. However, the following section has been added to the paper to clarify this issue:

Added/Modified

Deficit irrigation

2.4.   Deficit irrigation

VIC-CropSyst's deficit irrigation module requires two main inputs: a) a first approximation to the irrigation water demand obtained by generating time series of irrigation under no water stress condition using VIC-CropSyst, and b) deficit fractions that indicate the water availability. VIC-CropSyst then reads the amount of recorded irrigation from step one and applies the deficit fraction to simulate the agricultural and hydrologic processes under realistic water deficit conditions. The deficit fraction can be either homogenously applied across the entire basin or separately specified for each farmer depending on water rights or other considerations. Also, VIC-CropSyst can apply the deficit fraction during different times of the year. For example, if the water deficit happens later in the season, VIC-CropSyst can adjust irrigation amounts according to the timing of water shortage.

VIC-CropSyst has also been used in conjunction with reservoir models (e.g. ColSim; Wittwer et al., 2001 and YAK-RW; Zagona et al., 2001) to calculate the deficit irrigation fraction (e.g. Barik et al., 2017; Malek, et al., in preparation; Rajagopalan et al., in preparation). In general, the following six steps can be used to calculate and apply a deficit fraction: 1) VIC-CropSyst simulates the hydrologic states such as runoff and base flow as well as the irrigation water demand, 2) a routing model (i.e. Lohmann et al., 1998) is used to simulate streamflow, 3) simulated flow is bias corrected against observed flow, 4) a river system model is used to include operation of dams and reservoir and estimate water availability, 5) the availability of water is compared with demand, and 6)a deficit fraction is calculated and VIC-CropSyst is run to simulate the impacts of irrigation deficit on the hydrologic cycle and crop yields.

- I miss the broader embedding of this research in the existing body of knowledge. This model is certainly not the first to combine a hydrology and crop model (eg. LPJmL), but the authors seem to mainly relate to their own research in the introduction.

Authors' response: we added the following to strengthen our background section:

Added/Modified

Bierkens (2015) reviewed twenty three global/large-scale hydrological models (GHMs; e.g. WaterGAP, Verzano et al., 2012; WBMPlus, Wisser et al., 2010; Mac-PDM.09, Gosling and Arnell, 2011; and H08, Hanasaki et al., 2010), LSMs (VIC, Liang et al., 1994; MATSIRO, Takata et al., 2003; LM3, Milly et al., 2014; NOAH, Liu et al., 2016; JULES, Best et al., 2011; CLM, Fisher et al., 2015; SiB, Baker et al., 2008; and ORCHIDEE, Vérant et al., 2004) and dynamic vegetation models (DVMs; e.g. LPJmL, Fader et al., 2015). Among these models H08, MATSIRO, JULES, ORCHIDEE, and SiB use simple crop growth modules to simulate natural vegetation or generic C3 and/or C4 crops. NOAH, CLM, and LPJmL have more sophisticated crop growth schemes; these are further discussed below.

Using prescribed seasonally and spatially variable leaf area index (LAI) and root density, Wei et al. (2013) modified aerodynamic and soil deficit thresholds in the NOAH land surface model, thereby improving the simulation of warm season processes. In their model, however, crop growth and development does not mechanistically respond to climate, CO_2 concentrations, and soil moisture; this limits the accuracy of model simulation over agricultural areas where the feedback between agricultural processes and hydro-climatic conditions is significant. Liu et al. (2016) improved simulation of crop processes in the NOAH-MP-Crop model but their model could only simulate corn and soybean and did not capture irrigation processes.

Drewniak et al. (2013) enhanced the Community Land Model (CLM) in agricultural areas by using an improved representation of crop processes, but CO_2 fertilization effects, irrigation, and other common management activities were neglected. In their simulations, they considered only three crop species (wheat, corn and soybean) and used a fixed planting date, which can lead to a discrepancy with observations in that actual planting dates vary in time as a function of weather (Zeng et al., 2013), and can result in an over-estimation of the negative impacts of warming on crop yield, as an earlier planting date is a viable adaptation strategy in many regions of the world (Waha et al., 2013). While a newer version of CLM (CLM4-Crop; Lu et al., 2015) simulates irrigation events and CO_2 fertilization as well as biomass and vegetation growth processes, its application is also limited to three crop types (Chen et al., 2015) and is not able to mechanistically simulate irrigation efficiency.

Elliott et al. (2014) compared ten GHMs and six global gridded crop models (GGCMs); they reported that the performance of GHMs is generally poor in the simulation of future irrigation water demand. Many of them use prescribed crop growth parameters and did not capture CO_2 fertilization nor sensitivity to heat and water stresses; the only exception was the Lund-Potsdam-Jena Managed Land Dynamic Global Vegetation and Water Balance Model (LPJmL), which is a hydrologic model that can mechanistically simulates both hydrologic and agricultural processes. However, LPJmL simulates a limited number of crops (Elliott et al., 2014) and, as compared to specialized crop models (e.g. CropSyst; the Decision Support System for Agrotechnology Transfer; DSSAT, Jones et al., 2003; and the Environmental Policy Integrated Climate Model; EPIC, Williams et al., 1989, 1983), uses more simplistic methods to simulate crop processes such as LAI development, root distribution, and the number of stressors considered (Rosenzweig et al., 2014; Stöckle et al., 2003). Moreover, although LPJmL is a grid-based model, so far it has been used to address global scale issues at coarse scale (0.5 °), and has not been tested and used for regional studies. Also LPJmL uses prescribed country-specific irrigation

efficiency (Biemans et al., 2011; Fader et al., 2015; Rosenzweig et al., 2014), which can cause biases when LPJmL is applied at finer spatial scales. It is also worth mentioning that the scientific community has already benefited from watershed-scale hydrologic-agricultural models. For example the Soil Water Assessment Tool (SWAT Arnold et al., 1998; Neitsch et al., 2011) is coupled to a simplified version of the EPIC model (Williams et al., 1989, 1983) and is able to capture agricultural processes and management decisions. SWAT's shortcoming is the fact that it has seven crop classes and does not differentiate among crops within a class (e.g., tree fruits). Furthermore, SWAT uses predefined irrigation losses and does not simulate irrigation processes mechanistically.

- For sake of reproducibility, the authors should include more background of the models and equations used

Authors' response: We appreciate this observation. More details on algorithms used in VIC-CropSyst and its irrigation module were added to address this weakness.

Specific comments

- The abstract would benefit from a little more text on potential application of this model, and more specific on how it can be used to inform 'policy and best management practices to promote sustainable agriculture'. What can the model do, that cannot be done without a model?

Authors' response: We would like to thank the reviewer; more information on the application of the model has been added to the abstract.

Added/Modified

Because VIC-CropSyst combines two widely-used and mechanistic models (for crop growth phenology, growth, and management; and macroscale hydrology), it can provide realistic and hydrologically-consistent simulations of water availability, crop water requirement for irrigation, and agricultural productivity for both irrigated and dryland systems. This allows VIC-CropSyst to provide managers and decision makers with reliable information on regional water stresses and their impacts on food production. Additionally, VIC-CropSyst is being used in conjunction with socio-economic models, river system models and atmospheric models to simulate feedback processes between regional water availability, agricultural water management decisions, and land-atmospheric interactions.

- Pg 2, r 6.. there are unanswered questions.... what are the unanswered questions and how are you going to address them? - Pg2. r 6. The consequences of what kind of decisions are not understood? Can you give an example of a situation where that happened and where the use of this model could have helped?

Authors' response:

Many of the current land surface models (e.g., VIC stand-alone) do not have a mechanistic way to simulate agricultural processes; many others use fixed seasonally variable parameters (e.g. LAI) to represent crop development or simulate the crop processes through simplified versions of crop models (Elliott et al., 2014). To the best of our knowledge, there is no other land surface model for which an

equally sophisticated cropping system model has been added. VIC-CropSyst is a state of the art tool that facilitates a better understanding of regional water supply and demand as well as agricultural productivity. Such a tool can also open new doors to the simulation of interactions among human, climate, hydrologic and agriculture factors over intensely cultivated areas.

Many types of crops have been systematically ignored in land surface models; crop types that sometime play a significant role in regional economy of agricultural regions. Reliable information on responses of different crop varieties has implication for agricultural decisions that can potentially impact regional water and energy cycles (e.g. what crop might be curtailed when there is a water shortage). In the VIC-CropSyst we simulate more than ninety types of crops allowing us to take heterogeneity among different crop types into consideration and more accurately answer questions regarding socioeconomic aspects, such as agricultural benefits of constructing a reservoir.

Malek et al. (in preparation) used the VIC-CropSyst to simulate how future climate alters overall irrigation efficiency as well as different loss terms (i.e. direct evaporation from irrigation systems, evaporation from water trapped by canopy, soil evaporation, runoff and deep percolation), and discussed the regional water availability implications of such changes. To the best of our knowledge, none of the current land surface models are able to mechanistically simulate irrigation processes to answer questions like this.

Also because of the lack of mechanistic approach to simulate irrigation losses it is difficult to accurately capture how change in irrigation technology impacts return flows (which is crucial in downstream water availability of many agricultural basins); this tool captures that.

Moreover, this tool (in conjunction with river system models such as ColSim and Yak-RW) is being used to capture unintended consequences of certain adaptation decisions. For example, when farmers switch to new irrigation technology to improve farm-level irrigation efficiency, they may also reduce valuable return flow that contributes to downstream water availability. Return flow reduction also impacts seasonality and magnitude of instream flow which directly affects ecosystems and hydroelectric generation.

Added/Modified

Despite existing research on food scarcity, there are still unanswered questions about the relationship between food supply and the nexus of water resources, agriculture and human decisions. For example, how expectations of future climatic conditions influence farmer behaviour such as capital intensive switches in technology or cropping systems, is not well understood. Such scenarios require a simulation tool that can capture large-scale hydrologic processes while accurately simulating the impacts of climate, management, and water availability on different crop types. Moreover, regional consequences of decisions intended to mitigate the damages of future stressors are not well understood (Robertson and Swinton, 2005). For example, improvement in the efficiency of irrigation systems may increase consumptive water uses and lead to a reduction in return flow from irrigated areas (Causapé et al., 2004; Gosain et al., 2005). Return flow plays a significant role in the water availability of many agricultural regions; e.g., 40% of the water availability at the Yakima River's Parker Gauge in an average year is generated through return flows from upstream lands (USBR, 2010). Ecosystems and hydroelectric generation are also impacted as return flow changes. These knowledge gaps limit our ability to explore

viable adaptation strategies, particularly in understanding unintended consequences. Integrated modeling platforms can contribute to the systems-level understanding of dynamics between agricultural processes, large-scale water resources management decisions, and land-atmospheric interactions.

- P3 r 22. Can you give examples of the management decisions farmers can make?

Authors' response: Table 6 in the manuscripts represents some examples of the management/adaptation decisions that can be handled by VIC-CropSyst. For example, this includes choosing among different irrigation systems (there are different irrigation types included in the model), or modifying the irrigation systems (e.g. using different sprinkler options available for different systems). There are also options to plant other crop types, such as new varieties with longer growing periods, an adaptation strategy that increases the opportunity for photosynthesis. Other decision variables include a choice to fallow or deficit-irrigate lands during drought. Other decisions that can be informed with future model developments are related to nutrient management, tillage practices, and rotation options.

Added/Modified

While farmers can adjust their management decisions to reduce the negative impacts of climate change (e.g., switching to more-efficient irrigation technologies, more drought-tolerant crop types, varieties with longer growing periods, and precision agriculture), these human decisions can result in unintended impacts on regional water and energy cycles.

- P4 r1. What is meant by 'large scale results'?

Authors' response: To clarify this, we modified the text as shown below.

Added/Modified

Here, we define large-scale results as regionally-aggregated responses of agriculture to changes that can impact scales greater than a single cultivated field, such as a policy change (e.g., water law), climate-related impacts (e.g. warming-induced reductions in summer water availability), or development of large-scale infrastructure (e.g., a large reservoir).

- P5. I am surprised to see that you are not referring to other models that are also capable of relating hydrology to crop production.

Authors' response: We have provided a more comprehensive literature review to address this and other related reviewer comments.

- P5. Could you explain a little better why the (vertical) soil water balance of VIC is better than the one that was originally included in CropSyst? Since you are not using the lateral flow generated in VIC, the advantage of this coupling is not completely clear (to me).

Authors' response:

We clarified this in the text as follows.

Added/Modified

: In the integrated VIC-CropSyst model, CropSyst's soil hydrology is turned off, allowing VIC to simulate soil hydrologic processes, including the movement of water in soil, bare soil evaporation, and the generation of runoff and baseflow. We did this to retain consistency in all of the hydrologic processes. Standalone VIC and CropSyst use different soil hydrologic assumptions to simulate processes related to soil water movement and the generation of runoff and baseflow; these inconsistencies can lead to an inaccurate simulation of irrigation demand and crop productivity.

- P6. L14. It would be good to have a little more information on the crop model, since the information given here is very limited. E.g. which crops are included, how are sowing and harvest dates determined, is there any management included, how is yield calculated.

Authors' response: we provided a more complete description of the CropSyst:

In CropSyst the daily biomass production is restricted to the minimum of the two following biomass generation routines: i) radiation-based biomass production, and ii) transpiration-based biomass production. After simulation of potential biomass, CropSyst takes water, heat, freezing and nutrient stresses into account to calculate the actual yield. These stresses also modify other crop processes such as transpiration and LAI. Stress sensitivity varies during different phonological periods (e.g. from flowering to maturity). Root occurrence varies in each of the soil layers and depends on the root growth deeper into the soil during biomass development; thus, crop water and nutrient uptake also varies by soil layer. While the start and last date of the growing period is an input to the model, actual crop growth starts after a certain amount of thermal accumulation has been achieved during this user-specified growing period. Crop growth and development is also a function of thermal accumulation, affecting actual harvest date and other growth stages.

- P8. L6. As long as the paper describing the irrigation module in more detail is unpublished, it is difficult to judge the model, so a little more detail regarding algorithms is required here.

Authors' response: Thanks for the comments we included more details to the irrigation section, specifically in how each of the loss terms are calculated.

Added/Modified

The following formulas are used to calculate E_c and E_d from sprinkler and center pivot irrigation systems. Evaporation from Irrigation Intercepted Water (E_c): to calculate Ec, VIC-CropSyst uses the original VIC method (Liang et al., 1994). To avoid overestimation of Ec in agricultural areas, we used the equation developed by Kang et al., (2005) to set the maximum Ec. Evaporation from Irrigation Droplets (E_d). Users have the option to calculate Ed using one of the following two methods:

 1- Malek et al., (2016, in prep.):

$$E_d = ET_p \times \left(\frac{1}{D}\right)^{0.52} \times \left(\frac{V_0 \sin(\theta)}{g} + \frac{\sqrt{V_0^2 \sin^2(\theta) + 2g(Y_0-Y)}}{g}\right)^{1.57} \tag{4}$$

where Y_0(m) is height of nozzle; Y (m) is canopy height; V_0 (m/sec) is initial velocity of the irrigation water which depends on Irrigation system pressure H (m), nuzzle coefficient c_d, and initial angle of sprinkler θ; A_p is irrigated area at a time; D (mm) is the droplet diameter and ET_p (mm/Δt) is potential evapotranspiration.

2- Playán et al., (2005):

For sprinkler: $E_d = 20.3 + 0.214\, U^2 - 0.00229\, RH^2$ $\tag{5}$

For moving laterals and center pivot: $E_d = -2.1 + 1.91\, U^2 + 0.231\, T$ $\tag{6}$

where T (C) is the air temperature; U ($m\ s^{-1}$) is wind speed; and RH (%) is the relative humidity.

Deep Percolation Loss (Dp)

Dp is defined as irrigated water which penetrates below the root zone. Therefore, after an irrigation event the amount of water that enters the base flow layer and becomes inaccessible for crop roots is considered a deep percolation loss.

Runoff Losses (R_o)

Ro depends on soil infiltration rate and irrigation intensity. Whenever irrigation intensity is higher than soil infiltration capacity, runoff is generated as follows,

$$R_o = \frac{Ir}{t_{irr}} - f$$
(7)

where f is the infiltration rate $\left(\frac{mm}{hr}\right)$, I_r is the amount of irrigation water applied in each event (mm) and t_{irr} is the duration of irrigation (hr). Although irrigation intensity is usually a management decision, soil texture and hydraulic conductivity are assumed to be the key considerations in a well-managed irrigation system; therefore in the beginning of simulation, VIC-CropSyst estimates the irrigation duration (I_{du}) using the soil characteristics of each gridcell. The calculated I_{du} is used to estimate infiltration opportunity time of surface irrigation, rotation time in center pivot, and overlap and layout of sprinklers in solid-set, wheel move and big-gun irrigation systems. Then approximated irrigation intensity is compared with the irrigation infiltration rate (f). VIC-CropSyst uses the following equation developed by Philip, (1957) to estimate the infiltration rate,

$$f = \frac{1}{2} S\, T_i^{-0.5} + K_s$$
(8)

where $K_s \left(\frac{mm}{hr}\right)$ is the hydraulic conductivity and S is the sorptivity which is estimated through Rawls et al., (1992) formula and is calculated based on soil texture and initial water content. Therefore in VIC-CropSyst Ro depends on irrigation system, soil type, initial soil moisture as well as the intensity of water reaching to soil. Details of the runoff calculations are presented by Malek, et al. (2016, in prep).

- P8. It is very impressive that the model is able to simulate over 40 different irrigation systems, but it would be good to briefly descibe how differences between those systems are implemented in the model and which assumptions are made.

Authors' response: There are actually only four major categories with subcategories in each and the flexibility to adjust characteristics within these groups. This has been clarified and details added; please see below.

Added/Modified

Currently, VIC-CropSyst simulates four major categories of irrigation systems: surface, center pivot, sprinkler, and drip. Each category includes subcategories. Drip systems include surface and subsurface drip irrigation. In surface drip irrigation, water is applied on the soil surface, while in subsurface drip irrigation, water is applied below the surface and will not lead to any soil evaporative losses. Surface irrigation includes furrow, rill, and border irrigation, and the main difference between these three systems is in their wetted surface area, which is smaller in a furrow system. Center pivots are represented by eighteen different types of sprinklers that fall into two subcategories: impact and spray sprinklers. Impact sprinklers generally have a greater discharge rate and wetted radius. Sprinkler systems in VIC-CropSyst include seventeen nozzles from three major subcategories: solid set, big gun, and moving wheels. The subcategories differ in terms of discharge, wetted diameter, height, droplet size, and other aspects. The characteristics of these systems have been collected from different scientific papers, reports, and commercial catalogs, including Nelson Co. (2014) and RainBird (2014). This level of detail offers a

more accurate representation of irrigation practices, and it will help users to simulate the adaptation of different irrigation and management scenarios.

- P8 l22. Which crops are included?

Authors' response: Authors included the following table to clarify this:

Added/Modified

In a spatially-explicit manner, VIC-CropSyst is able to capture a large variety of crop groups: 1- cereal grains (e.g. winter and spring wheat, corn, barley, oats, sorghum), 2- vegetables and melons (e.g. dill, radish, mint, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, carrot, onion, cucumber and pumpkins, watermelon), 3- fruits and nuts (e.g. plum, apricot, cherry, grape, walnut, pear, peaches, apples, blubbery, strawberry, cranberry), 4- root crops (e.g. potato, sugar beet), 5- leguminous crops (e.g. green and dry bean, lentil, chickpea, pea), 6- forages (e.g. pasture, alfalfa, hay, grass, clover, grass), and 7- oil seeds (e.g. soybean, mustard, sunflower).

- P8 l29. For readibility, it would be good to write out the meaning of Esi in this sentence and put Esi between brackets.

Authors' response: Authors edited wrote out the Esi and put it into a brackets

Added/Modified:

In the drip and surface categories, evaporative losses happen only from the soil surface because irrigation happens below the canopy level. Irrigation takes place above the canopy in sprinkler and center pivot systems; therefore, evaporation from canopy-intercepted water (E_c) and the direct loss from droplets (E_d) are considered as major irrigation losses. VIC-CropSyst neglects evaporative losses from soil (E_{si}) for sprinkler and center pivot systems because energy is more readily available for water above the canopy and it suppresses the below-canopy evaporation (Uddin et al., 2013; Yonts et al., 2000).

- P9 l8. What is the equation, I think it would be good to add it here. - Idem for the equations in line 12 and line 14 (referring to an equation in an article in preparation is not ideal).

Authors' response: All the equations have been included in the manuscript.

- P10 l5. The simulated variables that are compared, could results been shown for all the mentioned variables?

Authors' response:

Added/ Modified:

VIC-CropSyst's simulated soil moisture, ET, yield and irrigation water demand were compared to observed data obtained from the FLUXNET network (Baldocchi et al., 2001). Simulated LAI was evaluated against Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) remote sensing observations (Cohen et al., 2006). We also evaluated regional performance of VIC-CropSyst in simulation of ET over the U.S. Pacific Northwest, including the states of Washington, Idaho and Oregon. Other studies such as Malek et at (in preparation a and b), Rajagopalan, et al., (in preparation), Barik et al., (2017), Hall et al., 2017), Yorgey et al., (2011) evaluated VIC-CropSyst in its capability to capture regional irrigation demand, naturalized streamflow, observed flow, county level yield, snow water equivalent, and irrigation efficiency.

- P10 l18. The soil files were modified using available information, could this be explained?

Authors' response: we started from the Maurer et al (2002) soil file and we replaced its sand content with sand content available at the study site. We also added the clay percentages to the Maurer (2002)'s soil file.

Added/Modified:

We replaced its sand content with data available at the study site. We also added the clay percentages to Maurer et al. (2002)'s soil file. In our simulation, VIC-CropSyst reads the sand and clay content and uses pedo-transfer functions developed by Saxton et al. (1986) to generate saturated hydraulic conductivity, bulk density, air entry potential, the b coefficient of Campbell, (1974)'s soil retention curve, field capacity, wilting point, and porosity.

- P11, l 19. Are those climate data the same as the climate data mentioned on p 10 (DAYMET)? This is somewhat confusing.

Authors' response: We did not use the DAYMET data to run the model over three states of Washington, Oregon and Idaho. We used the data prepared by Abatzoglou and Brown, (2012). We added a table to clarify this in the text.

Added/Modified

Table 5- Soil, climate, vegetation and crop information used for regional evaluation of VIC-CropSyst over the U.S. Pacific Northwest. The resolution of the input data was $1/16^{th}$ °.

Input	Source	Information used by VIC-CropSyst
Weather	*Abatzoglou and Brown (2012)*	*precipitation, minimum and maximum temperature and wind speed*
Soil	*STATSGO (Schwarz and Alexander, 1995)*	*latitude, longitude, sand and clay content, hydraulic conductivity, field capacity, bulk density, etc.*
Crop/Vegetation	*USDA/WSDA vegetation distribution maps (Boryan et al., 2011; Yorgey et al., 2011)*	*crop type, acreage, irrigation systems, etc.*

- P 11 line 25. I understood from table 2 and different figures that simulations were made for corn only, how was the crop distribution information used?

Authors' response: We evaluated VIC-CropSyst at point and regional scales. Over our point-scale sites (Nebraska and Illinois), we evaluated VIC-CropSyst for corn. However, over the region, we applied the model for all of the major crop types that are grown in the region.

Added/Modified:

The performance of VIC-CropSyst was evaluated at both regional (over the U.S. Pacific Northwest) and point scales. Point-scale evaluation involved using two flux tower sites located in agricultural fields in the U.S. (Nebraska and Illinois).

- P12 section 3.3.1 Is water shortage for irrigation not considered at all? Could that be an issue in this region?

Authors' response: Although irrigation shortage can be simulated by VIC-CropSyst (in combination with reservoir models like ColSim), we were not able to find any record of deficit irrigation management strategy at this specific site and did not apply deficit irrigation. Also, as figure 7 shows, there is no clear trend of yield overestimation by the model that strongly supports water shortage as an issue.

Added/Modified

Although Figure 7 does not show a systematic overestimation by the model, a combination of inaccurate meteorological data, missing processes (e.g. lack of VPD feedback as discussed in section 3.1.2) and unrecorded conditions such as insufficient irrigation water or heat stress can contributes to these discrepancies.

- P12 section 3.1.2. Could the overestimation of etp also have to do with water shortage, the used crop parameterization?

Authors' response: Because there was no mentioning of any deficit irrigation at Nebraska-irrigated site and also because a similar trend was observed at the non-irrigated site, we originally assumed that the corn crop is well-watered. However, we do agree that this can also be an uncertainty that can lead to discrepancies. Hence, we added this to the text as well.

Authors added the following to clarify this:

Added/Modified:

Inaccuracy of the meteorological data or uncertainties related to unrecorded management practices such as deficit irrigation can be other sources of error.

- P12 3.1.3 could you describe a little better how yields are calculated and also reflect on why the variability for irrigated yields is not captured.

There can be different reasons that the variability of the yield is not fully captured at the irrigated site: inaccuracy in climatic data, missing processes in the model such as the one discussed in section 3.1.2 (i.e. we do not simulate the feedback of irrigation evaporative losses on ambient temperature and VPD, which can change performance of stomata and rate of photosynthesis), and unrecorded heat and water stresses. However, because there was no systematic overestimation of the yield we could not conclude that a single unrecorded stress (e.g. water stress and heat stress) is responsible for this.

Authors believe that the discussion added to this section clarifies this:

Added/Modified:

Although Figure 7 does not show a systematic overestimation by the model, a combination of inaccurate meteorological data, missing processes (e.g. lack of VPD feedback as discussed in section 3.1.2) and unrecorded conditions such as insufficient irrigation water or heat stress can contributes to these discrepancies..

- P13 3.1.4 It would be interesting to see some reflection on the meaning of errors.

We added some texts to clarify this:

The discrepancies may relate to the use of pedotransfer functions that convert soil textural characteristics to soil hydraulic properties (e.g. field capacity, permanent wilting point and hydraulic conductivity) for use in VIC-CropSyst (Pachepsky and Rawls, 1999; Tietje and Hennings, 1996). Also, scale discrepancies between the sensors' point-scale observation and the grid-scale simulation (Crow et al., 2012; Robinson et al., 2008) and inaccuracy of meteorological and soil data can be other sources of error. Additionally, imperfections in model processes such as soil water movement, evapotranspiration and irrigation loss calculation can contribute to the error.

- P14 I think it is good to emphasize here that the model can be used to evaluate the cumulative effects of large scale implementation of selected adaptation strategies over a basin or watershed.

Authors added this:

VIC-CropSyst can be used to investigate the hydrologic and atmospheric impacts of these adaptation decisions.

This part in 4.2.1 can also help explaining the large scale consequences.

Also, any changes in agricultural activities (e.g., switching to a new irrigation system) directly impacts the hydrology of agricultural fields, thus changing return flow timing and magnitude and the availability of water for downstream users; these downstream consequences can also be simulated by this modeling platform. This is an example of how the human-land-climate nexus can be captured through a modeling framework that simulates large-scale hydrologic processes and regional water availability in a highly cultivated basin, while capturing the dynamics of farm-level irrigation decisions.

Major comments:

"VIC-CropSyst: A regional-scale modeling platform to simulate the nexus of climate, hydrology, cropping systems,

5 **and human decisions" by Malek et al. In this paper the authors describe a simulation platform that captures the nexus of land, atmosphere, and human processes in one model. To this end, they have coupled the macroscale Variable Infiltration Capacity (VIC) hydrologic model and the CropSyst agricultural model. The paper is well written, good to understand and the results are well described. The topic of the study is of interest for scientists and natural resources decision makers.**

10 **However, there are some shortcomings, and the major in my view is that they ignore the huge amount of literature and work which already has been done in this direction. The authors present the topic of the study, to fully couple hydrological and agricultural models in one system considering feedbacks, as if this is an entirely new field. Cited are only global scale studies with comparable approaches but not so far developed. But the case studies given in this paper are at the regional and even local scale. And at the regional scale, first attempts to couple hydrological and**

15 **crop models started already in the late 70ties. A prominent example is SWAT (Soil and Water Assessment tool), nowadays also applied at the continental and global scale, and many other exist. At the global scale, the models ORCHIDEE and LPJmL have coupled water and crop modules etc.**

First and foremost, the authors would like to thank Reviewer #1 for this constructive feedback of the article.

The authors thank the reviewer for this insightful comment. The authors agree that the incorporation of agricultural processes

20 in hydrologic models such as SWAT dates back to the early stages of computer models, and this was not acknowledged in the manuscript. VIC and CropSyst are well-established large-scale hydrology and cropping systems models, respectively. The original intent was to present VIC-CropSyst as a contribution to large-scale land surface models due to its versatility and combined mechanistic simulation of crop and agricultural management processes as well as hydrologic processes. To address the reviewer's concern, in the revised manuscript, we incorporated a more comprehensive literature review that takes

25 various types of hydrologic models into account.

Added/Modified

Bierkens (2015) reviewed twenty three global/large-scale hydrological models (GHMs; e.g. WaterGAP, Verzano et al., 2012; WBMPlus, Wisser et al., 2010; Mac-PDM.09, Gosling and Arnell, 2011; and H08, Hanasaki et al., 2010), LSMs (VIC, Liang et al., 1994; MATSIRO, Takata et al., 2003; LM3, Milly et al., 2014; NOAH, Liu et al., 2016; JULES, Best et al.,

30 *2011; CLM, Fisher et al., 2015; SiB, Baker et al., 2008; and ORCHIDEE, Vérant et al., 2004) and dynamic vegetation models (DVMs; e.g. LPJmL, Fader et al., 2015). Among these models H08, MATSIRO, JULES, ORCHIDEE, and SiB use simple crop growth modules to simulate natural vegetation or generic C3 and/or C4 crops. NOAH, CLM, and LPJmL have more sophisticated crop growth schemes; these are further discussed below.*

Using prescribed seasonally and spatially variable leaf area index (LAI) and root density, Wei et al. (2013) modified aerodynamic and soil deficit thresholds in the NOAH land surface model, thereby improving the simulation of warm season processes. In their model, however, crop growth and development does not mechanistically respond to climate, CO_2 concentrations, and soil moisture; this limits the accuracy of model simulation over agricultural areas where the feedback

5   *between agricultural processes and hydro-climatic conditions is significant. Liu et al. (2016) improved simulation of crop processes in the NOAH-MP-Crop model but their model could only simulate corn and soybean and did not capture irrigation processes.*

Drewniak et al. (2013) enhanced the Community Land Model (CLM) in agricultural areas by using an improved representation of crop processes, but CO_2 fertilization effects, irrigation, and other common management activities were

10   *neglected. In their simulations, they considered only three crop species (wheat, corn and soybean) and used a fixed planting date, which can lead to a discrepancy with observations in that actual planting dates vary in time as a function of weather (Zeng et al., 2013), and can result in an over-estimation of the negative impacts of warming on crop yield, as an earlier planting date is a viable adaptation strategy in many regions of the world (Waha et al., 2013). While a newer version of CLM (CLM4-Crop; Lu et al., 2015) simulates irrigation events and CO_2 fertilization as well as biomass and vegetation*

15   *growth processes, its application is also limited to three crop types (Chen et al., 2015) and is not able to mechanistically simulate irrigation efficiency.*

Elliott et al. (2014) compared ten GHMs and six global gridded crop models (GGCMs); they reported that the performance of GHMs is generally poor in the simulation of future irrigation water demand. Many of them use prescribed crop growth parameters and did not capture CO_2 fertilization nor sensitivity to heat and water stresses; the only exception was the Lund-

20   *Potsdam-Jena Managed Land Dynamic Global Vegetation and Water Balance Model (LPJmL), which is a hydrologic model that can mechanistically simulates both hydrologic and agricultural processes. However, LPJmL simulates a limited number of crops (Elliott et al., 2014) and, as compared to specialized crop models (e.g. CropSyst; the Decision Support System for Agrotechnology Transfer; DSSAT, Jones et al., 2003; and the Environmental Policy Integrated Climate Model; EPIC, Williams et al., 1989, 1983), uses more simplistic methods to simulate crop processes such as LAI development, root*

25   *distribution, and the number of stressors considered (Rosenzweig et al., 2014; Stöckle et al., 2003). Moreover, although LPJmL is a grid-based model, so far it has been used to address global scale issues at coarse scale (0.5 °), and has not been tested and used for regional studies. Also LPJmL uses prescribed country-specific irrigation efficiency (Biemans et al., 2011; Fader et al., 2015; Rosenzweig et al., 2014), which can cause biases when LPJmL is applied at finer spatial scales. It is also worth mentioning that the scientific community has already benefited from watershed-scale hydrologic-agricultural*

30   *models. For example the Soil Water Assessment Tool (SWAT Arnold et al., 1998; Neitsch et al., 2011) is coupled to a simplified version of the EPIC model (Williams et al., 1989, 1983) and is able to capture agricultural processes and management decisions. SWAT's shortcoming is the fact that it has seven crop classes and does not differentiate among crops within a class (e.g., tree fruits). Furthermore, SWAT uses predefined irrigation losses and does not simulate irrigation processes mechanistically.*

Answer to minor comments:

Page 3, last para: How do you define return flow?

In this study, we are referring to the USBR (2010) definition of return flow as a non-evaporative, reusable loss of water through conveyance systems and the field-level application of irrigation water. In the revised manuscript, we added some explanation to clarify this return flow definition.

Added/Modified:

In many agricultural basins, the availability of water for downstream users depends greatly on the return flow from upstream lands, which mainly .comes from non-evaporative, reusable loss of water through conveyance systems and field-level application of irrigation water.

Page 4, second para: ": : :the current state of LSMs is not capable of capturing agricultural processes in a detailed manner". However, the literature cited is mostly older than 2010, and the most recent 2014. This is not the current state.

Authors' response: In our new submission, we have done an up-to-date literature review and added more information about recently published works on this topic.

Page 6, first para: Does VIC consider reservoirs and other water management measures?

Authors' response: While VIC-CropSyst does not simulate reservoir directly nor the potential management decisions in operating these waterbody compartment, our research team often connects the regional simulations of VIC-CropSyst to river system and water management models (e.g., ColSim and Yak-RW). These research efforts usually focus on understanding the dynamics between large-scale water supply, agricultural water demand, and the operation of dams and reservoirs. We provided more information about these applications in the manuscript.

Added/Modified:

VIC-CropSyst has also been used in conjunction with reservoir models (e.g. ColSim; Wittwer et al., 2001 and YAK-RW; Zagona et al., 2001) to calculate the deficit irrigation fraction (e.g. Barik et al., 2017; Malek, et al., in preparation; Rajagopalan et al., in preparation). In general, the following six steps can be used to calculate and apply a deficit fraction: 1) VIC-CropSyst simulates the hydrologic states such as runoff and base flow as well as the irrigation water demand, 2) a routing model (i.e. Lohmann et al., 1998) is used to simulate streamflow, 3) simulated flow is bias corrected against observed flow, 4) a river system model is used to include operation of dams and reservoir and estimate water availability, 5) the availability of water is compared with demand, and 6)a deficit fraction is calculated and VIC-CropSyst is run to simulate the impacts of irrigation deficit on the hydrologic cycle and crop yields.

Page 10, last para: "As with other hydrological models, the VIC model needs to be calibrated : : :". This is only part of the story: State of the art is to calibrate AND validate in a split-sample approach. So, are the results shown in Figures 5-10 from the calibration or from the validation period? If, for example, the results in Figure 7 are from the calibration period, I would expect them to be good.

Authors' response: We thank the reviewer for this observation. The authors agree that this section of the original manuscript was not written in a clear and understandable fashion. We will make sure that this part is more explicitly explained in our revised submission. To answer the reviewer's question, we did not calibrate the VIC-CropSyst at the flux tower sites in this study. We used calibrated parameters developed in a separate study by Maurer et al. (2002). They calibrated a standalone version of the VIC model over the entire United States in $1/8^{th}$ resolution. We selected the grid cells that overlap with our study sites.

Added/Modified:

As with other hydrological models, the VIC model needs to be calibrated for optimized performance over a specific region. Table 3 shows VIC's key calibration parameters; more information on calibration parameters and methods can be found in past VIC studies (e.g. Elsner et al., 2010; Liang et al., 1994; Maurer et al., 2002). We used calibrated parameters determined by Maurer et al. (2002) for each flux tower station (the last two columns of Table 3).. We also tested the sensitivity of soil moisture content, crop growth, and irrigation demand and losses to different calibration parameters using the ranges available in Column 3 of Table 3 and differences were negligible..

<mark>**Reviewer # 2**</mark>

In this paper the authors present a regional version of a coupled model system, the VIC hydrological model and the CropSyst crop model. The objective of the coupled system is a.o. to evaluate the potential impact of adaptation measures taken by farmers on basin scale hydrology.

The authors would like to thank the reviewer # 2 for all the constructive comments. The following addresses the general and specific comments.

General comments

The authors could elaborate a little more on the potential applications of this coupled model system, as they make not clear what is the added value of the coupled system versus the individual models.

Potential application

The primary focus of VIC-CropSyst model was to combine in a tightly-integrated framework the strengths of an existing mechanistic large-scale hydrologic model with a mechanistic crop growth, phenology, and management model, with some potential applications being around adaptation, but other applications as well such as understanding the role that agricultural processes have in driving larger-scale water and energy cycles. This model predominantly targets large river basins with significant agricultural activities. Also because VIC-CropSyst mechanistically simulates irrigation demand and losses, it can be used over regions with intensive irrigation (e.g. agricultural river basins of the western U.S). VIC-CropSyst can be applied at regional, continental or global scales and can provide the scientific community and policy makers with helpful

information about the impact of management decisions and climatic factors on agricultural productivity, and water supply and demand.

VIC-CropSyst can also be used to understand impacts of agricultural management practices (e.g. switching to a new irrigation system or a new crop variety), under historic and future climate, on evapotranspiration and surface characteristics such as LAI, soil moisture and return flow from irrigated lands. The model is already being used within earth system models to serve two main purposes i) feed socioeconomic and river system management tools with water supply, yield and irrigation demand; and ii) improve boundary conditions of atmospheric models over agricultural areas.

Added/Modified

VIC-CropSyst is used in conjunction with reservoir operation models in the CRB, and accounting for the process of water rights curtailment under shortages in Washington State and farmer response to curtailment, to identify the indirect impacts on climate change on agricultural production though changes in water availability (Rajagopalan et al., in preparation). The current version of VIC-CropSyst (v2, as described herein) was also used in the most recent Columbia River Basin water supply and demand projection for the 2030s (Barik et al., 2017; Hall et al., 2017). These water supply and demand studies were submitted to the Washington State Legislature in the years of 2011 and 2016 and provide detailed information for each watershed in eastern Washington to the entire CRB as a whole. This information is being used by the Legislature for long-term water supply planning.

VIC-CropSyst has been used to investigate different scenarios for renegotiation of the Columbia River Treaty (Rushi et al. 2017). Existing modeling efforts to date have focused primarily on the impact that treaty renegotiation would have on flood risk, hydropower generation, and environmental flows (Cosens, 2010; Hamlet and Lettenmaier, 1999a); assessment of the impact of CRT changes on irrigated agriculture along the Columbia Mainstem is a knowledge gap. Rushi et al. (2017), therefore applied VIC-CropSyst linked to ColSim to simulate the complex impacts of climate change and the Columbia River Treaty on hydrology and agriculture in the river basin and concluded that climate change i) shifts water supply towards earlier in the season, ii) reduces flood risk in the upper CRB while increases frequency and magnitude of floods in the middle and lower parts of the basin, iii) shifts water demand towards earlier in the season in some locations with mixed effects on water rights curtailment risk, and iv) reduces hydropower generation. The authors found that the considered CRT scenarios can improve power generation and agricultural water demand while preventing floods in an altered climate.

VIC-CropSyst is an effective tool for studying the large-scale aggregated impacts of local management decisions and phenomena. For example, VIC-CropSyst was applied by Malek et al. (in review) who found that climate change-induced increases in evaporative (consumptive) losses from irrigation systems and decreases in non-evaporative irrigation losses (i.e., runoff and deep percolation) would lead to a decrease in reusable return flow, which would negatively affect basin-wide water availability and productivity.

VIC-CropSyst has also been used over the Yakima River basin (YRB) to evaluate the impacts of climate change on decisions related to investment in irrigation technology (Malek et al., 2016; in prep.). Economic damages of future more frequent droughts (Vano et al., 2010) are considered the main incentive to invest in more efficient irrigation technology (Berger and

Troost, 2014). To analyze future changes in regional irrigation patterns, Malek et al. (in prep.) used VIC-CropSyst in conjunction with an economic model and the RiverWare model (Zagona et al., 2001). Figure 11 shows a result of this integration to simulate historical (1981-2006) drought frequency and severity, and the percentage of the YRB's perennial crop growers who are simulated to switch to more efficient irrigation systems to minimize the negative consequences of

5 *droughts during the two decades of 1990-2000 and 2050-2060. Also, any changes in agricultural activities (e.g., switching to a new irrigation system) directly impacts the hydrology of agricultural fields, thus changing return flow timing and magnitude and the availability of water for downstream users; these downstream consequences can also be simulated by this modeling platform. This is an example of how the human-land-climate nexus can be captured through a modeling framework that simulates large-scale hydrologic processes and regional water availability in a highly cultivated basin, while capturing*

10 *the dynamics of farm-level irrigation decisions.*

what is the added value of the coupled system versus the individual models.

1-VIC:

VIC simulates one crop type and growth stages of that crop type is simulated through monthly prescribed LAIs, which means that VIC does not mechanistically simulate agricultural processes such as crop development, biomass production, the

15 impact of water heat and nutrient stresses on crop growth, and many other details provided by CropSyst in the VIC-CropSyst coupled version. Also VIC does not mechanistically simulate irrigation losses and only includes one irrigation type (sprinkler). Lack of these processes makes any estimation of irrigation water demand, transpiration and crop growth questionable and can lead to inaccuracy in simulation of water and energy cycles over agricultural areas. VIC-CropSyst responds to these shortcomings as it is an implementation of a well-established mechanistic crop model that simulates

20 agricultural processes in a sophisticated manner. In VIC-CropSyst crop growth is controlled by environmental conditions such as radiation, water availability, temperature, nutrient and CO2 concentration.

2- CropSyst

CropSyst is a cropping system model that is able to simulate agricultural processes mechanistically. Although the primary purpose of this study was to improve simulation of land surface processes through adding a cropping system (CropSyst) to a

25 widely used hydrologic model (VIC), simulation of agriculture processes in CropSyst can also benefit from this coupling. CropSyst has been already used to simulate local-scale hydrologic processes, but it has not been developed to simulate regional water and energy cycles. VIC has a more sophisticated and mechanistic way of handling regional hydrologic cycle. Many studies (e.g. Elsner et al., 2010; Hamlet and Lettenmaier, 1999; Maurer et al., 2002) have used VIC to simulate runoff, baseflow, soil moisture and cold season processes to eventually estimate availability of water for irrigation. Also, the stand-

30 alone CropSyst does not have a mechanistic irrigation module. Therefore, we argue that the coupled model can improve the usefulness and applicability of CropSyst especially over irrigated areas.

Added/Modified

6

We coupled the VIC version 4.1.2-e with CropSyst-v4.15, although the coupled model will be updated with new versions of VIC and CropSyst as they become available. In a spatially-explicit manner, VIC-CropSyst is able to capture a large variety of crop groups: 1- cereal grains (e.g. winter and spring wheat, corn, barley, oats, sorghum), 2- vegetables and melons (e.g. dill, radish, mint, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, carrot, onion, cucumber and pumpkins, watermelon), 3- fruits and nuts

5 *(e.g. plum, apricot, cherry, grape, walnut, pear, peaches, apples, blubbery, strawberry, cranberry), 4- root crops (e.g. potato, sugar beet), 5- leguminous crops (e.g. green and dry bean, lentil, chickpea, pea), 6- forages (e.g. pasture, alfalfa, hay, grass, clover, grass), and 7- oil seeds (e.g. soybean, mustard, sunflower).*

- The authors claim that the coupled model system can be used to evaluate the impact of certain agriculture related

10 **adaptation measures over the region or river basin, but I was surprised to see that this impact is only modelled in one way. The way I understand the model from this manuscript, is that irrigation water is assumed to be always available, but the source of this irrigation water is not discussed. Unless water is always extracted from deep confined groundwater layers, there should be an effect of water withdrawals for irrigation on streamflow and water availability downstream. Since VIC explicitly calculates streamflow, I think it is a missed opportunity not to include**

15 **this interaction, especially since irrigation withdrawals have been implemented before eg. by Haddeland et al. To my understanding there is no consideration of water shortage for irrigation.**

We would like to thank the reviewer for this observation. We added a new section to the main body of the paper to clarify this.

VIC-CropSyst is being used in a variety of projects following these steps (as documented by Malek et al., in preparation): 1)

20 VIC-CropSyst simulates the hydrologic states such as runoff and base flow as well as the irrigation water demand, 2) a routing model (i.e. Lohmann et al., 1998) is used to simulate streamflow, 3) simulated flow is bias corrected against observed flow, 4) a river system model is used to include operation of dams and reservoir and estimate water availability, 5) availability of water is compared with demand, and 6) deficit fraction is calculated and VIC-CropSyst is run to simulate the deficit scenarios. Malek et al. (in preparation) discussed the implementation of VIC-CropSyst in these six steps as a part of

25 the Agricultural Spatial Economic Analysis Platform (ASEAP) to investigate how farmers should invest on more efficient irrigation systems as climate changes.

Haddeland et al. (2006) used a similar process using a simple reservoir management module within the routing code of Lohmann et al. (1998). However, Haddeland et al. (2006) used the VIC model in isolation of a cropping system model (that captures all of the crop-specific characteristics and management that influence irrigation demand), and developers of VIC-

30 CropSyst believe that a crop model is important for accurate simulation of irrigation demand. However, the following section has been added to the paper to clarify this issue:

Added/Modified

Deficit irrigation

2.4.   Deficit irrigation

VIC-CropSyst's deficit irrigation module requires two main inputs: a) a first approximation to the irrigation water demand obtained by generating time series of irrigation under no water stress condition using VIC-CropSyst, and b) deficit fractions that indicate the water availability. VIC-CropSyst then reads the amount of recorded irrigation from step one and applies the deficit fraction to simulate the agricultural and hydrologic processes under realistic water deficit conditions. The deficit

5 *fraction can be either homogenously applied across the entire basin or separately specified for each farmer depending on water rights or other considerations. Also, VIC-CropSyst can apply the deficit fraction during different times of the year. For example, if the water deficit happens later in the season, VIC-CropSyst can adjust irrigation amounts according to the timing of water shortage.*

VIC-CropSyst has also been used in conjunction with reservoir models (e.g. ColSim; Wittwer et al., 2001 and YAK-RW;

10 *Zagona et al., 2001) to calculate the deficit irrigation fraction (e.g. Barik et al., 2017; Malek, et al., in preparation; Rajagopalan et al., in preparation). In general, the following six steps can be used to calculate and apply a deficit fraction: 1) VIC-CropSyst simulates the hydrologic states such as runoff and base flow as well as the irrigation water demand, 2) a routing model (i.e. Lohmann et al., 1998) is used to simulate streamflow, 3) simulated flow is bias corrected against observed flow, 4) a river system model is used to include operation of dams and reservoir and estimate water availability, 5)*

15 *the availability of water is compared with demand, and 6)a deficit fraction is calculated and VIC-CropSyst is run to simulate the impacts of irrigation deficit on the hydrologic cycle and crop yields.*

- I miss the broader embedding of this research in the existing body of knowledge. This model is certainly not the first to combine a hydrology and crop model (eg. LPJmL), but the authors seem to mainly relate to their own research in the introduction.

20 Authors' response: we added the following to strengthen our background section:

Added/Modified

Bierkens (2015) reviewed twenty three global/large-scale hydrological models (GHMs; e.g. WaterGAP, Verzano et al., 2012; WBMPlus, Wisser et al., 2010; Mac-PDM.09, Gosling and Arnell, 2011; and H08, Hanasaki et al., 2010), LSMs (VIC, Liang et al., 1994; MATSIRO, Takata et al., 2003; LM3, Milly et al., 2014; NOAH, Liu et al., 2016; JULES, Best et al.,

25 *2011; CLM, Fisher et al., 2015; SiB, Baker et al., 2008; and ORCHIDEE, Vérant et al., 2004) and dynamic vegetation models (DVMs; e.g. LPJmL, Fader et al., 2015). Among these models H08, MATSIRO, JULES, ORCHIDEE, and SiB use simple crop growth modules to simulate natural vegetation or generic C3 and/or C4 crops. NOAH, CLM, and LPJmL have more sophisticated crop growth schemes; these are further discussed below.*

Using prescribed seasonally and spatially variable leaf area index (LAI) and root density, Wei et al. (2013) modified

30 *aerodynamic and soil deficit thresholds in the NOAH land surface model, thereby improving the simulation of warm season processes. In their model, however, crop growth and development does not mechanistically respond to climate, CO_2 concentrations, and soil moisture; this limits the accuracy of model simulation over agricultural areas where the feedback between agricultural processes and hydro-climatic conditions is significant. Liu et al. (2016) improved simulation of crop*

8

processes in the NOAH-MP-Crop model but their model could only simulate corn and soybean and did not capture irrigation processes.

Drewniak et al. (2013) enhanced the Community Land Model (CLM) in agricultural areas by using an improved representation of crop processes, but CO_2 fertilization effects, irrigation, and other common management activities were neglected. In their simulations, they considered only three crop species (wheat, corn and soybean) and used a fixed planting date, which can lead to a discrepancy with observations in that actual planting dates vary in time as a function of weather (Zeng et al., 2013), and can result in an over-estimation of the negative impacts of warming on crop yield, as an earlier planting date is a viable adaptation strategy in many regions of the world (Waha et al., 2013). While a newer version of CLM (CLM4-Crop; Lu et al., 2015) simulates irrigation events and CO_2 fertilization as well as biomass and vegetation growth processes, its application is also limited to three crop types (Chen et al., 2015) and is not able to mechanistically simulate irrigation efficiency.

Elliott et al. (2014) compared ten GHMs and six global gridded crop models (GGCMs); they reported that the performance of GHMs is generally poor in the simulation of future irrigation water demand. Many of them use prescribed crop growth parameters and did not capture CO_2 fertilization nor sensitivity to heat and water stresses; the only exception was the Lund-Potsdam-Jena Managed Land Dynamic Global Vegetation and Water Balance Model (LPJmL), which is a hydrologic model that can mechanistically simulates both hydrologic and agricultural processes. However, LPJmL simulates a limited number of crops (Elliott et al., 2014) and, as compared to specialized crop models (e.g. CropSyst; the Decision Support System for Agrotechnology Transfer; DSSAT, Jones et al., 2003; and the Environmental Policy Integrated Climate Model; EPIC, Williams et al., 1989, 1983), uses more simplistic methods to simulate crop processes such as LAI development, root distribution, and the number of stressors considered (Rosenzweig et al., 2014; Stöckle et al., 2003). Moreover, although LPJmL is a grid-based model, so far it has been used to address global scale issues at coarse scale (0.5 °), and has not been tested and used for regional studies. Also LPJmL uses prescribed country-specific irrigation efficiency (Biemans et al., 2011; Fader et al., 2015; Rosenzweig et al., 2014), which can cause biases when LPJmL is applied at finer spatial scales. It is also worth mentioning that the scientific community has already benefited from watershed-scale hydrologic-agricultural models. For example the Soil Water Assessment Tool (SWAT Arnold et al., 1998; Neitsch et al., 2011) is coupled to a simplified version of the EPIC model (Williams et al., 1989, 1983) and is able to capture agricultural processes and management decisions. SWAT's shortcoming is the fact that it has seven crop classes and does not differentiate among crops within a class (e.g., tree fruits). Furthermore, SWAT uses predefined irrigation losses and does not simulate irrigation processes mechanistically.

- For sake of reproducibility, the authors should include more background of the models and equations used

Authors' response: We appreciate this observation. More details on algorithms used in VIC-CropSyst and its irrigation module were added to address this weakness.

Specific comments

- The abstract would benefit from a little more text on potential application of this model, and more specific on how it can be used to inform 'policy and best management practices to promote sustainable agriculture'. What can the model do, that cannot be done without a model?

Authors' response: We would like to thank the reviewer; more information on the application of the model has been added to the abstract.

Added/Modified

Because VIC-CropSyst combines two widely-used and mechanistic models (for crop growth phenology, growth, and management; and macroscale hydrology), it can provide realistic and hydrologically-consistent simulations of water availability, crop water requirement for irrigation, and agricultural productivity for both irrigated and dryland systems. This allows VIC-CropSyst to provide managers and decision makers with reliable information on regional water stresses and their impacts on food production. Additionally, VIC-CropSyst is being used in conjunction with socio-economic models, river system models and atmospheric models to simulate feedback processes between regional water availability, agricultural water management decisions, and land-atmospheric interactions.

- Pg 2, r 6.. there are unanswered questions.... what are the unanswered questions and how are you going to address them? - Pg2. r 6. The consequences of what kind of decisions are not understood? Can you give an example of a situation where that happened and where the use of this model could have helped?

Authors' response:

Many of the current land surface models (e.g., VIC stand-alone) do not have a mechanistic way to simulate agricultural processes; many others use fixed seasonally variable parameters (e.g. LAI) to represent crop development or simulate the crop processes through simplified versions of crop models (Elliott et al., 2014). To the best of our knowledge, there is no other land surface model for which an equally sophisticated cropping system model has been added. VIC-CropSyst is a state of the art tool that facilitates a better understanding of regional water supply and demand as well as agricultural productivity. Such a tool can also open new doors to the simulation of interactions among human, climate, hydrologic and agriculture factors over intensely cultivated areas.

Many types of crops have been systematically ignored in land surface models; crop types that sometime play a significant role in regional economy of agricultural regions. Reliable information on responses of different crop varieties has implication for agricultural decisions that can potentially impact regional water and energy cycles (e.g. what crop might be curtailed when there is a water shortage). In the VIC-CropSyst we simulate more than ninety types of crops allowing us to take heterogeneity among different crop types into consideration and more accurately answer questions regarding socioeconomic aspects, such as agricultural benefits of constructing a reservoir.

Malek et al. (in preparation) used the VIC-CropSyst to simulate how future climate alters overall irrigation efficiency as well as different loss terms (i.e. direct evaporation from irrigation systems, evaporation from water trapped by canopy, soil evaporation, runoff and deep percolation), and discussed the regional water availability implications of such changes. To the

best of our knowledge, none of the current land surface models are able to mechanistically simulate irrigation processes to answer questions like this.

Also because of the lack of mechanistic approach to simulate irrigation losses it is difficult to accurately capture how change in irrigation technology impacts return flows (which is crucial in downstream water availability of many agricultural basins); this tool captures that.

Moreover, this tool (in conjunction with river system models such as ColSim and Yak-RW) is being used to capture unintended consequences of certain adaptation decisions. For example, when farmers switch to new irrigation technology to improve farm-level irrigation efficiency, they may also reduce valuable return flow that contributes to downstream water availability. Return flow reduction also impacts seasonality and magnitude of instream flow which directly affects ecosystems and hydroelectric generation.

Added/Modified

Despite existing research on food scarcity, there are still unanswered questions about the relationship between food supply and the nexus of water resources, agriculture and human decisions. For example, how expectations of future climatic conditions influence farmer behaviour such as capital intensive switches in technology or cropping systems, is not well understood. Such scenarios require a simulation tool that can capture large-scale hydrologic processes while accurately simulating the impacts of climate, management, and water availability on different crop types. Moreover, regional consequences of decisions intended to mitigate the damages of future stressors are not well understood (Robertson and Swinton, 2005). For example, improvement in the efficiency of irrigation systems may increase consumptive water uses and lead to a reduction in return flow from irrigated areas (Causapé et al., 2004; Gosain et al., 2005). Return flow plays a significant role in the water availability of many agricultural regions; e.g., 40% of the water availability at the Yakima River's Parker Gauge in an average year is generated through return flows from upstream lands (USBR, 2010). Ecosystems and hydroelectric generation are also impacted as return flow changes. These knowledge gaps limit our ability to explore viable adaptation strategies, particularly in understanding unintended consequences. Integrated modeling platforms can contribute to the systems-level understanding of dynamics between agricultural processes, large-scale water resources management decisions, and land-atmospheric interactions.

- P3 r 22. Can you give examples of the management decisions farmers can make?

Authors' response: Table 6 in the manuscripts represents some examples of the management/adaptation decisions that can be handled by VIC-CropSyst. For example, this includes choosing among different irrigation systems (there are different irrigation types included in the model), or modifying the irrigation systems (e.g. using different sprinkler options available for different systems). There are also options to plant other crop types, such as new varieties with longer growing periods, an adaptation strategy that increases the opportunity for photosynthesis. Other decision variables include a choice to fallow or deficit-irrigate lands during drought. Other decisions that can be informed with future model developments are related to nutrient management, tillage practices, and rotation options.

11

Added/Modified

While farmers can adjust their management decisions to reduce the negative impacts of climate change (e.g., switching to more-efficient irrigation technologies, more drought-tolerant crop types, varieties with longer growing periods, and
5 *precision agriculture), these human decisions can result in unintended impacts on regional water and energy cycles.*

- P4 r1. What is meant by 'large scale results'?

Authors' response: To clarify this, we modified the text as shown below.

Added/Modified

10 *Here, we define large-scale results as regionally-aggregated responses of agriculture to changes that can impact scales greater than a single cultivated field, such as a policy change (e.g., water law), climate-related impacts (e.g. warming-induced reductions in summer water availability), or development of large-scale infrastructure (e.g., a large reservoir).*

- P5. I am surprised to see that you are not referring to other models that are also capable of relating hydrology to crop production.

15 Authors' response: We have provided a more comprehensive literature review to address this and other related reviewer comments.

- P5. Could you explain a little better why the (vertical) soil water balance of VIC is better than the one that was originally included in CropSyst? Since you are not using the lateral flow generated in VIC, the advantage of this
20 **coupling is not completely clear (to me).**

Authors' response:

We clarified this in the text as follows.

Added/Modified

25 *: In the integrated VIC-CropSyst model, CropSyst's soil hydrology is turned off, allowing VIC to simulate soil hydrologic processes, including the movement of water in soil, bare soil evaporation, and the generation of runoff and baseflow. We did this to retain consistency in all of the hydrologic processes. Standalone VIC and CropSyst use different soil hydrologic assumptions to simulate processes related to soil water movement and the generation of runoff and baseflow; these inconsistencies can lead to an inaccurate simulation of irrigation demand and crop productivity.*

30 **- P6. L14. It would be good to have a little more information on the crop model, since the information given here is very limited. E.g. which crops are included, how are sowing and harvest dates determined, is there any management included, how is yield calculated.**

Authors' response: we provided a more complete description of the CropSyst:

In CropSyst the daily biomass production is restricted to the minimum of the two following biomass generation routines: i) radiation-based biomass production, and ii) transpiration-based biomass production. After simulation of potential biomass, CropSyst takes water, heat, freezing and nutrient stresses into account to calculate the actual yield. These stresses also modify other crop processes such as transpiration and LAI. Stress sensitivity varies during different phonological periods

5 *(e.g. from flowering to maturity). Root occurrence varies in each of the soil layers and depends on the root growth deeper into the soil during biomass development; thus, crop water and nutrient uptake also varies by soil layer. While the start and last date of the growing period is an input to the model, actual crop growth starts after a certain amount of thermal accumulation has been achieved during this user-specified growing period. Crop growth and development is also a function of thermal accumulation, affecting actual harvest date and other growth stages.*

10

- P8. L6. As long as the paper describing the irrigation module in more detail is unpublished, it is difficult to judge the model, so a little more detail regarding algorithms is required here.

Authors' response: Thanks for the comments we included more details to the irrigation section, specifically in how each of the loss terms are calculated.

15 Added/Modified

The following formulas are used to calculate E_c and E_d from sprinkler and center pivot irrigation systems. Evaporation from Irrigation Intercepted Water (E_c): to calculate Ec, VIC-CropSyst uses the original VIC method (Liang et al., 1994). To avoid overestimation of Ec in agricultural areas, we used the equation developed by Kang et al., (2005) to set the maximum Ec. Evaporation from Irrigation Droplets (E_d). Users have the option to calculate Ed using one of the following two methods:

20 *1- Malek et al., (2016, in prep.):*

$$E_d = ET_p \times \left(\frac{1}{D}\right)^{0.52} \times \left(\frac{V_0 \sin(\theta)}{g} + \frac{\sqrt{V_0^2 \sin^2(\theta) + 2g(Y_0 - Y)}}{g}\right)^{1.57} \qquad (4)$$

where $Y_0(m)$ is height of nozzle; Y (m) is canopy height; V_0 (m/sec) is initial velocity of the irrigation water which depends on Irrigation system pressure H (m), nuzzle coefficient c_d, and initial angle of sprinkler θ; A_p is irrigated area at a time; D (mm) is the droplet diameter and ET_p (mm/Δt) is potential evapotranspiration.

25 *2- Playán et al., (2005):*

For sprinkler: $E_d = 20.3 + 0.214 \, U^2 - 0.00229 \, RH^2$ \qquad (5)

For moving laterals and center pivot: $E_d = -2.1 + 1.91 \, U^2 + 0.231 \, T$ \qquad (6)

where T (C) is the air temperature; U ($m \, s^{-1}$) is wind speed; and RH (%) is the relative humidity.

30

Deep Percolation Loss (Dp)

13

Dp is defined as irrigated water which penetrates below the root zone. Therefore, after an irrigation event the amount of water that enters the base flow layer and becomes inaccessible for crop roots is considered a deep percolation loss.

Runoff Losses (R_o)

5   *R_o depends on soil infiltration rate and irrigation intensity. Whenever irrigation intensity is higher than soil infiltration capacity, runoff is generated as follows,*

$$R_o = \frac{I_r}{t_{irr}} - f \qquad\qquad\qquad (7)$$

10   *where f is the infiltration rate $\left(\frac{mm}{hr}\right)$, I_r is the amount of irrigation water applied in each event (mm) and t_{irr} is the duration of irrigation (hr). Although irrigation intensity is usually a management decision, soil texture and hydraulic conductivity are assumed to be the key considerations in a well-managed irrigation system; therefore in the beginning of simulation, VIC-CropSyst estimates the irrigation duration (I_{du}) using the soil characteristics of each gridcell. The calculated I_{du} is used to estimate infiltration opportunity time of surface irrigation, rotation time in center pivot, and overlap and layout of sprinklers*

15   *in solid-set, wheel move and big-gun irrigation systems. Then approximated irrigation intensity is compared with the irrigation infiltration rate (f). VIC-CropSyst uses the following equation developed by Philip, (1957) to estimate the infiltration rate,*

$$f = \frac{1}{2} S\, T_i^{-0.5} + K_s \qquad\qquad\qquad (8)$$

20

where $K_s \left(\frac{mm}{hr}\right)$ is the hydraulic conductivity and S is the sorptivity which is estimated through Rawls et al., (1992) formula and is calculated based on soil texture and initial water content. Therefore in VIC-CropSyst Ro depends on irrigation system, soil type, initial soil moisture as well as the intensity of water reaching to soil. Details of the runoff calculations are presented by Malek, et al. (2016, in prep).

25

- P8. It is very impressive that the model is able to simulate over 40 different irrigation systems, but it would be good to briefly descibe how differences between those systems are implemented in the model and which assumptions are made.

Authors' response: There are actually only four major categories with subcategories in each and the flexibility to adjust

30   characteristics within these groups. This has been clarified and details added; please see below.

Added/Modified

Currently, VIC-CropSyst simulates four major categories of irrigation systems: surface, center pivot, sprinkler, and drip. Each category includes subcategories. Drip systems include surface and subsurface drip irrigation. In surface drip irrigation, water is applied on the soil surface, while in subsurface drip irrigation, water is applied below the surface and will not lead to any soil evaporative losses. Surface irrigation includes furrow, rill, and border irrigation, and the main
5 *difference between these three systems is in their wetted surface area, which is smaller in a furrow system. Center pivots are represented by eighteen different types of sprinklers that fall into two subcategories: impact and spray sprinklers. Impact sprinklers generally have a greater discharge rate and wetted radius. Sprinkler systems in VIC-CropSyst include seventeen nozzles from three major subcategories: solid set, big gun, and moving wheels. The subcategories differ in terms of discharge, wetted diameter, height, droplet size, and other aspects. The characteristics of these systems have been collected*
10 *from different scientific papers, reports, and commercial catalogs, including Nelson Co. (2014) and RainBird (2014). This level of detail offers a more accurate representation of irrigation practices, and it will help users to simulate the adaptation of different irrigation and management scenarios.*

- P8 l22. Which crops are included?

15 Authors' response: Authors included the following table to clarify this:

Added/Modified

In a spatially-explicit manner, VIC-CropSyst is able to capture a large variety of crop groups: 1- cereal grains (e.g. winter and spring wheat, corn, barley, oats, sorghum), 2- vegetables and melons (e.g. dill, radish, mint, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, carrot, onion, cucumber and pumpkins, watermelon), 3- fruits and nuts (e.g. plum, apricot, cherry, grape, walnut,
20 *pear, peaches, apples, blubbery, strawberry, cranberry), 4- root crops (e.g. potato, sugar beet), 5- leguminous crops (e.g. green and dry bean, lentil, chickpea, pea), 6- forages (e.g. pasture, alfalfa, hay, grass, clover, grass), and 7- oil seeds (e.g. soybean, mustard, sunflower).*

- P8 l29. For readability, it would be good to write out the meaning of Esi in this sentence and put Esi between
25 **brackets.**

Authors' response: Authors edited wrote out the Esi and put it into a brackets

Added/Modified:

In the drip and surface categories, evaporative losses happen only from the soil surface because irrigation happens below the canopy level. Irrigation takes place above the canopy in sprinkler and center pivot systems; therefore, evaporation from
30 *canopy-intercepted water (E_c) and the direct loss from droplets (E_d) are considered as major irrigation losses. VIC-CropSyst neglects evaporative losses from soil (E_{si}) for sprinkler and center pivot systems because energy is more readily available for water above the canopy and it suppresses the below-canopy evaporation (Uddin et al., 2013; Yonts et al., 2000).*

- P9 l8. What is the equation, I think it would be good to add it here. - Idem for the equations in line 12 and line 14 (referring to an equation in an article in preparation is not ideal).

Authors' response: All the equations have been included in the manuscript.

- P10 l5. The simulated variables that are compared, could results been shown for all the mentioned variables?

Authors' response:

Added/ Modified:

VIC-CropSyst's simulated soil moisture, ET, yield and irrigation water demand were compared to observed data obtained from the FLUXNET network (Baldocchi et al., 2001). Simulated LAI was evaluated against Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) remote sensing observations (Cohen et al., 2006). We also evaluated regional performance of VIC-CropSyst in simulation of ET over the U.S. Pacific Northwest, including the states of Washington, Idaho and Oregon. Other studies such as Malek et at (in preparation a and b), Rajagopalan, et al., (in preparation), Barik et al., (2017), Hall et al., 2017), Yorgey et al., (2011) evaluated VIC-CropSyst in its capability to capture regional irrigation demand, naturalized streamflow, observed flow, county level yield, snow water equivalent, and irrigation efficiency.

- P10 l18. The soil files were modified using available information, could this be explained?

Authors' response: we started from the Maurer et al (2002) soil file and we replaced its sand content with sand content available at the study site. We also added the clay percentages to the Maurer (2002)'s soil file.

Added/Modified:

We replaced its sand content with data available at the study site. We also added the clay percentages to Maurer et al. (2002)'s soil file. In our simulation, VIC-CropSyst reads the sand and clay content and uses pedo-transfer functions developed by Saxton et al. (1986) to generate saturated hydraulic conductivity, bulk density, air entry potential, the b coefficient of Campbell, (1974)'s soil retention curve, field capacity, wilting point, and porosity.

- P11, l 19. Are those climate data the same as the climate data mentioned on p 10 (DAYMET)? This is somewhat confusing.

Authors' response: We did not use the DAYMET data to run the model over three states of Washington, Oregon and Idaho. We used the data prepared by Abatzoglou and Brown, (2012). We added a table to clarify this in the text.

Added/Modified

Table 5- Soil, climate, vegetation and crop information used for regional evaluation of VIC-CropSyst over the U.S. Pacific Northwest. The resolution of the input data was 1/16th °.

Input	Source	Information used by VIC-CropSyst
Weather	*Abatzoglou and Brown (2012)*	*precipitation, minimum and maximum temperature and wind speed*
Soil	*STATSGO (Schwarz and Alexander, 1995)*	*latitude, longitude, sand and clay content, hydraulic conductivity, field capacity, bulk*

		density, etc.
Crop/Vegetation	*USDA/WSDA vegetation distribution maps (Boryan et al., 2011; Yorgey et al., 2011)*	*crop type, acreage, irrigation systems, etc.*

- P 11 line 25. I understood from table 2 and different figures that simulations were made for corn only, how was the crop distribution information used?

Authors' response: We evaluated VIC-CropSyst at point and regional scales. Over our point-scale sites (Nebraska and Illinois), we evaluated VIC-CropSyst for corn. However, over the region, we applied the model for all of the major crop types that are grown in the region.

Added/Modified:

The performance of VIC-CropSyst was evaluated at both regional (over the U.S. Pacific Northwest) and point scales. Point-scale evaluation involved using two flux tower sites located in agricultural fields in the U.S. (Nebraska and Illinois).

- P12 section 3.3.1 Is water shortage for irrigation not considered at all? Could that be an issue in this region?

Authors' response: Although irrigation shortage can be simulated by VIC-CropSyst (in combination with reservoir models like ColSim), we were not able to find any record of deficit irrigation management strategy at this specific site and did not apply deficit irrigation. Also, as figure 7 shows, there is no clear trend of yield overestimation by the model that strongly supports water shortage as an issue.

Added/Modified

Although Figure 7 does not show a systematic overestimation by the model, a combination of inaccurate meteorological data, missing processes (e.g. lack of VPD feedback as discussed in section 3.1.2) and unrecorded conditions such as insufficient irrigation water or heat stress can contributes to these discrepancies.

- P12 section 3.1.2. Could the overestimation of etp also have to do with water shortage, the used crop parameterization?

Authors' response: Because there was no mentioning of any deficit irrigation at Nebraska-irrigated site and also because a similar trend was observed at the non-irrigated site, we originally assumed that the corn crop is well-watered. However, we do agree that this can also be an uncertainty that can lead to discrepancies. Hence, we added this to the text as well.

Authors added the following to clarify this:

Added/Modified:

Inaccuracy of the meteorological data or uncertainties related to unrecorded management practices such as deficit irrigation can be other sources of error.

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- P12 3.1.3 could you describe a little better how yields are calculated and also reflect on why the variability for irrigated yields is not captured.

There can be different reasons that the variability of the yield is not fully captured at the irrigated site: inaccuracy in climatic data, missing processes in the model such as the one discussed in section 3.1.2 (i.e. we do not simulate the feedback of irrigation evaporative losses on ambient temperature and VPD, which can change performance of stomata and rate of photosynthesis), and unrecorded heat and water stresses. However, because there was no systematic overestimation of the yield we could not conclude that a single unrecorded stress (e.g. water stress and heat stress) is responsible for this.

Authors believe that the discussion added to this section clarifies this:

Added/Modified:

Although Figure 7 does not show a systematic overestimation by the model, a combination of inaccurate meteorological data, missing processes (e.g. lack of VPD feedback as discussed in section 3.1.2) and unrecorded conditions such as insufficient irrigation water or heat stress can contributes to these discrepancies..

- P13 3.1.4 It would be interesting to see some reflection on the meaning of errors.

We added some texts to clarify this:

The discrepancies may relate to the use of pedotransfer functions that convert soil textural characteristics to soil hydraulic properties (e.g. field capacity, permanent wilting point and hydraulic conductivity) for use in VIC-CropSyst (Pachepsky and Rawls, 1999; Tietje and Hennings, 1996). Also, scale discrepancies between the sensors' point-scale observation and the grid-scale simulation (Crow et al., 2012; Robinson et al., 2008) and inaccuracy of meteorological and soil data can be other sources of error. Additionally, imperfections in model processes such as soil water movement, evapotranspiration and irrigation loss calculation can contribute to the error.

- P14 I think it is good to emphasize here that the model can be used to evaluate the cumulative effects of large scale implementation of selected adaptation strategies over a basin or watershed.

Authors added this:

VIC-CropSyst can be used to investigate the hydrologic and atmospheric impacts of these adaptation decisions.

This part in 4.2.1 can also help explaining the large scale consequences.

Also, any changes in agricultural activities (e.g., switching to a new irrigation system) directly impacts the hydrology of agricultural fields, thus changing return flow timing and magnitude and the availability of water for downstream users; these downstream consequences can also be simulated by this modeling platform. This is an example of how the human-land-climate nexus can be captured through a modeling framework that simulates large-scale hydrologic processes and regional water availability in a highly cultivated basin, while capturing the dynamics of farm-level irrigation decisions.

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VIC-CropSyst-v2: A regional-scale modeling platform to simulate the nexus of climate, hydrology, cropping systems, and human decisions

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Abstract

Food supply is affected by a complex nexus of land, atmosphere, and human processes, including short- and long-term
20 stressors (e.g., drought and climate change, respectively). A simulation platform that captures these complex elements can be used to inform policy and best management practices to promote sustainable agriculture. We have developed a tightly-coupled framework using the macroscale Variable Infiltration Capacity (VIC) hydrologic model and the CropSyst agricultural model. A mechanistic irrigation module was also developed for inclusion in this framework. Because VIC-CropSyst combines two widely-used and mechanistic models (for crop growth phenology, growth, and management; and
25 macroscale hydrology), it can provide realistic and hydrologically-consistent simulations of water availability, crop water requirement for irrigation, and agricultural productivity for both irrigated and dryland systems. This allows VIC-CropSyst to provide managers and decision makers with reliable information on regional water stresses and their impacts on food production. Additionally, VIC-CropSyst is being used in conjunction with socio-economic models, river system models and atmospheric models to simulate feedback processes between regional water availability, agricultural water management
30 decisions, and land-atmospheric interactions. The performance of VIC-CropSyst was evaluated at both regional (over the

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U.S. Pacific Northwest) and point scales. Point-scale evaluation involved using two flux tower sites located in agricultural fields in the U.S. (Nebraska and Illinois). The agreement between recorded and simulated evapotranspiration (ET), applied irrigation water, soil moisture, leaf area index (LAI), and yield indicated that, although the model is intended to work at regional scales, it also captures field scale processes in agricultural areas.

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Keywords: integrated platform, hydrologic model, agricultural model, adaptation strategies, irrigation management, regional scale, climate change

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Nomenclature			
E_{si}	Evaporation from soil during irrigation	A_p	Irrigated covered area
E_c	Evaporation from intercepted water	D	Droplet size
E_d	Evaporation from irrigation droplets	V_0	Initial velocity of droplets
T	Transpiration	MAD	Maximum allowable depletion
ET_p	Potential evapotranspiration	g	Acceleration of gravity
A_w	Soil wetted area	Y_0	Height of nozzle
T_i	Time of irrigation	Y	Canopy height
D_p	Deep percolation	S	Sorptivity coefficient
K_s	Saturated hydraulic conductivity	B_i	Runoff calibration parameter
R_o	Runoff loss	D_s	VIC base flow calibration parameter
q	Emitter discharge	Ds_{max}	VIC base flow calibration parameter
ρ_b	Soil bulk density	W_s	VIC base flow calibration parameter
$\Delta\theta$	Change in the water content	GDD	Growing degree days
LAI	Leaf area index	E_s	Evaporation from soil
K_c	Crop coefficient	ET_a	Actual evapotranspiration

20

1. Introduction

Projected increases in food demand (Godfray et al., 2010) along with other stressors such as droughts and extreme heat events contribute to threats on global food supply (Wheeler and Braun, 2013). Despite existing research on food scarcity, there are still unanswered questions about the relationship between food supply and the nexus of water resources, agriculture and human decisions. For example, how expectations of future climatic conditions influence farmer behaviour such as capital intensive switches in technology or cropping systems, is not well understood. Such scenarios require a simulation tool that can capture large-scale hydrologic processes while accurately simulating the impacts of climate, management, and water availability on different crop types. Moreover, regional consequences of decisions intended to mitigate the damages of future stressors are not well understood (Robertson and Swinton, 2005). For example, improvement in the efficiency of irrigation systems may increase consumptive water uses and lead to a reduction in return flow from irrigated areas (Causapé et al., 2004; Gosain et al., 2005). Return flow plays a significant role in the water availability of many agricultural regions; e.g., 40% of the water availability at the Yakima River's Parker Gauge in an average year is generated through return flows from upstream lands (USBR, 2010). Ecosystems and hydroelectric generation are also impacted as return flow changes. These knowledge gaps limit our ability to explore viable adaptation strategies, particularly in understanding unintended consequences. Integrated modeling platforms can contribute to the systems-level understanding of dynamics between agricultural processes, large-scale water resources management decisions, and land-atmospheric interactions.

The overall goal of this study is to develop a computational modeling platform that mechanistically captures the interactions between hydrology, crop growth and phenology, and crop and water resource management decisions in the context of global change. Such a platform allows for investigation around multiple objectives: 1) understanding how climate dynamics and land-atmosphere interactions affect water and agricultural sustainability; and (conversely) 2) exploring the role of agricultural (biophysical and socioeconomic) processes in driving land-atmosphere interactions, including climate feedback mechanisms at larger scales.

1.1. Future Food Demand and Supply

While over 800 million people throughout the world suffer from undernourishment (FAO, 2013), global change is expected to exacerbate food security problems. The demand for food is increasing due to population growth and changes in food dietary tendency towards higher consumption of meat products (Long et al., 2015). Food supply, on the other hand, may not increase as fast as demand (Wheeler and Braun, 2013), as it is affected by complicated interactions between climate, the hydrologic cycle, cropping systems, and human decisions. Table 1 shows the variety of ways that climate change can impact crop yield, with some impacts being positive and others negative; the net result is dependent on region, crop, and future time period. Mechanistic integrated modeling platforms are necessary to assess the net impact of global change on crop production.

[TABLE 1]

1.2. Interactions between Cropping Systems, the Hydrologic Cycle, Climate, and Human Decisions

Although agricultural productivity is affected by disturbances in the regional cycles of water and energy (Pielke Sr. et al., 2007), agriculture itself feeds back to alter the hydrological cycle by changing evapotranspiration (ET), and the magnitude and temporal regime of soil moisture, infiltration and runoff generation (Haddeland et al., 2006; Harding et al., 2015; Lu et al., 2015; Sorooshian et al., 2012). The impact of irrigated agriculture on energy and water cycles is particularly important (Ferguson and Maxwell, 2011; Lobell et al., 2009; Pokhrel et al., 2016; Puma and Cook, 2010; Scanlon et al., 2007; Sridhar, 2013). Irrigation uses 70% of total global water withdrawals (Rost et al., 2008) and boosts soil moisture storage available for crop uptake, and ultimately increases ET. Irrigation losses also increase the amount of deep percolation and runoff.

While farmers can adjust their management decisions to reduce the negative impacts of climate change (e.g., switching to more-efficient irrigation technologies, more drought-tolerant crop types, varieties with longer growing periods, and precision agriculture), these human decisions can result in unintended impacts on regional water and energy cycles. The consequences of anthropogenic disturbances (e.g., irrigation withdrawal and dam construction) on the regional water cycle can be greater than the impacts of climate change (Haddeland et al., 2014). Irrigation management and changes in cropping patterns are two examples of management decisions influencing the amount of evapotranspiration, runoff, deep percolation, and soil moisture, all of which can alter timing and magnitude of return flow. In many agricultural basins, the availability of water for downstream users depends greatly on the return flow from upstream lands, which mainly comes from non-evaporative, reusable loss of water through conveyance systems and field-level application of irrigation water. Therefore, regional-scale simulation of the hydrologic cycle is crucial to the analysis of the impacts of water management in large river basins with significant agricultural activities.

VIC-CropSyst provides an advantage over the stand-alone CropSyst model when run over larger scales. Here, we define large-scale results as regionally-aggregated responses of agriculture to changes that can impact scales greater than a single cultivated field, such as a policy change (e.g., water law), climate-related impacts (e.g. warming-induced reductions in summer water availability), or development of large-scale infrastructure (e.g., a large reservoir). Allen et al., (2015) interviewed around twenty stakeholders, including governmental and non-governmental agency staff and producers, to understand their priorities, concerns and decision-making processes. They found that many of these stakeholders, including individual producers, are interested in local and basin-scale information about the impacts of climate change, infrastructural developments, and land management practices on the quantity, quality and temporal regimes of water resources. Therefore, large-scale integrated modeling platforms are also needed to inform regional natural and agricultural resource management policies and actions.

1.3. Agricultural Processes within Macroscale Hydrologic Models

1.3.1. Capturing Cropping Systems within Land Surface Models

Land Surface Models (LSMs) are used for regional to global-scale simulations of water and energy cycles, often providing terrestrial boundary conditions to general circulation models (GCMs). Results of modeling studies have indicated that, despite the tremendous advances in earth system modeling, the current state of LSMs is not capable of capturing agricultural processes in a detailed manner (e.g. Chang et al., 2014; Haddeland et al., 2006; Hansen et al., 2006; Lobell et al., 2009, 2008; Ozdogan et al., 2010a). In many of them, agricultural processes are similar to natural vegetation (Chang et al., 2014); due to phenological similarities, agricultural lands are often represented by grass vegetation (Elliott et al., 2014). Also, management or harvesting activities as well as CO_2 fertilization effects may be ignored (Drewniak et al., 2013). Mitchell et al. (2004) compared the results of four different models and reported poor overall performance among LSMs in capturing warm season ET. In most cases, this inconsistency can be explained by weak representation of agricultural processes. For example, Schwalm et al. (2010) compared 22 terrestrial biosphere models with North American flux tower sites and found the performance of models in natural vegetation areas to be better than in cropland areas.

Bierkens (2015) reviewed twenty three global/large-scale hydrological models (GHMs; e.g. WaterGAP, Verzano et al., 2012; WBMPlus, Wisser et al., 2010; Mac-PDM.09, Gosling and Arnell, 2011; and H08, Hanasaki et al., 2010), LSMs (VIC, Liang et al., 1994; MATSIRO, Takata et al., 2003; LM3, Milly et al., 2014; NOAH, Liu et al., 2016; JULES, Best et al., 2011; CLM, Fisher et al., 2015; SiB, Baker et al., 2008; and ORCHIDEE, Vérant et al., 2004) and dynamic vegetation models (DVMs; e.g. LPJmL, Fader et al., 2015). Among these models H08, MATSIRO, JULES, ORCHIDEE, and SiB use simple crop growth modules to simulate natural vegetation or generic C3 and/or C4 crops. NOAH, CLM, and LPJmL have more sophisticated crop growth schemes; these are further discussed below.

Using prescribed seasonally and spatially variable leaf area index (LAI) and root density, Wei et al. (2013) modified aerodynamic and soil deficit thresholds in the NOAH land surface model, thereby improving the simulation of warm season processes. In their model, however, crop growth and development does not mechanistically respond to climate, CO_2 concentrations, and soil moisture; this limits the accuracy of model simulation over agricultural areas where the feedback between agricultural processes and hydro-climatic conditions is significant. Liu et al. (2016) improved simulation of crop processes in the NOAH-MP-Crop model but their model could only simulate corn and soybean and did not capture irrigation processes.

Drewniak et al. (2013) enhanced the Community Land Model (CLM) in agricultural areas by using an improved representation of crop processes, but CO_2 fertilization effects, irrigation, and other common management activities were neglected. In their simulations, they considered only three crop species (wheat, corn and soybean) and used a fixed planting date, which can lead to a discrepancy with observations in that actual planting dates vary in time as a function of weather (Zeng et al., 2013), and can result in an over-estimation of the negative impacts of warming on crop yield, as an earlier

planting date is a viable adaptation strategy in many regions of the world (Waha et al., 2013). While a newer version of CLM (CLM4-Crop; Lu et al., 2015) simulates irrigation events and CO2 fertilization as well as biomass and vegetation growth processes, its application is also limited to three crop types (Chen et al., 2015) and is not able to mechanistically simulate irrigation efficiency.

Elliott et al. (2014) compared ten GHMs and six global gridded crop models (GGCMs); they reported that the performance of GHMs is generally poor in the simulation of future irrigation water demand. Many of them use prescribed crop growth parameters and did not capture CO2 fertilization nor sensitivity to heat and water stresses; the only exception was the Lund-Potsdam-Jena Managed Land Dynamic Global Vegetation and Water Balance Model (LPJmL), which is a hydrologic model that can mechanistically simulates both hydrologic and agricultural processes. However, LPJmL simulates a limited number of crops (Elliott et al., 2014) and, as compared to specialized crop models (e.g. CropSyst; the Decision Support System for Agrotechnology Transfer; DSSAT, Jones et al., 2003; and the Environmental Policy Integrated Climate Model; EPIC, Williams et al., 1989, 1983), uses more simplistic methods to simulate crop processes such as LAI development, root distribution, and the number of stressors considered (Rosenzweig et al., 2014; Stöckle et al., 2003). Moreover, although LPJmL is a grid-based model, so far it has been used to address global scale issues at coarse scale (0.5 °), and has not been tested and used for regional studies. Also LPJmL uses prescribed country-specific irrigation efficiency (Biemans et al., 2011; Fader et al., 2015; Rosenzweig et al., 2014), which can cause biases when LPJmL is applied at finer spatial scales. It is also worth mentioning that the scientific community has already benefited from watershed-scale hydrologic-agricultural models. For example the Soil Water Assessment Tool (SWAT Arnold et al., 1998; Neitsch et al., 2011) is coupled to a simplified version of the EPIC model (Williams et al., 1989, 1983) and is able to capture agricultural processes and management decisions. SWAT's shortcoming is the fact that it has seven crop classes and does not differentiate among crops within a class (e.g., tree fruits). Furthermore, SWAT uses predefined irrigation losses and does not simulate irrigation processes mechanistically.

1.3.2. Capturing Irrigation Systems within Land Surface Models

Irrigation is one of the important but under-appreciated processes in LSMs (Gordon et al., 2008; Ozdogan et al., 2010; Pokhrel et al., 2016). Normally, irrigation processes are treated in LSMs with one of the followings approaches. *1- Irrigation time and amount is not mechanistically simulated:* In most modeling studies, irrigation requirements are calculated using published irrigation guidelines or a time series of satellite observations (Pokhrel et al., 2011). In other models, irrigation water scarcity is not captured (e.g. Ozdogan et al., 2010), which can result in less realistic irrigation management during droughts. *2- Irrigation is included but with unrealistic assumptions of irrigation efficiency:* For example, CLM v4 simulates the time of irrigation based on soil deficit but does not consider irrigation losses (Leng et al., 2013). This can cause poor representation of hydrologic processes in agricultural areas and underestimation of irrigation demand. *3- Partitioning of overall efficiency into different losses through prescribed ratios:* Pokhrel et al. (2011) developed an irrigation module and coupled it to the Minimal Advanced Treatments of Surface Interaction and RunOff

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(MATSIRO) model. The irrigation module considers soil moisture deficit to calculate the time of irrigation, but their irrigation module did not consider the partitioning of the overall efficiency into different losses and did not simulate the dynamics between irrigation losses and the hydrologic cycle. Haddeland et al. (2006) implemented a simple irrigation module into the VIC model. This irrigation module, however, was limited to prescribed losses of sprinkler systems. Also, because the stand-alone VIC model does not mechanistically simulate crop processes, the timing and amount of the irrigation water is not responsive to crop growth, management, and phenology.

These shortcomings, simplifying assumptions, and lack of a mechanistic way to simulate irrigation processes in LSMs lead to inaccurate ET and water demand simulations (Pokhrel et al., 2011; Sridhar, 2013). Also, because LSMs are often coupled to atmospheric models, this lack of capturing mechanistic irrigation processes will cause biases in turbulent heat flux simulations, leading to GCM errors.

2. Approach

Here, we introduce the newly integrated model VIC-CropSyst, which is a coupling between the VIC hydrologic model and the CropSyst crop growth, phenology, and management model. VIC-CropSyst can be used for regional to global-scale simulations of water and energy cycles over natural and managed terrestrial ecosystems. A process-based irrigation module was also developed to simulate the interactions between irrigation management decisions and the hydrologic cycle in this integrated model.

2.1. Descriptions of Stand Alone Models

2.1.1. VIC

The VIC model is a processed-based large-scale hydrologic model developed initially by Liang et al. (1994). VIC uses the variable infiltration capacity curve introduced by Zhao et al. (1980) to simulate infiltration and surface runoff, and Franchini and Pacciani's (1991) formula to calculate base flow. Liang et al. (1996) further developed the model to represent multiple soil moisture layers (the original version only had two). Cherkauer et al. (2003) added processes for more accurate simulation of soil freeze and thaw as well as the canopy energy balance in freezing conditions. further information on simulation of the snowpack can be found in Andreadis et al. (2009). While simulation time-step of the stand alone VIC model can be specified to be daily, hourly or sub-daily (e.g. three hour), in the version of VIC-CropSyst described herein, the simulation time-step is currently limited to daily time-steps. Subsequent VIC-CropSyst model developments will allow for sub-daily time-steps. VIC also has the flexibility to be implemented over multiple resolutions (generally at or greater than 1/16th °), and captures sub-grid heterogeneity in vegetation, elevation, snow depth, and a variety of other variables. The stand-alone VIC model uses prescribed monthly LAI values to represent seasonal variations of vegetation cover, and so does not simulate agricultural processes such as crop development and biomass production and the impacts of water, heat and nutrient stresses on crop growth. Also, the VIC model does not mechanistically simulate irrigation losses and only includes

one type of irrigation (sprinkler). This limits VIC's ability to accurately simulate water demand, transpiration and agricultural productivity. VIC has been applied and evaluated by several researchers over a variety of areas; e.g., Elsner et al., (2010) and Hamlet and Lettenmaier (1999) over the Columbia River basin; Adam et al. (2007) in the Eurasian arctic; Maurer et al. (2002) over the contiguous U.S.; and Yuan et al. (2004) over China.

2.1.2. CropSyst

CropSyst (Stockle et al., 1994, Stockle et al., 2003) is a process-based cropping system model, capturing water, nitrogen and carbon cycles as well as the key processes related to crop phenology, root and shoot growth, and biomass production and yield. CropSyst simulates field operations including irrigation, fertilization, tillage, residue management and crop rotation. It also captures the effects of CO_2 concentration and stressors such as water limitation, temperature extremes and soil salinity on crop development. CropSyst has been applied over a range of climatic conditions worldwide, as well as for climate change studies (e.g., Confalonieri and Bocchi (2005) for rice in Italy; Ferrer et al. (2000) for corn in Spain; Pala et al. (1996) for wheat in Syria; Karimi et al., (2017) and Pannkuk et al., (1998) for wheat in the U.S. Pacific Northwest; and Alva et al. (2010) for potatoes in the U.S. Pacific Northwest).

In CropSyst the daily biomass production is restricted to the minimum of the two following biomass generation routines: i) radiation-based biomass production, and ii) transpiration-based biomass production. After simulation of potential biomass, CropSyst takes water, heat, freezing and nutrient stresses into account to calculate the actual yield. These stresses also modify other crop processes such as transpiration and LAI. Stress sensitivity varies during different phonological periods (e.g. from flowering to maturity). Root occurrence varies in each of the soil layers and depends on the root growth deeper into the soil during biomass development; thus, crop water and nutrient uptake also varies by soil layer. While the start and last date of the growing period is an input to the model, actual crop growth starts after a certain amount of thermal accumulation has been achieved during this user-specified growing period. Crop growth and development is also a function of thermal accumulation, affecting actual harvest date and other growth stages.

2.2. Model Integration

We coupled the VIC version 4.1.2-e with CropSyst-v4.15, although the coupled model will be updated with new versions of VIC and CropSyst as they become available. In a spatially-explicit manner, VIC-CropSyst is able to capture a large variety of crop groups: 1- cereal grains (e.g. winter and spring wheat, corn, barley, oats, sorghum), 2- vegetables and melons (e.g. dill, radish, mint, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, carrot, onion, cucumber and pumpkins, watermelon), 3- fruits and nuts (e.g. plum, apricot, cherry, grape, walnut, pear, peaches, apples, blubbery, strawberry, cranberry), 4- root crops (e.g. potato, sugar beet), 5- leguminous crops (e.g. green and dry bean, lentil, chickpea, pea), 6- forages (e.g. pasture, alfalfa, hay, grass, clover, grass), and 7- oil seeds (e.g. soybean, mustard, sunflower). In the tightly coupled VIC-CropSyst model (Figure 1), all

hydrologic processes except for transpiration are handled by VIC, while crop growth, transpiration, phenology, and management are handled by CropSyst. In the following section we briefly explain the structure of the VIC-CropSyst coupling (Figure 1~~Figure 1~~). Then we discuss some of the changes we have made to each model to support this integration. Finally, we discuss the irrigation module that we have developed and implemented in VIC-CropSyst.

5

[FIGURE 1]

2.2.1. Water and Energy Balances in VIC-CropSyst

Figure 2~~Figure 2~~ shows how VIC-CropSyst handles the water and energy budgets. VIC first simulates the energy balance (explained by Cherkauer et al., (2003) and Liang et al., (1994)). It estimates available energy per time step and uses an

10   iterative approach to partition the available energy into each of the energy components (e.g., snowmelt and sublimation heat fluxes, ground heat flux, and sensible heat flux). After these terms are calculated, the remaining energy will be available to potential evapotranspiration (ETp). Evaporation can happen from at least one of the five following processes (Thompson et al., 1993): 1- directly from irrigation water (E_d), 2- from intercepted water by the canopy (E_c), 3- from the wetted soil surface during irrigation (E_{si}), 4- from the soil surface when irrigation is not occurring (E_s), and 5- transpiration (T).

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CropSyst is called while VIC is simulating the energy balance, but after ETp is portioned into each of its terms. Following this, potential transpiration and availability of soil moisture are passed to CropSyst (Figure 2~~Figure 2~~). Actual transpiration depends on the availability of soil water. When the soil does not have enough water to meet crop demand, actual crop transpiration is less than potential. In the coupled model, CropSyst simulates actual transpiration, soil water extraction from

20   each layer, water stress, and crop growth; it then passes the extracted soil water amount to VIC to calculate the water balance. VIC updates soil moisture and simulates the rest of the hydrologic components such as runoff and baseflow.

[FIGURE 2]

25   ### 2.2.2. Significant Changes to Each Model

Soil Hydrology: In the integrated VIC-CropSyst model, CropSyst's soil hydrology is turned off, allowing VIC to simulate soil hydrologic processes, including the movement of water in soil, bare soil evaporation, and the generation of runoff and baseflow. We did this to retain consistency in all of the hydrologic processes. Standalone VIC and CropSyst use different soil hydrologic assumptions to simulate processes related to soil water movement and the generation of runoff and baseflow;

30   these inconsistencies can lead to an inaccurate simulation of irrigation demand and crop productivity. Because crop processes are sensitive to soil moisture availability, we have modified the VIC soil structure. While VIC previously had the capacity to handle an indefinite number of soil moisture layers, the majority of VIC applications utilize three layers, where

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runoff and baseflow are generated from the top and bottom layers, respectively, while the middle layer is the root zone where plant water uptake occurs. Because the availability of water where roots are concentrated is central to unstressed crop growth, and because the dynamic simulation of root growth is sensitive to the vertical distribution of soil moisture, VIC's conventional three layering system is too coarse to accurately represent this condition, particularly during droughts and over rain-fed cropland. Therefore, we expanded the middle layer of VIC to 15 layers. Finally, the minimum soil moisture in VIC-CropSyst is set to the wilting point (except in the top evaporative layer).

Soil File: The conventional versions of VIC directly read soil properties (e.g. soil hydraulic conductivity, field capacity, wilting point, bulk density) from input files. For a more consistent way (between VIC and CropSyst) of inputting soil input information, empirical functions developed by Saxton et al. (1986) were implemented in the model and VIC-CropSyst internally estimates the necessary soil parameters using soil textural characteristics (i.e., sand and clay percentages).

2.3. Irrigation Module

The irrigation module (Figure 3Figure 3) is briefly explained below, while a more detailed description can be found in Malek et al (2016, in prep). The irrigation module calculates irrigation frequency, amount, and losses.

[FIGURE 3]

Currently, VIC-CropSyst simulates four major categories of irrigation systems: surface, center pivot, sprinkler, and drip. Each category includes subcategories. Drip systems include surface and subsurface drip irrigation. In surface drip irrigation, water is applied on the soil surface, while in subsurface drip irrigation, water is applied below the surface and will not lead to any soil evaporative losses. Surface irrigation includes furrow, rill, and border irrigation, and the main difference between these three systems is in their wetted surface area, which is smaller in a furrow system. Center pivots are represented by eighteen different types of sprinklers that fall into two subcategories: impact and spray sprinklers. Impact sprinklers generally have a greater discharge rate and wetted radius. Sprinkler systems in VIC-CropSyst include seventeen nozzles from three major subcategories: solid set, big gun, and moving wheels. The subcategories differ in terms of discharge, wetted diameter, height, droplet size, and other aspects. The characteristics of these systems have been collected from different scientific papers, reports, and commercial catalogs, including Nelson Co. (2014) and RainBird (2014). This level of detail offers a more accurate representation of irrigation practices, and it will help users to simulate the adaptation of different irrigation and management scenarios.

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2.3.1. Irrigation Frequency

Evaporation, transpiration, and deep percolation cause reductions in root-zone soil water content. When soil moisture deficit reaches one of the following two thresholds, VIC-CropSyst triggers an irrigation event: 1- capacity of the irrigation system, which sets the maximum amount of water that can be applied in an irrigation event, and 2- the Maximum Allowable Depletion (MAD), which determines what degree of soil dryness causes water stress in each crop. To define crop-specific MADs, we created a table of parameters using FAO-56 (Allen, 1998).

2.3.2. Evaporative Losses

In the drip and surface categories, evaporative losses happen only from the soil surface because irrigation happens below the canopy level. Irrigation takes place above the canopy in sprinkler and center pivot systems; therefore, evaporation from canopy-intercepted water (E_c) and the direct loss from droplets (E_d) are considered as major irrigation losses. VIC-CropSyst neglects evaporative losses from soil (E_{si}) for sprinkler and center pivot systems because energy is more readily available for water above the canopy and it suppresses the below-canopy evaporation (Uddin et al., 2013; Yonts et al., 2000). Evaporative losses from drip and surface irrigation systems are based on the following formula,

$$E_{si} = ET_p \, A_w \, T_i / 24 \qquad\qquad (1)$$

where ET_p is potential ET [mm/Δt]; A_w is the wetted surface fraction during irrigation; and T_i is the time of irrigation [hr]. While A_w is assumed to be 1.0, 1.0 and 0.5 for border, basin and farrow irrigation, respectively, we used Malek and Peters (2011)'s equation to estimate the wetted radius of drip irrigation and calculate the wetted percentage.

The following formulas are used to calculate E_c and E_d from sprinkler and center pivot irrigation systems. *Evaporation from Irrigation Intercepted Water (E_c)*: To calculate Ec, VIC-CropSyst uses the original VIC method (Liang et al., 1994). avoid overestimation of Ec in agricultural areas, we used the equation developed by Kang et al. (2005) to set maximum Ec. *Evaporation from Irrigation Droplets (E_d)*: Users have the option to calculate Ed using one of two methods of:

1- Malek et al. (in review)

$$E_d = ET_p \times \left(\frac{1}{D}\right)^{0.52} \times \left(\frac{V_0 \sin(\theta)}{g} + \frac{\sqrt{V_0^2 \sin^2(\theta) + 2g(Y_0 - Y)}}{g}\right)^{1.57} \qquad\qquad (2)$$

where Y_0 (m) is height of nozzle; Y (m) is canopy height; V_0 (m/sec) is initial velocity of the irrigation water which depends on irrigation system pressure H (m), nozzle coefficient c_d, and initial angle of sprinkler θ; A_p is irrigated area at a time; D (mm) is the droplet diameter and ET_p (mm/Δt) is potential evapotranspiration.

2- Playán et al., (2005):

For sprinkler: $E_d = 20.3 + 0.214\,U^2 - 0.00229\,RH^2$ (3)

For moving laterals and center pivot:

$E_d = -2.1 + 1.91\,U^2 + 0.231\,T$ (4)

where T (°C) is the air temperature; U ($m\,s^{-1}$) is wind speed; and RH (%) is the relative humidity.

2.3.3. Deep Percolation Loss (D_p)

Dp is defined as irrigated water which penetrates below the root zone. Therefore, after an irrigation event the amount of water that enters the base flow layer and becomes inaccessible for crop roots is considered a deep percolation loss.

2.3.4. Runoff Losses (R_o)

Ro depends on soil infiltration rate and irrigation intensity. Whenever irrigation intensity is higher than soil infiltration capacity, runoff is generated as follows,

$R_o = \dfrac{Ir}{t_{irr}} - f$ (5)

where f is the infiltration rate $\left(\dfrac{mm}{hr}\right)$, I_r is the amount of irrigation water applied in each event (mm) and t_{irr} is the duration of irrigation (hr). Although irrigation intensity is usually a management decision, soil texture and hydraulic conductivity are assumed to be the key considerations in a well-managed irrigation system; therefore in the beginning of simulation, VIC-CropSyst estimates the irrigation duration (I_{du}) using the soil characteristics of each grid cell. The calculated I_{du} is used to estimate the infiltration opportunity time of surface irrigation, rotation time in center pivot, and overlap and layout of sprinklers in solid-set, wheel move and big-gun irrigation systems. If approximated irrigation intensity exceeds the irrigation infiltration rate (f), the extra water generates runoff. VIC-CropSyst uses the equation developed by Philip, (1957) to estimate the infiltration rate,

$$f = \frac{1}{2}ST_i^{-0.5} + K_s \tag{6}$$

where $K\_s \left(\frac{mm}{hr}\right)$ is the hydraulic conductivity and S is the sorptivity which is estimated using the Rawls et al., (1992) formula and is calculated based on soil texture and initial water content. Therefore, in VIC-CropSyst, Ro depends on irrigation system, soil type, initial soil moisture as well as the intensity of water reaching to soil. Details of the runoff calculations are presented by Malek, et al. (2016, in prep).

2.4. Deficit irrigation

VIC-CropSyst's deficit irrigation module requires two main inputs: a) a first approximation to the irrigation water demand obtained by generating time series of irrigation under no water stress condition using VIC-CropSyst, and b) deficit fractions that indicate the water availability. VIC-CropSyst then reads the amount of recorded irrigation from step one and applies the deficit fraction to simulate the agricultural and hydrologic processes under realistic water deficit conditions. The deficit fraction can be either homogenously applied across the entire basin or separately specified for each farmer depending on water rights or other considerations. Also, VIC-CropSyst can apply the deficit fraction during different times of the year. For example, if the water deficit happens later in the season, VIC-CropSyst can adjust irrigation amounts according to the timing of water shortage.

VIC-CropSyst has also been used in conjunction with reservoir models (e.g. ColSim; Wittwer et al., 2001 and YAK-RW; Zagona et al., 2001) to calculate the deficit irrigation fraction (e.g. Barik et al., 2017; Malek, et al., in preparation; Rajagopalan et al., in preparation). In general, the following six steps can be used to calculate and apply a deficit fraction: 1) VIC-CropSyst simulates the hydrologic states such as runoff and base flow as well as the irrigation water demand, 2) a routing model (i.e. Lohmann et al., 1998) is used to simulate streamflow, 3) simulated flow is bias corrected against observed flow, 4) a river system model is used to include operation of dams and reservoir and estimate water availability, 5) the availability of water is compared with demand, and 6)a deficit fraction is calculated and VIC-CropSyst is run to simulate the impacts of irrigation deficit on the hydrologic cycle and crop yields.

2.5. Previous versions of VIC-CropSyst

VIC-CropSyst v1.0 was originally developed and used to forecast the impact of climate change on Columbia River Basin water supply and irrigation water demand (Yorgey, et al., 2011; Rajagopalan, et al., in review). This version was created using VIC (v4.0.7) and CropSyst (v4.15). This version is a lower coupling in terms of hydrology; i.e., both models simulate their own soil moisture with different soil parameters and soil layers. While VIC provides the water and cropping information and available energy for evapotranspiration, partitioning of energy to different evaporative losses (i.e., evaporation from soil and transpiration) is separately done in each model and irrigation evaporative losses are not considered in VIC's energy balance. The irrigation efficiencies were hard coded in this earlier version. VIC-CropSyst v1.1 was slightly

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modified and used by (Liu et al., 2013). Rajagopalan et al. (in preparation) also used VIC-CropSyst v1.1 to evaluate the impact of climate change on agricultural productivity in the CRB. This manuscript describes the fully coupled version of the VIC-CropSyst model (version 2). This version is tightly connected in which VIC handles all of the soil hydrologic processes; to do this, some VIC soil processes were altered to be more compatible with CropSyst. Furthermore, the influence of crop transpiration on energy balance is captured in this new version. Finally, this version mechanistically simulates irrigation processes and losses (e.g., irrigation evaporative losses) and is able to apply deficit irrigation.

2.4.2.6.   Data and Study Sites/Areas

VIC-CropSyst's simulated soil moisture, ET, yield and irrigation water demand were compared to observed data obtained from the FLUXNET network (Baldocchi et al., 2001). Simulated LAI was evaluated against Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) remote sensing observations (Cohen et al., 2006). We also evaluated regional performance of VIC-CropSyst in simulation of ET over the U.S. Pacific Northwest, including the states of Washington, Idaho and Oregon. Other studies such as Malek et at (in preparation a and b), Rajagopalan, et al., (in preparation), Barik et al., (2017), Hall et al., 2017), Yorgey et al., (2011) evaluated VIC-CropSyst in its capability to capture regional irrigation demand, naturalized streamflow, observed flow, county level yield, snow water equivalent, and irrigation efficiency.

2.4.1.2.6.1.   Site Description

The flux tower stations considered in this study are located in two U.S. states of Nebraska (NE) and Illinois (IL) (Figure 4Figure 4). Available environmental and agricultural information include latent heat, soil moisture and meteorological data, crop type, LAI, and biomass production. The towers are all in agricultural fields and have relatively long periods of available data. The station in the IL is not irrigated and the site in NE is irrigated with recorded irrigation frequency and amount.

2.4.2.2.6.2.   Meteorological, Soil, Land Cover, and Topographic Data

Daily meteorological data were acquired from the DAYMET (Thornton et al., 2012) gridded data source. Soil files were taken from Maurer et al. (2002) for associated grid cells. We replaced its sand content with data available at the study site. We also added the clay percentages to Maurer et al. (2002)'s soil file. In our simulation, VIC-CropSyst reads the sand and clay content and uses pedo-transfer functions developed by Saxton et al. (1986) to generate saturated hydraulic conductivity, bulk density, air entry potential, the b coefficient of Campbell, (1974)'s soil retention curve, field capacity, wilting point, and porosity. Table 2Table 2 shows soil texture calculated using the United States Department of Agriculture's soil triangle (Garcia-Gaines and Frankenstein, 2015).

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[TABLE 2]

[FIGURE 4]

1.1.1.2.6.3. Calibration Parameters for Point Scale Evaluation

As with other hydrological models, the VIC model needs to be calibrated for optimized performance over a specific region. Table 3Table 3 shows VIC's key calibration parameters; more information on calibration parameters and methods can be found in past VIC studies (e.g. Elsner et al., 2010; Liang et al., 1994; Maurer et al., 2002). We used calibrated parameters determined by Maurer et al. (2002) for each flux tower station (the last two columns of Table 3). We also tested the sensitivity of soil moisture content, crop growth, and irrigation demand and losses to different calibration parameters using the ranges available in Column 3 of Table 3Table 3 and differences were negligible.

[TABLE 3]

2.4.3.2.6.4. Parametrization of Growth Stages in CropSyst

Thermal accumulation time in CropSyst is used to represent crop phenological development and the rate of biological activity (McMaster and Wilhelm, 1997). Specifically, the sum of growing degree days (GDD) is used to specify the time needed to reach specific phenological periods. We parameterized VIC-CropSyst for each site using published dates of crop growth stages (Table 4Table 4); meteorological information was used to convert calendar days to GDDs. Peak LAI was acquired from the MODIS LAI product (Cohen et al., 2006). Missing phenological information was estimated from the MODIS-derived peak LAIs as follows: i) flowering is 2-7 days after peak LAI, ii) filling starts 7-14 days after flowering, and iii) maturity happen 30-45 days into the filling period. Table 4Table 4 shows estimated/observed dates of the growing stages.

[TABLE 4]

2.4.4.2.6.5. Pacific Northwest Climate, Soil and Crop Information

We used the gridded historical climate data developed by Abatzoglou and Brown (2012), including precipitation, minimum and maximum temperature and wind speed (Table 5). Soil input file was developed using the STATSGO dataset (Schwarz

and Alexander, 1995); to develop the soil file we used the same parameters as Elsner et al (2010) except we added the clay percentage because, as mentioned earlier, VIC-CropSyst uses Saxton et al (1986)'s Pedotransfer functions and can internally calculate the soil parameters (e.g. hydraulic conductivity, field capacity, bulk density). The calibration parameters (Table 3Table 3) used for simulation of ET over the Pacific Northwest were taken from Yorgey et al. (2011). Crop distribution information over the region was developed using the Washington State's Department of Agriculture for Washington State and the United State Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s cropping information for outside of the Washington State (Boryan et al., 2011). More information on crop types and crop input parameters (e.g. phonological periods, radiation use efficiency, transpiration use efficiency, maximum leaf area index, etc.) can be found in Barik et al. (2017), Hall et al. (2017) and Rajagopalan, et al. (in review).

TABLE [5]

2.3. Evaluation and Application

2.1.3.1. Point Scale Evaluation

2.1.1.3.1.1. Applied Irrigation Water

Figure 5Figure 5 compares recorded and simulated irrigation water (mean error=13%). Discrepancies may be due to reduction of crop yield in the field due to stresses that are not captured in the model such as impacts of weed or pests. Also, yields measured in small plots are subject to sampling uncertainty; In addition, simulated irrigation events are likely to include an extra event at the end of the season when irrigation managers stop irrigating earlier due to crop senescence.

[FIGURE 5]

2.1.2.3.1.2. Evapotranspiration (ET)

Figure 6Figure 6 depicts the comparisons between monthly simulated and observed ET over irrigated and non-irrigated sites. While the model tends to overestimate ET, particularly during the month with larger ET, simulations are more accurate at the NE irrigated site. Root mean squares errors (RMSEs) for the NE and IL stations were 8.0 and 1.0 (mm/day), respectively. In

general, the deviation between observed and simulated ET is higher in the summer months. One explanation for this bias is that we do not consider the feedback of evaporative losses from irrigation droplets (E_d) and canopy-intercepted water (E_c) to the local microclimate system, while in reality these evaporative losses will lower ambient temperature and decrease vapor pressure deficit (VPD) (Kohl and Wright, 1974; Liu and Kang, 2006), thereby reducing irrigation demand. In the Biosphere-relevant Earth system model (BioEarth) project (Adam et al., 2014) this shortcoming is being addressed through coupling of VIC-CropSyst to atmospheric models. Inaccuracy of the meteorological data or uncertainties related to unrecorded management practices such as deficit irrigation can be other sources of error. This deviation can also be explained by a typical 20% systematic error in flux tower ET observations, which tend to underestimate the latent heat fluxes. This energy imbalance issue has been discussed in many studies by the microclimatological community (Frank et al., 2013; Leuning et al., 2012; Mahrt, 1998; Wilson et al., 2002).

[FIGURE 6]

2.1.3.3.1.3.   Corn Yield

Figure 7 compares simulated and observed corn yield over the two sites. The mean error of simulated yield for NE (irrigated) and IL (non-irrigated) were 9% and 3%, respectively. Although Figure 7 does not show a systematic overestimation by the model, a combination of inaccurate meteorological data, missing processes (e.g. lack of VPD feedback as discussed in section 3.1.2) and unrecorded conditions such as insufficient irrigation water or heat stress can contributes to these discrepancies. The fact that the error is smaller over the non-irrigated site can be explained by the fact that irrigation management did not have to be simulated, thereby reducing the opportunity for introducing model error.

[FIGURE 7]

2.1.4.3.1.4.   Soil Moisture

Figure 8 compares simulated and observed soil moisture over the two sites. Because the soil moisture sensors were placed at 10 and 25 cm depths a the NE site and at 2.5 and 10 cm depths at the IL site, we aggregated the first three VIC soil moisture layers (for a total thickness of 30 cm) for comparison against observations at the NE site. We compared just the first VIC soil moisture layer (10 cm depth) against observed at the IL site. The mean errors were 18% and 16% for the NE and IL sites, respectively. As with crop yield, soil moisture simulations are better for the non-irrigated site, particularly in terms of variability. The discrepancies may relate to the use of pedotransfer functions that convert soil textural characteristics to soil hydraulic properties (e.g. field capacity, permanent wilting point and hydraulic conductivity) for use in VIC-CropSyst (Pachepsky and Rawls, 1999; Tietje and Hennings, 1996). Also, scale discrepancies between the sensors' point-scale

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observation and the grid-scale simulation (Crow et al., 2012; Robinson et al., 2008) and inaccuracy of meteorological and soil data can be other sources of error. Additionally, imperfections in model processes such as soil water movement, evapotranspiration and irrigation loss calculation can contribute to the error.

[FIGURE 8]

3.1.5. Leaf Area Index (LAI)

Figure 9 shows that VIC-CropSyst is able to capture the magnitude and seasonality of observed LAI, with a slight underestimation of peak LAI. The information we used for calibration of phenological periods (Figure 9) are not specifically collected for the two study sites, but instead were based on state-scale studies and reports; this is a potential source of error in simulation of LAI. Because of limited information at flux tower sites, we did not consider all of the crop-related parameters (e.g. radiation use efficiency, maximum crop coefficient and maximum crop coverage) during calibration, which can also lead to some discrepancies (e.g. Jalota et al., 2010; Klein et al., 2012).

[FIGURE 9]

3.2. Regional Evaluation of Evapotranspiration (ET)

We used VIC-CropSyst to simulate ET over the CRB portions of three states: Washington, Idaho and Oregon (Figure 10). Simulated ET was aggregated from the original model resolution of $1/16^{th}$ to 0.5 degree for comparison against the upscaled ET product derived from the FLUXNET eddy tower network (Baldocchi et al., 2001). Liu et al (2013) described the details of the creation of the empirically-derived or "observed" ET map. They also compared the observed ET with an offline (from CropSyst) version of VIC-simulated ET and reported a systematic underestimation of simulated ET over warm irrigated areas. Our ET results show that VIC-CropSyst's simulated ET in general produces a lower error as compared to VIC-offline, especially over irrigated areas; error over irrigated landscapes was reduced from about 28% to 17%, a 40% reduction. However, it is important to note that another source of the discrepancy is due to inaccuracy of the observed ET product because it was developed using a limited number of flux tower stations as well as empirical formulas that also have inherent errors (see Liu et al. 2013 for details).

[FIGURE 10]

3.3 Regional Evaluation of crop yields and irrigation demands.

Rajagopalan et al. (in review) performed an evaluation of county level aggregated irrigated crop yields against NASS crop yield statistics, and comparison of average modelled irrigation demands from the Columbia Basin Project area in the CRB to irrigation diversions. The mean annual yields between observed and simulated values are in agreement with relative errors less than +/-5%. On average, the model simulated annual irrigation demands where about 20% less than diversions. Part of this difference can be explained by the fact that diversions account for conveyance and seepage losses in the distribution system.

3.4. Examples of VIC-CropSyst Application

4.1. Simulation of Agricultural Adaptation in Response to Climate Change

Farmers adapt their agricultural management to minimize unfavourable impacts of stressors such as climate change (Kurukulasuriya and Rosenthal., 2003). Possible agricultural adaptation strategies have been discussed (e.g. Anwar et al., 2013; Howden et al., 2007; Kurukulasuriya and Rosenthal., 2003; Smit and Skinner., 2002; Smith et al., 2000). However, lack of appropriate simulation tools to assess the effectiveness of an adaptation decision while capturing complex regional impacts is a significant shortcoming. VIC-CropSyst simulates common adaptation strategies used by farmers, and captures the consequences of these adaptation strategies on local and regional hydrology and land-atmosphere interactions. Table 6 shows a list of adaptation decisions that can be handled by VIC-CropSyst. These decisions range from short-term tactical (T) to long-term strategic (L) decisions.

[TABLE 6]

4.2. Foundation for Integration within Other Modeling Platforms

VIC-CropSyst can be used with other modeling frameworks such as atmospheric, socio-economics, and water storage and routing models. These integrations may simulate the human-land-climate nexus and provide scientists, stakeholders and policy makers with a broader understanding of the interactions and feedbacks in this nexus. VIC-CropSyst has been already used and implemented in various projects. Examples of these implementations are as follows. VIC-CropSyst can also be used to investigate the hydrologic and atmospheric impacts of these adaptation decisions.

3.2.1.4.2.1. Water Resources Management and Socio-Economic Studies

VIC-CropSyst is used in conjunction with reservoir operation models in the CRB, and accounting for the process of water rights curtailment under shortages in Washington State and farmer response to curtailment, to identify the indirect impacts on climate change on agricultural production though changes in water availability (Rajagopalan et al., in preparation). The current version of VIC-CropSyst (v2, as described herein) was also used in the most recent Columbia River Basin water supply and demand projection for the 2030s (Barik et al., 2017; Hall et al., 2017). These water supply and demand studies were submitted to the Washington State Legislature in the years of 2011 and 2016 and provide detailed information for each watershed in eastern Washington to the entire CRB as a whole. This information is being used by the Legislature for long-term water supply planning.

VIC-CropSyst has been used to investigate different scenarios for renegotiation of the Columbia River Treaty (Rushi et al. 2017). Existing modeling efforts to date have focused primarily on the impact that treaty renegotiation would have on flood risk, hydropower generation, and environmental flows (Cosens, 2010; Hamlet and Lettenmaier, 1999a); assessment of the impact of CRT changes on irrigated agriculture along the Columbia Mainstem is a knowledge gap. Rushi et al. (2017), therefore applied VIC-CropSyst linked to ColSim to simulate the complex impacts of climate change and the Columbia River Treaty on hydrology and agriculture in the river basin and concluded that climate change i) shifts water supply towards earlier in the season, ii) reduces flood risk in the upper CRB while increases frequency and magnitude of floods in the middle and lower parts of the basin, iii) shifts water demand towards earlier in the season in some locations with mixed effects on water rights curtailment risk, and iv) reduces hydropower generation. The authors found that the considered CRT scenarios can improve power generation and agricultural water demand while preventing floods in an altered climate.

VIC-CropSyst is an effective tool for studying the large-scale aggregated impacts of local management decisions and phenomena. For example, VIC-CropSyst was applied by Malek et al. (in review) who found that climate change-induced increases in evaporative (consumptive) losses from irrigation systems and decreases in non-evaporative irrigation losses (i.e., runoff and deep percolation) would lead to a decrease in reusable return flow, which would negatively affect basin-wide water availability and productivity.

VIC-CropSyst has also been used over the Yakima River basin (YRB) to evaluate the impacts of climate change on decisions related to investment in irrigation technology (Malek et al., 2016; in prep.). Economic damages of future more frequent droughts (Vano et al., 2010) are considered the main incentive to invest in more efficient irrigation technology (Berger and Troost, 2014). To analyze future changes in regional irrigation patterns, Malek et al. (in prep.) used VIC-CropSyst in conjunction with an economic model and the RiverWare model (Zagona et al., 2001). Figure 11 shows a result of this integration to simulate historical (1981-2006) drought frequency and severity, and the percentage of the YRB's perennial crop growers who are simulated to switch to more efficient irrigation systems to minimize the negative consequences of droughts during the two decades of 1990-2000 and 2050-2060. Also, any changes in agricultural activities (e.g., switching to a new irrigation system) directly impacts the hydrology of agricultural fields, thus changing return flow

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timing and magnitude and the availability of water for downstream users; these downstream consequences can also be simulated by this modeling platform. This is an example of how the human-land-climate nexus can be captured through a modeling framework that simulates large-scale hydrologic processes and regional water availability in a highly cultivated basin, while capturing the dynamics of farm-level irrigation decisions.

[FIGURE 11]

3.2.2. 4.2.2. Land-Atmosphere Interactions

Irrigation and other agricultural decisions modify local to regional climate through changes in land surface conditions such as temperature, water vapor content and albedo (Fernández et al., 2001; Liu and Kang, 2006). This phenomena can be used to compensate the negative impacts of heat stress (Lobell et al., 2008), which will be especially important in the future if there are more severe and frequent extreme events related to climate change (Long and Ort, 2010). These management decisions will also impact the regional water cycle, potentially leading to disruption in water availability (Adamson and Loch, 2014) and modifying fluxes of water to the atmosphere (Pielke Sr. et al., 2007). As a part of the BioEarth platform (Adam et al., 2014), VIC-CropSyst is being coupled to an atmospheric model, the Weather Research and Forecast model (WRF; (Michalakes et al., 2005; Skamarock et al., 2008) that can be used to quantify the impacts of irrigation and other agricultural management on atmospheric processes, as well as to assess how irrigation management can be used to mitigate heat stress.

4. 5. Conclusions

Meeting future food demand will require an extensive understanding of the interactions between agricultural and other systems, such as water resources planning and management, socioeconomic, and atmospheric processes. The main purpose of this study was to develop the VIC-CropSyst platform that provides tightly-integrated and mechanistic representation of both cropping systems and water/energy cycles at regional to global scales. Tight integration between VIC and CropSyst necessitated modification of both models, including how the models handle soil movement and vertical distribution, transpiration, LAI, and irrigation. Evaluation of VIC-CropSyst over two flux tower sites shows that the coupled model captures key agronomic and hydrologic states and fluxes at the field scale. Furthermore, implementation of VIC-CropSyst over the U.S. Pacific Northwest region reduced ET simulation error by 40% over irrigated landscapes.

The VIC-CropSyst platform enables the land surface modeling community to investigate a variety of agricultural management decisions, including crop choice, planted acreage, planting and harvesting date, and multiple irrigation management options. In particular, the new mechanistic irrigation model, which is tightly coupled with both the energy and water cycles, can be used to address questions related to the interaction of climate, hydrology, river basin water management, and irrigation management strategies.

VIC-CropSyst can be integrated with different modeling platforms to capture the dynamics of the human-land-climate nexus. This can potentially improve the understanding of environmental processes in highly-cultivated basins and can be used to investigate best management practices to promote future sustainability of agricultural production while preserving water resources and minimizing the negative intended and unintended consequences of human actions. Some examples of these implementations are as follows:

Coupling with water resource management and socioeconomic models: This involves simulating regional water availability and agricultural productivity, adaptive responses of farmers to climate change, and unintended consequences of these adaptation decisions.

Coupling with weather and climate models: VIC-CropSyst will also provide capabilities to investigate the dynamics of agricultural management decisions on local to regional weather and climate patterns through modifications of energy and water fluxes (Barnston and Schickedanz, 1984; Douglas et al., 2009; Kohl and Wright, 1974). This promotes the understanding of, for example, how irrigation management and technology can control negative impacts of heat and water stresses on crop yield.

VIC-CropSyst is being used in earth system models (EaSMs) such as BioEarth (Adam et al., 2014) and can be implemented in other EaSMs such as the Platform for Regional Integrated Modeling and Analysis (PRIMA; Kraucunas et al., 2014). Implementation of VIC-CropSyst in EaSMs facilitates a powerful representation of large-scale interactions between different biophysical and socioeconomic components over areas with significant agricultural activities. This is a transformational step in the understanding of the food-energy-water nexus which can lead to efficient and more sustainable management decisions that co-balance and benefit all three sectors.

Code and/or data availability

The VIC-CropSyst is a freeware open source community model; source codes, user manual and test cases will be distributed through contact to Keyvan Malek (keyvan.malek@wsu.edu), Jennifer Adam (jcadam@wsu.edu) and Mingliang Liu (mingliang.liu@wsu.edu).

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Tables

Table 1- Impacts of climate change on crop yield, as discussed by Kurukulasuriya and Rosenthal, 2003; Leakey et al., 2009; Reilly, 2002; Rosenzweig et al., 2001; and Rowan et al., 2011.

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Impact factors	Mechanism of impact	Direction of impact on yield	References
CO_2 concentration	More efficient photosynthesis	+	Kurukulasuriya and Rosenthal, 2003; Leakey et al., 2009
	Crop water use efficiency	+	Leakey et al., 2009
	Nutrient use efficiency	+	Ainsworth and Rogers, 2007
Temperature	Crop growing period length	-	Kurukulasuriya and Rosenthal, 2003; Dukes and Mooney, 1999
	Planting date	+/-	Parry et al., 2005
	Timing and rate of crop growth and phenology	+/-	Tao et al., 2003
	Pest and weed growth and development	-	Kurukulasuriya and Rosenthal, 2003

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Fruit quality		-	
Humidity	Changes in stomata functioning	+	Leakey et al., 2009; Nijs et al., 1997
Precipitation	Changes in soil moisture and irrigation water resources	-/+	Rowan et al., 2011
Frequency of climate extreme events (droughts and heat waves)	Crop productivity	-	Rosenzweig et al., 2001
Temperature + Precipitation	Water availability for irrigated agriculture over snow dominant basins	-	Adam et al., 2009; Barnett et al., 2005; Elsner et al., 2010; Mote et al., 2005

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Table 2 – Two flux tower stations used for evaluation of the VIC-CropSyst. Nebraska site is irrigated using a center pivot system and the Illinois flux tower station is rain-fed.

Stations	State	Irrigated	Cropping pattern	Period	Soil type	Average Precipitation (mm)	Average Temperature (°C)
Mead Irrigated	Nebraska	Yes	Corn	2001-	Silty clay	789	10.1

				(NE)	2008	loam		
Fermi National Laboratory	Illinois (IL)	No	Corn/ Soybean	2002- 2007	Silty clay loam	929	9.2

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Table 3–Calibration parameters used for VIC-CropSyst over the two study sites (columns 5 to 6) and over the Columbia River Basin (CRB). Column 3 represents the ranges of these parameters used for the sensitivity studies.

parameter	Description	Range	CRB	NE	IL
bs	Adjusts partitioning of precipitation to runoff and infiltration	0.001-0.4	0.1-0.3	0.2	0.31
Ds	Base flow parameter- fraction of base flow parameter	0.001-0.99	0.001-0.88	0.005	0.72
Ws	A fraction of maximum base flow indicating where the base flow curve starts	0.4-0.9	0.51-0.91	0.8	0.53
Ds-Max	Maximum daily base flow generation	0.1-30	0.2-10	10	28.61

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Table 4- Estimated calendar days correspond to each of the growing stages in two study sites. Some of the information is from references listed for each site.

	crop type	planting	emergence	peak LAI	flowering	filling	maturity	reference
NE	corn	127	140	195	205	225	255	(Sakamoto et al., 2010)
IL	corn	125	137	200	208	212	250	(Nafziger, 2013)

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Table 5- Soil, climate, vegetation and crop information used for regional evaluation of VIC-CropSyst over the U.S. Pacific Northwest. The resolution of the input data was 1/16th °.

Input	Source	Information used by VIC-CropSyst
Weather	Abatzoglou and Brown (2012)	precipitation, minimum and maximum temperature and wind speed
Soil	STATSGO (Schwarz and Alexander, 1995)	latitude, longitude, sand and clay content, hydraulic conductivity, field capacity, bulk density, etc.
Crop/Vegetation	USDA/WSDA vegetation distribution maps (Boryan et al., 2011; Yorgey et al., 2011)	crop type, acreage, irrigation systems, etc.

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Table 6- Summary of adaptation strategies that can be handled by VIC-CropSyst: the modeling platform is able to simulate the impacts of local decisions on agricultural productivity and at the same time capture the impacts of these decisions on regional land-atmospheric interactions and hydrological water availability in the basin.

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|	Adaptation strategy	Timing*	Duration**
1	**Crop-related adaptation strategies**		
	i- Crop choice and rotation	R*	L
	ii- Cropping acreage and location of cropping activities	R and A	L
	iii- Timing of planting and harvesting date	C and A	T
	iv- Using new variety of the same crop	R	L
2	**Long term strategic water management adaptations**		
	i- Irrigation system or nozzle	R and A	L
3	**Seasonal adaptations to respond to altered water deficit and temporal availability of water**		
	i- Deficit irrigation magnitude	C	T
	ii- Deficit irrigation timing in a season	C	T
4	**Short term tactical adaptation to minimize the impacts of heat stress**		

i- Supplementary/over irrigation		T
ii- Irrigation frequency	C	T
iii- Irrigation intensity	C	T

*According to Smit and Skinner (2002), the timing of adaptation decision can be A-Anticipatory (proactive), C-Concurrent (during) or R-Responsive (reactive)

**Duration of adaptive actions can be short term-tactical (T) and long-term strategic (L)(Smit and Skinner, 2002)

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Figures
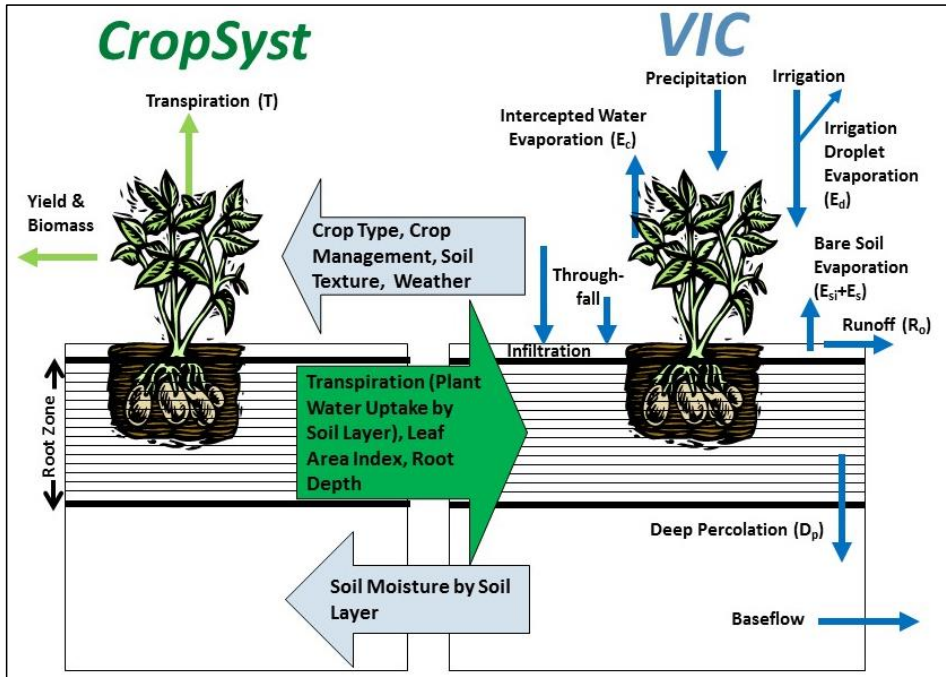
Figure 1- This schematic shows how VIC and CropSyst are coupled. VIC provides the availability of water and energy to CropSyst. CropSyst uses this information to grow the crop, produce biomass and yield, and simulate transpiration. CropSyst passes back the information that is needed by VIC (e.g., the distribution of transpiration uptake in different soil layers, LAI, and root depth) to simulate the hydrologic and energy cycle and the scheduling of irrigation.

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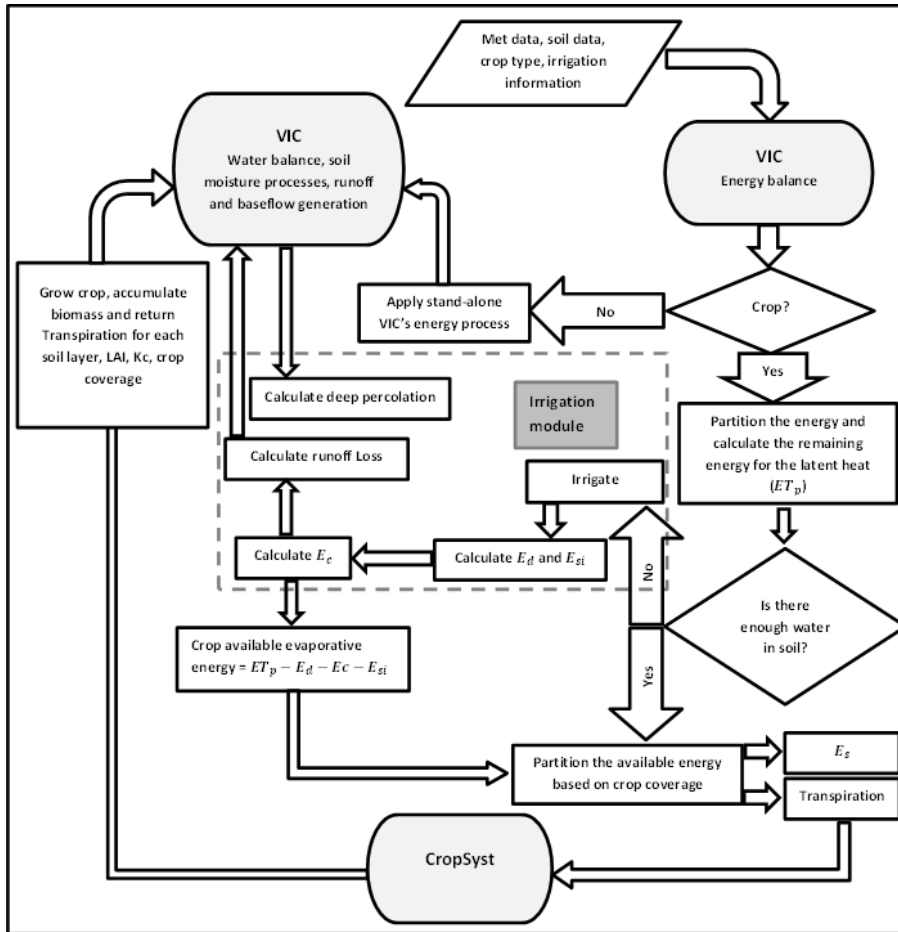
Figure 2 – Algorithm used in VIC-CropSyst to partition available energy into different evaporative components. The energy and water balances are handled by the VIC model. CropSyst receives the amount of energy available for transpiration and the availability of water in the soil to determine crop water uptake. VIC needs actual transpiration in different layers of the soil to close the water cycle. Communication between the two models happens for every time-step.
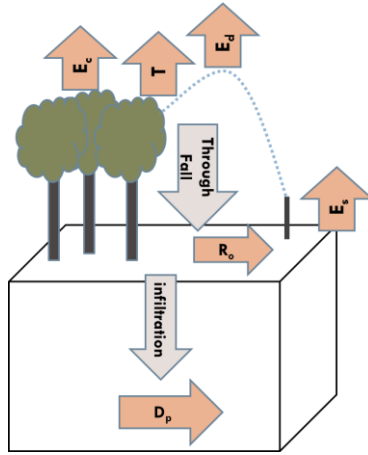
Figure 3 –Pathways of irrigation water loss simulated in the irrigation module. E_d: evaporation from irrigation droplets, E_c: evaporation from irrigation water intercepted by canopy, E_s: evaporative loss from soil surface, D_p: Deep percolation loss and R_o: Irrigation runoff loss. The efficiency of irrigation water is calculated by considering total applied water and all loss terms.

$$Ef = 100 \times \left(1 - \frac{E_d + E_s + E_c + R_o + D_p}{total\ irrigation\ water}\right)$$

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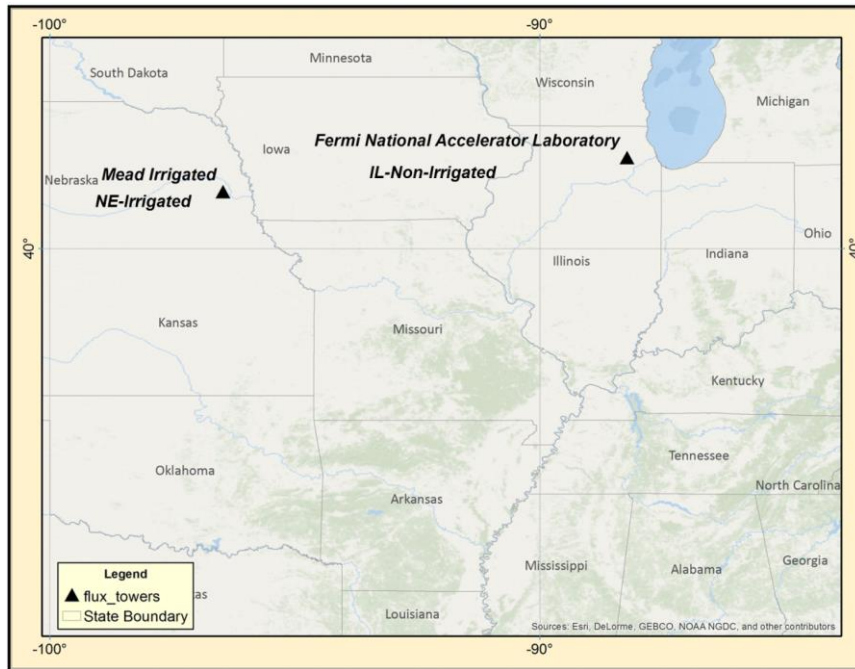
Figure 4 - Location of the two flux tower sites in the U.S. two flux tower sites are all in agricultural fields. Mead irrigated site (NE) is located in the Nebraska; Fermi National lab site (IL) is located in the Illinois; NE is irrigated and the IL is a non-irrigated agricultural site.

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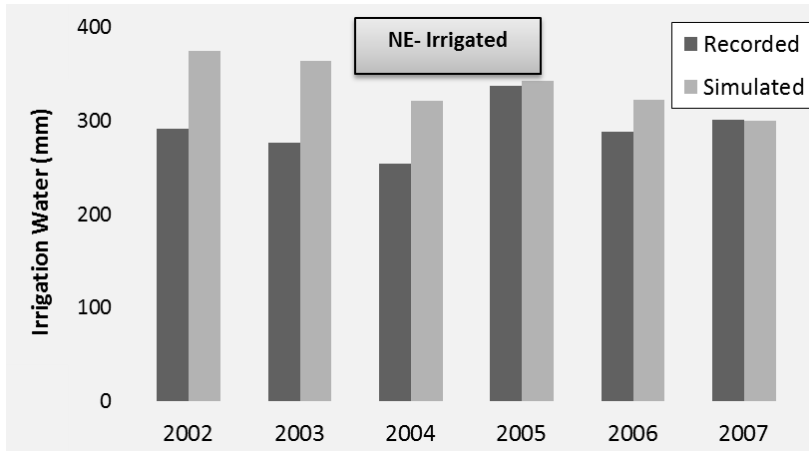
Figure 5 - Simulated versus recorded irrigated water in an irrigated corn field at the NE flux tower site.
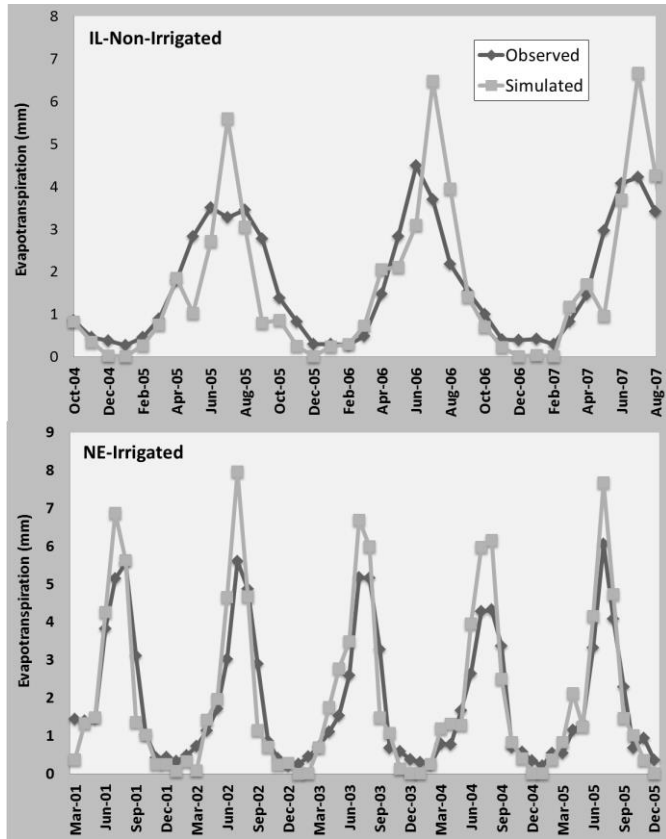
Figure 6- Comparison of simulated and observed corn evapotranspiration (ET) at two flux tower sites located in NE and IL. The NE site is irrigated while IL is a non-irrigated field.

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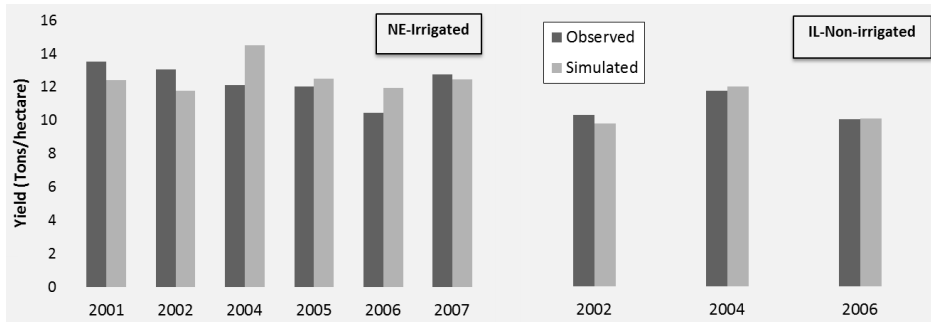
Figure 7 – Comparison of simulated and observed corn yield at two flux tower sites for the years during which yield observations were taken.
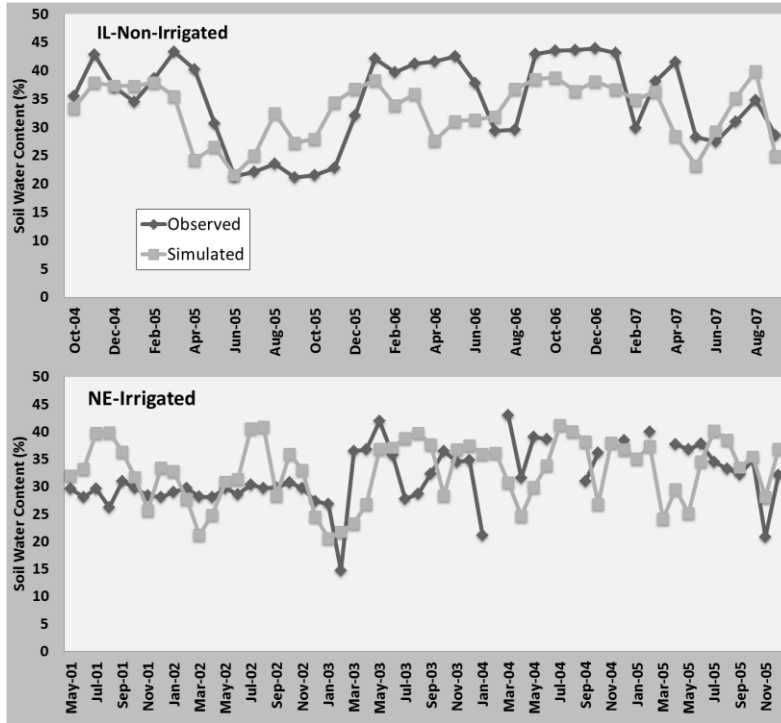
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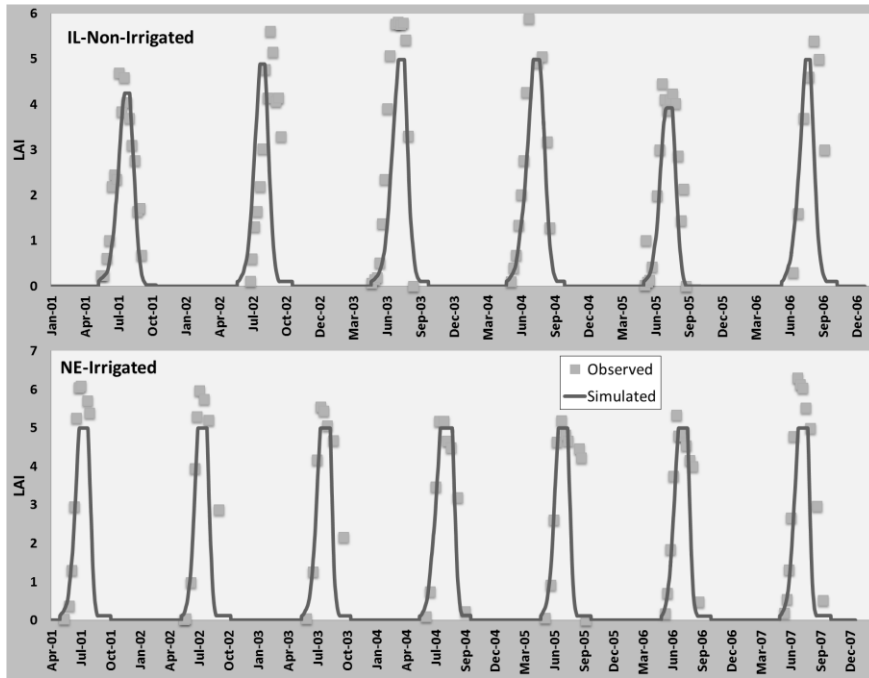**Figure 8- Comparison of simulated and observed soil moisture at the flux tower sites located in IL (top) and NE (bottom).**

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Figure 9- Comparison of simulated and observed corn LAI over two flux tower sites located in IL (top) and NE (bottom).
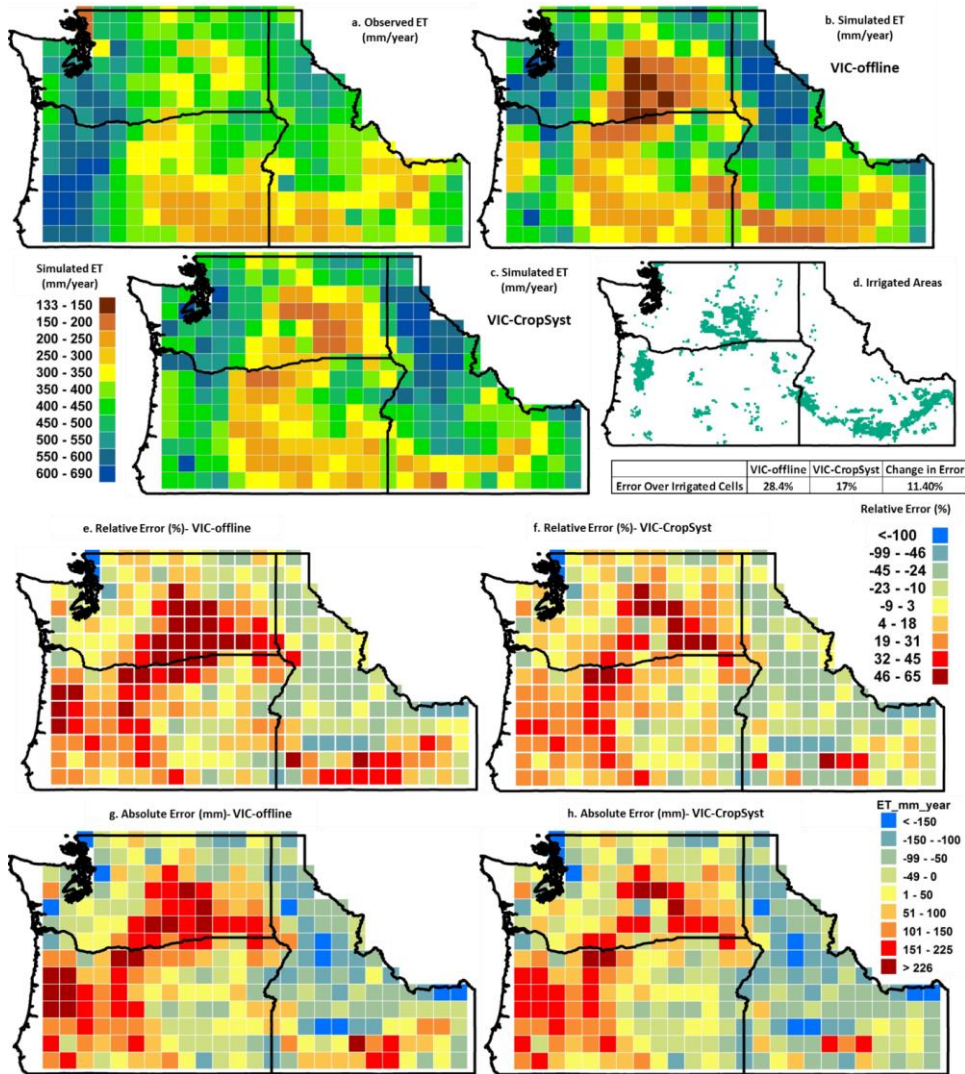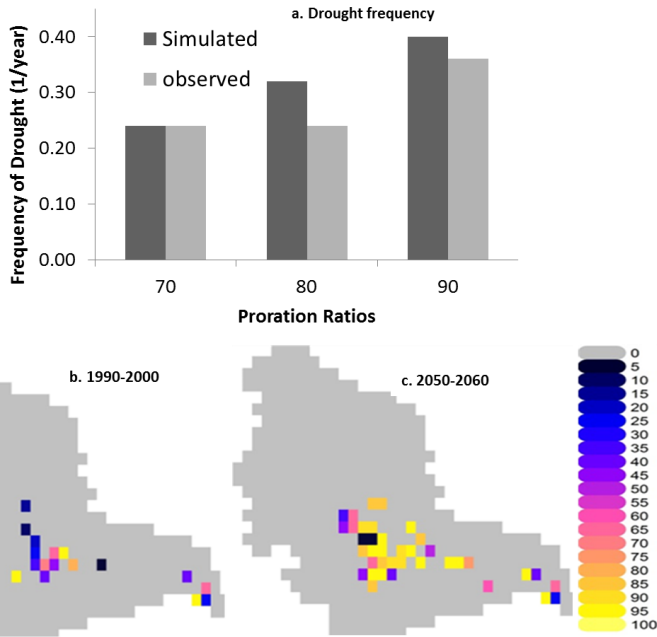
Figure 10 – Comparison of simulated and empirically-derived ET over the U.S. Pacific Northwest. The simulation and observation period is 1982-2008.

Figure 11- Regional application of VIC-CropSyst in conjunction with a river system model (YAK-RW; (Hubble, 2012; Zagona et al., 2001) and an economic model to simulate historical (1981-2006) drought frequency (panel a), when the percentage of the water right allocated for the irrigation season (i.e., proration rate) is lower than 70%, 80% and 90%. Panels b and c (Malek, K et al., 2016) show the percentage of farmers (perennial crop growers) who invest in new efficient irrigation technologies in response to simulated droughts during the two decades of 1990-2000 (panel b) and 2050-2060 (panel c).

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