

MIT Study: No Scientific Consensus On Global Warming Crop Impact

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Scientists disagree on the effects of global warming on American agriculture, according to a Massachusetts Institute of Technology study published Friday.

The research used climate and agricultural computer models to conclude that global warming would have numerous positive impacts on US farming, including fewer frosts, a longer growing season and an earlier start of field operations by the end of the century. However, the study also found that plants could potentially suffer from more heat stress and more dry days.

The study's one firm conclusion was that farmers would likely be able to adapt to the potential challenges caused by global warming.

“The new study, and its approach to trying to better identify the type and character of future climate changes that may be best related to future agricultural productivity is useful, primarily, as the authors point out, in helping to drive adaptive strategies,” Chip Knappenberger, climate scientist at the libertarian Cato Institute, told The Daily Caller News Foundation. “It is silly to think that U.S. farmers will not adapt to climate change—after all adaptive measures are at the heart of agriculture, as different crop varieties, different farming techniques, different technologies, etc., are what drives crop yields ever higher, even in the face climate change. This has happened in the past and will continue to happen in the future.”

The study rebukes previous claims that global warming could cause the total collapse of American and global agriculture.

“Projections of agricultural collapse (in the U.S. or abroad) as a result of human-caused global warming are naive at best, intentionally misleading at worst,” Knappenberger continued. “The new paper largely avoids such pitfalls as it recognizes that a) all climate change is not bad for U.S. agriculture, and b) more importantly, that the future of agricultural productivity depends on continuing adaptation—something that the authors of the new paper hope that their results aid in.”

The study was authored by a research team from MIT and the University of California at Davis and was published in the peer-reviewed scientific journal *Environmental Research Letters*. The new research is an enormous boost for scientists skeptical of global warming, as it indicates they were correct about a long running positive effect of rising CO2 emissions.

Previous studies have estimated that global warming is causing roughly half of Earth's land-mass to demonstrate "significant greening" and that only 4 percent of the world saw a decrease in plant life. The increased vegetation growth caused by warmer temperatures is likely slowing global warming as well, since more trees and plants equates to more sequestered CO2.

Other research suggests that increasing global temperatures means the air has more capacity to hold moisture from the oceans, leading to more rains in arid regions of the world. This is even true in the Earth's driest regions, such as the Sahara desert. The research concludes that arid areas and deserts in Australia, California, Central Asia, Sinai and Southwestern Africa can all expect more rain.

This is the latest scientific study to show that nature is considerably more resilient to global warming than scientists suspected and even United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change now believes that the evidence linking global warming to extinctions is sparse.

Global warming will likely have many positive environmental impacts such as helping Canadian trees recover from a devastating insect infestation, creating more food for fish in the ocean, making life easier for Canadian moose, improving the environment better for bees and literally causing deserts to bloom with foliage.

Despite this growing consensus, environmental groups still believe that plants and animals aren't capable of adapting to changing temperatures, leading to mass extinctions and agricultural disruptions caused by global warming.

"One-fourth of the Earth's species could be headed for extinction by 2050 due to climate change," The Nature Conservancy claims. "Rising temperatures are changing weather and vegetation patterns across the globe, forcing animal species to migrate to new, cooler areas in order to survive."