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# AgRISTARS 

SR-B2-04375

A Joint Program for Agriculture and Resources Inventory Surveys Through Aerospace Remote Sensing

## Supporting Research

November 1982

## FINAL REPORT

## LABELING RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF THROUGH-THE-SEASON AREA ESTIMATION

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Final Report
for
NASA Contract NAS9-14565

LABELING RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF THROUGH-TRE-SEASON AREA ESTIMATION

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Period Covered
15 November 1980-30 June 1982

Remote Sensing Research Program
Space Sciences Laboratory Series 23, Issue 10

# LABELING RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF THROUGH-THE-SEASON AREA ESTIMATION 

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### 1.0 INTROUUCTION AND RESEARCH GOALS

The Large Area Crop Inventory Experiment (LACIE) demonstrated the usefulness of Landsat data for crop identification measurements in support of area estimation without a ground sample stage. In particular, LACIE area estimation procedures were for estimation of small grain acreages in areas where ground data would not be avallable. The LACIE small grains procedures were end-of-season procedures. That is, the LACIE procedures depended upon the full set of crop season acquisitions in order to perform the crop type labeling operation with sufficient accuracy. During the LACIE Transition Program, and in the subsequent AgRISTARS Project, there was a desire to not only extend the LACIE-like technology to crop types other than small grains, but also to more directly address the need for a continual through-the-season estimation capability. Through-the-season capability was most desirable to all potential users of the technology, since crop production indications prior to the end-of-season would allow for more effectiva management and planning within the agrobusiness community and commodities market.

The crop types selected for the extension of the LACIE-like technology were corn and soybeans. The particular foreign areas of interest for applicatien of the technology were Argentina and Brazil. Therefore the work described in this report was directed toward corn and soybean crop types. The ultimate goal of the work was to develop corn and soybean crop type labeling procedures to be used in support of a through-the-season area estimation technology. It was envisioned that a through-the-season capability would be developed that would allow for the estimation of crop acreages at any time in the growing season. This may mean that more thar one pre-end-of-seas on labeling procedure would need to be developed for use in d! ferent periods within the growing season. At the least, it was felt that the particular point in the season at which an estimate was desired would affect the operating parameters of any labeling procedure, Therefore, a further goal of this research was to come to understand the dynamics of crop separability as the growing season progressed.

### 2.0 GENERAL APPROACH

There were three phases planned in the overall approach to developing through-the-season labeling procedures. These three phases were:

First Phase: Determination and Description of Summer Crop Type Separation Characteristics Throughout the Growing Season

Second Phase: / Development of Labeling Guidelines for Pre-End-ofSeason Labeling of Corn and Soybeans

## Third Phase: Development of Labeling Procedures to Support a Through-the-Season Area Estimation Procedure

Briefly in the first phase-mDetermination and Description of Summer Crop Type Separation Characteristics Throughout the Growing Season--the research would focus on determining what, if any, crop type or crop group characteristics could be observed within Landsat data that would be useful in uniquely identifying the crop types or at the very least the crop groups of interest. In addition, the expected improvement in labeling accuracy as the growing season progressed was to be evaluated and some mechanism for determining or for controlling the setting of the operating parameters at various periods in the growing season was to be investigated.

The second phase of research--Development of Labeling Guidelines--would formulate consistent labeling guidelines for the separation of corn and soybeans throughout the growing season. Clearly formulated guidelines would then allow labeling procedures to be designed in support of specific through-the-season area estimation procedures being developed.

The third phase--Development of Labeling Procedures--was to proceduralize the labeling guidelines into a consistent logical processing of the data either by an analyst, machine, or both interactively, similar to the proceduralization effort undertaken in the design of the Corn/Soybean Baseline Procedure $\mathrm{C} / \mathrm{S}-1$.

This document will report on the progress of the first phase of the research. At present no plans exist to continue with the other two phases due to termination of support for this effort.

### 3.0 THROUGH-THE-SEASON MODEL OF LABELING ACCURACY

### 3.1 GENERAL MODEL CONCEPT

There are four characteristics observable in multitemporal Landsat data that are most useful in determining the crop type or crop group identification of an agricultural feature. These characteristics are: (1) a temporal characteristic which pertains to the development of a feature's vegetation canopy through time, i.e., what time of year is a green vegetation canopy observable for the feature as opposed to bare ground; (2) a spectral characteristic which refers to the value of a given spectral variable, or to the relative relationship between two or more spectral variables for a given feature; and (3) two spatial characteristics, one which refers to the geometric attributes of a given feature such as the nature of a feature's boundary, and the other which refers to the areal distribution of similar and dissimilar features within the area of analysis. The most important characteristic for crop identification is the temporal characteristic. The temporal characteristic allows the separation of crop groups within a region, or more precisely, is used to define the various crop groups within the region. In order to support evaluation of the temporal characteristic, collateral data in the form of crop calendars are needed. Indeed, the most important piece of collateral data for crop type analysis is crop calendar data. The crop calendar data provides information about when crops within a given region are likely to be or are (if a real time crop calendar is used) in any given biostage.

From past research and experience, the spectral response of many vegetation biostages are familiar and generally known. Therefore a spectral crop calendar can be generated from phenological crop calendar data. This spectral crop calendar model allows an analyst or programmed decision algorithm to judge the most likely crop type or cover class label to assign to a given feature in a given set of multitemporal, spectral data such as Landsat data.

The logic process by which a labeling target's observed characteristics are evaluated can be illustrated by the list of "important questions" in Table 1. The ability to answer the important questions in a deterministic manner is dependent upon the temporal set of acquisitions available for analysis. It can be appreciated that as the crop growing season starts, there is little or no spectral data available to answer any of the questions. As the season progresses, however, more data become available and more of the "important questions" can be answered. The accuracy of any labeling analysis task is a function of the temporal sequence of acquisitions available. Thus, it can be understood that the labeling accuracy increases as a function of time. Note, however, that some questions can only be answered after a discrete event has occurred. For example, question 2a ("When does the maximum value for the green vegetation indicator occur?"): This question cannot be answered until some time AFTER the occurrence of the maximum value because a relative maximum can only be identified after the value of the green vegetation indicator has started to decrease again. This time delay in ability to answer a specific question relative to the occurrence of some events says that the labeling accuracy function relative to time is not a smoothly increasing function, but is a function which increases in steps. The plot of this function through the crop growing season would have several plateaus where the labeling accuracy would remain fairly constant until sufficient data had been received that would allow the answering of additional "important questions." (A graphical representation of this model is shown in Figure 1.) The above description of the model of labeling accuracy has ignored the question of data dropout and the use of. multiyear labeling procedures or estimators. If multiyear labeling procedures or estimators were employed, the value for $A_{0}$ (initial value for labeling accuracy at the start ( $t_{0}$ ) of a given crop year) would probably be higher (indicated by $A_{m}$ ). The labeling accuracy function would then proceed to perform generally as described above except for the increased accuracy levels expected from the use of multiyear data. Data dropout would have the effect of prolanging the length of various labeling accuracy plateaus until such time as sufficient data became available to answer additional "important questions."

With the above-described Labeling Accuracy Model as a basis, the Through-theSeason labeling research effort sought to accomplish the following objectives in Phase One:
(1) Determine the specific identification characteristics that could be used to uniquely identify summer crop types (corn/soybean) or crop group to the highest accuracy level possible within any given accuracy plateau;
(2) Determine a means of specificaily identifying when each of the accuracy plateaus started and ended for the corn/soybean situation.

### 3.2 SPECIFIC THROUGH-THE-SEASON MODEL OF LABELING ACCURACY FOR CORN/SOYBEANS IN U.S. CORN BELT AND PERIPHERY

The accuracy plateaus described in the general Through-the-Season labeling model need to be more definitively described for the specific corn/soybean situation. This was done based on when each of the important questions from Table 1 could be answered during the Corn/Soybean Summer Crop growing season in the U.S. Corn Belt and Corn Belt Periphery. Figure 2 shows the specific characterization of the Labeling Accuracy Model for the Corn/Soybean Summer Crops in the Corn Belt Area. Use of multiyear data or data dropout were ignored for the present. The C/S-1 (Corn/Soybean Baseline Procedure) Summer Crop biowindows and the potential and actual separation windows have also been delineated on the specific model representation. As can be seen, C/S-1 is actually a mid-season procedure based on the occurrence of the actual separation window in the mid-season of the model. Since the DFS stratification in C/S-1 can be done with a minimum set of two acquisitions--one acquisition from the very early or pre-season time period and one acquisition from the very early to mid-season time period--C/S-1 can operate as a midseason procedure. Partiy hecause of the above reason and partly due to efficiency of approach, the decision was made to concentrate on the early season plateau in the initial efforts toward developing a Through-the-Season labeling logic.

Therefore the specific objectives of this initial Through=the-Season effort were:
(1) to determine when $t_{2}$ occurred - for the Corn/Soybean situation,
(i) investigate how the occurrence of $t_{2}$ could be predicted operationally (i.e. real time during an actual Through-the-Season Estimation Effort)
(2) to determine what characteristics or attributes of corn/soybeans, summer crops, and others were useful in separating
(i) summer crops from other (at the least)
(ii) corn and soybeans from other summer crops and from each other if possible.

### 4.0 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

### 4.1 DATA SET

### 4.1.1 Segment Selection

The Through-the-Season labeling guidelines research was intended to support Through-the-Season area estimation procedures for use in foreign areas, particularly Argentiria. However at the time of this study, no Argentina spectral data were availatile. For this reason the labeling guidelines research was conducted using the spectral data from segments located within the U.S. Corn Belt and Corn Belt Periphery. Segments selected for inclusion in the study were chosen
based on the following: (1) how well they represented the geographical diversity within the Corn Belt and Corn Belt Periphery, and (2) the adequacy of their Landsat acquisition histories. A good acquisition history was one that included at least one acquisition prior to the earliest planting date for corn, at least one acquisition during or Just past corn tasseling or soybean pod setting, and a sufficient number of acquisitions in between these two bounding crop biostages. The dates of corn planting, corn tasseling, and soybean pod setting, as well as other crop calendar Information was determined from the statewide year-specific crop calendars published by the U.S.D.A. - Statistical Reporting Service within their Weekly Crop and Weather Bulletins. Before final inclusion of a segment within the study data base, all segment acquisitions were visually screened for cloud cover, haze, and bad data lines. Eighteen segments were selected to comprise the data set. The list of selected segments and acquisitions is given in Table 2, and the segment locations are shown in Figure 3.

### 4.1.2 Segment Preprocessing

Sun angle and haze correction was performed on all acquisitions selected for inclusion in the data set. The sun angle and haze correction algor'thm used to normalize the spectral data was the global XSTAR algorithm2 developed by the Environmental Research Institute of Michigan (ERIM). This algorithm had been used quite successfully on numerous previously analyzed data sets of Landsat spectral data. Following the application of XSTAR, the spectral features of interest for the analysis were extracted. The spectral features extracted for analysis were as follows:
(a) Tassel-cap component 1 (TC-1, Brightness)
(b) Tassel-cap component 2 (TC-2;, Greeiness)--Green vegetation indicator
(c) GRABS ${ }^{3}$ (Greenness Above Bare Soil)--Green vegetation indicator

Tassel-cap Brightness (TC-1) and GRABS were given the most emphasis in the analysis due to the successful'results achieved in latieling crop type from prior studies.

Tassel-cap transformation is an afine transformation of the Landsat four-channel MSS data into four new cilannels or components of data which correspond more directly with physical processes and relationships, (particularly for vegetational ground features) than the l.andsat MSS bands do directly. GRABS is a green vegetation indicator (measure of infraredness) derived from tassel-cap greenness and the threshold of detection for green vegetation established for the $7 / 5 \mathrm{VI}:{ }^{3}$

$$
\text { GRABS }=(T C-2)-0.09178(T C-1)+5.58959
$$

### 4.1.3 Sampling of Fields by Crop Type

Digitized ground data supplied by Johnson Space Center (JSC) was used to identify specific fields within a given crop type or vegetation cover class. A maximum of 10 fields for each summer crop type present within a segment was sampled. Sufficiently large non-summer crop fields were also sampled if they were present within a given segment. To minimize the effects of misregistration between acquisitions, and to insure some level of spectral purity within the crop type samples, only field center pixels were included within the sample. A pixel was included in the sample of a field if it had a margin around it that was at least two pixels wide, or if the surrounding pixels were of the same cover class. This sampling strategy had the effect of excluding small fields from the study. In total 574 fields were sampled from the 18 segments in the data set. The number of fields sampled by segments and cover class is shown in Table 3.

## 4.1,4 Analysis Approach

For each of the sampled fields, a field mean was calculated in each of the spectral features to be analyzed for each acquisftion. All of the analyses were then carried out on the field means data. Temporal plots of the field means were generated for Brightness (TC-1) and GRABS spectral features for each sampled field. In addition, segment level (segment average) temporal plots were generated for each segment by using a weighted (by pixel number) average of the field means within each crop type within each segment. Appendix A contains the segment mean temporal plots for Brightness and GRABS for each cover type sampled,

In order to determine whether there were any detectable differences between the crop groups, and the summer crop types at various points earlier in the growing season prior to end-ofseason, the above described temporal plots were examined and evaluated with particular emphasis on observing differences as early in the growing season as possible. In addition the data were evaluated to try to determine at what points in the growing season significant increases in identification accuracies would likely occur as a function of the additional spectral and crop calendar data which become available as the season, progressed.

### 5.0 DETERMINATION OF $t_{2}$ : SUMMER CROP SPECTRAL EMERGENCE DATE

### 5.1 DEFINITION, RATIONALE AND ASSUMPTIONS

In the Corn Belt, soybean is frequently the last summer crop planted. This is so partly because corn yield is more favorably affected by early planting than is soybeans. Thus corn planting has priority over soybeans; also soybeans can be double cropped after small grains so that double cropped soybean planting is delayed until after small grain harvest. observations from past research of the temporal patterns of corn, soybean,
and other summer crops in the Corn Belt have shown this later planting pattern for soybeans to be rasonably consistent within the region, though local variations do occur. The date of $t_{2}$ is defined as the date when all summer crops are detectable. Within the Corn belt to can be approximately defined as the date when all soybeans are detectable. The word "all" in these definitions should be read $>$ " $95 \%$ ". This is similar to the manner in which the spectral biowindows were defined for C/S-1.

Since by definition from the model, the "early season" labeling guidelines would be based on the spectral-temporal characteristics of detectable vegetation, lt was necessary to know or to be able to estimate when "all" summer crops were detectable in order to correctly operate the appropriate labeling procedures.* That 1s, the actual date of occurrence of $t_{2}$ needed to be determined. A method for estimating the occurrence of $t_{2}$ prior to tis occurrence was also expected to be needed in the eventual Through-the-Season Estimation Procedure to be developed.

Since to was expected to vary between years, a long-term average crop calendar would not be adequate for estimating $t_{2}$ as closely as was felt necessary. Therefore, a real-time method for estimating the occurrence of $\mathrm{t}_{2}$ in any given inventory year was needed. The assumption was made that, at the least, some real-time crop calendar model data would be avallable. However, since no crop calendar model data was available for evaluation, and only limited progress on a Corn Crop Calendar Model was perceived at the time by these investigators, reliance upon such crop calendar model data was minimized as much as possible. The only yearspecific crop calendar data avallable for this study, however, was the U.S.D.A.-S.R.S.'s Statewide Crop Calendars. Therefore the statewide yearspecific crop calendar information was used to develop the method for estimating the occurrence of $t_{2}$. It was hoped that crop calendar models under development could supply the needed information in foreign areas at some time in the not-too-distant future.

Since $t_{2}$ was expected to vary each year within each region, a reference point or start date $t_{0}$ was required that could be determined for each region each year. From the statewide year-specific U.S.D.A.-S.R.S. Crop Calendars $t_{0}$ was defined as the day on which $50 \%$ of the first planted summer crop was reported to have been planted. Thus in the Corn Belt, $t_{0}$ was defined as the date on which $50 \%$ of corn was reported to have been planted. From past research in crop calendar analysis for summer crops and small grains, it was determined that the $50 \%$ planted date for any crop tended to be less variable year-to-year than other percent planted points e.g. $5 \%, 75 \%$, $95 \%$, etc. Based on this perceived tendency toward higher stability, the $50 \%$ planted date was chosen as $t_{0}$. In addition, this definition of $t_{0}$ allowed $t_{0}$ to be determined from data that would be available reasonably early in any growing season so that true Through-the-Season procedures could be developed that would start with the season and not at some later point in the season. (Past definitions of early and mid-season

[^0]have been stated in terms of days preceding harvest. One, therefore, needed an estimate of when harvest was to occur before one could classify acquisit!ons as to early or mid-season.)

The time between $t_{0}$ and $t_{2}$ ( $t$ ime interval $t_{2}$ - $t_{0}$ ) needed to be determined and its year-to-year variation evaluated.

### 5.2 ESTIMATION OF ( $\mathrm{t}_{2}-\mathrm{t}_{0}$ )

Figure 4 graphically represents one preliminary method used to estimate ( $t_{2}-t_{0}$ ). 1978 data from segment 127, Montgomery County, Indiana, was used to make a "first-look" sample calculation of the interval from $50 \%$ corn planted ( $\mathrm{t}_{0}$ ) to $95 \%$ soybean detectaluility ( $\mathrm{t}_{2}$ ). Segment 127 was selected from the 18 sampled segments because it had a good acquisition history, good crop calendar information, and was one of the first segments to pass through pre-processing (sun angle and haze correction, etc.). GRABS values were used to calculate the detectability wate because $G R A B S=0$ (green vegetation threshold value) is standard for all segments and acquisitions processed through the LACIE Program. Mean GRABS values of ten soybean fields were plotted for the first five acquisitions; June 1, June 10, July 16, July 26 and August 4 All ten fields passed thot GRABS threshold of detectability between the fourth and fifth acquisitions, Figure 5. A variable $\times$ (Julian date) $=$ the $t$ intercept, of the line drawn between GRABS values on acquisitions 4 and 5 with the threshold of detectability (GRABS $=0$ ), was determined for each sampled field. Using the value of this variable for each sample field, a weighted mean and variance was calculated. The $95 \%$ confidence interval was determined and added to the weighted mear. ving a Julian day by which $95 \%$ of sampled soybean fields were detectaule. In 1978 50\% statewide planted day for soybean was obtained from the :ndiana annual crop and livestock report for the year and subtracted from the $95 \%$ mean detectability day + the $95 \%$ confidence interval. The difference, 15 days, was the interval $x_{2}$ in Figure 4.

The interval from the $50 \%$-planted day for corn and the $50 \%$-planted day for soybean was ascertained as shown in Table 4. Six years of crop calendar data was available from which to calculate a inean number of days from the statewide $50 \%$ corn planted day to the $50 \%$ soybean-planted day. The $95 \%$ confidence interval was determined and added to the mean to give an interval, $x_{1}$ in Figure 4, of 26 days. The 26 -day interval was added to the 15 -day interval from soybean planting to first detectability to estimate $\mathrm{x}_{1}$ in Figure 4 --the number of days from the $50 \%$-planted day for corn to first detectability of all soybean fields in segment 127. The final value, 41 days, was rounded off to 40 days for convenience.

Although the 40 -day interval from corn planting to soybean detectability was calculated from a single segment year, the time interval $\mathrm{t}^{+}+40$ was used as the initial estimate of ( $\mathrm{t}_{2}-\mathrm{t}_{0}$ ) for all 18 segments. The actual value for $t_{2}{ }_{-} t_{0}$ varied from state to state because of state-to-state variation in the $50 \%$ corn-planted day, but almost all corn and soybean fields were detectable on the first acquisition after $t_{0}+40$.
99.1\% of swerter crop fields had mean GRABS values above 0 on the first acquisition after $t_{0}$. $97,3 \%$ of the fields had mean "1 lues above GRABS $=5.9$. The number of days from $t_{0}+40$ to the first acquisition varied between 5 and 40 with an average, weighted by the number of fields in each segment, of 18.5 days. In contrast, $41.8 \%$ of summer crop fields had GRABS values above 0 on the last acquisition prior to the $t_{0}+40$ date. The number of days between the acquisition prior to $t_{0}+40$ and the $\left(t_{0}+40\right)$ date varied between 5 and 31 with a weighted average of 15.0, The data is summarized in Table 5.

The estimate of a 40 -day interval from planting to detectability was further evaluated using field measurements data obtained from LARS. Corn fields had at least $20 \%$ ground cover* approximately 40 days after planting, especially with the more dense, and more common, plantings. Soybean fields passed the 20\% ground cover point. well before 40 days after $50 \%$ planted date of the soybeans. The spectral emergence of the soybean fields could not be evaluated with respect to a $50 \%$ corn planted date since this was somewhat of an artificial situation.

Additional analysis was performed to estimate $t_{p}$ using all corn and soybean pixels in seven Indiana and seven lowa segments. Digitized and registered ground data was used to sample all identified corn and soybean pixels within the 14 segments. The percentage of corn and soybean pixels above GRABS $=5.0$ decision threshold** on each acquisition for each segment was determined and plotted against Julian date. The segment plots were then combined by state and a statewide (as represented by the sample of seven segnents/state) cumulative spectral emergence curve (S curve) was generated for each state. The $S$ curve was fit to the data points using a two piece curve fitting method whereby all data before the obvious upper break in slope plus the 1 st group of data points at or after the obvious break in slope were fitted by regression to the exponential function $y=a e^{b x}$. The second group of points which included all data points at or after the obvious upper break in slope were fit by regression to the linear function $y=a x+b$. The two curves were then pieced together visually (i.e. the upper shoulder was estimated by eye). Two analyses were done, a) one using $t_{0}=50 \%$ planted date for corn statewide, and b) one using $t_{0}=50 \%$ planted date for corn at the CRD to which a given segment belonged. Thus the second analysis was done on data normalized for $t_{0}$ at the CRD level. The non-normalized 5 curves of data points for each set of segments by state are shown in Figure 6. The normalized $S$ curves and data points are shown in Figure 7.

The results of this analysis are shown in Table 6. The earlier estimate of $t_{0}+40=t_{2}=95 \%$ sumnier crops spectral emerged based on analysis of segment 127 sampled corn and soybean fields does not appear to have been very good. From the above described analysis $t_{2}=t_{0}+70$ and $t_{0}+51$ for Iowa and Indiana non-normalized data respectively. For the normalized

[^1]data, $t_{2}=T_{0}+58$ and $T_{0}+56$ days for Iowa and Indiana respectively. There was also better correspondence between estimates of other \% wmergence points between the two states in the normalized data. The $r^{2}$ values for the regression curve fit were fairly good for Indiana - . 86 and, 84 for non-normalized and normalized data respectively. However the $r^{2}$ vatens. for the regression curve fit for lowa were not very good - . 57 and . 14 A non-normalized and normalized data respectively.

This new estimate for $t_{2}=t_{0}+57$ days actually corresponds very well with the definition for the end of Summer Crop blowindow SC2 from C/S-1 baseline procedure if one adjusts for the difference between 5\% corn planted (from $\mathrm{C} / \mathrm{S}-1$ ) and $50 \%$ corn planted from the Through-the-Season Model. This was to be expected since the SC2/SC3 biowindow boundary point and $t_{2}$ are theoretically the same from their conceptual definitions.

It is clear from inspection of Figures 6 and 7 that there is much more variation in lowa spectral crop calendars. To what this variation is due cannot be determined in any certainty in this study, however it would seem reasonable to suspect that most of the crop calendar variation in lowa is due to greater variation in planting dates throughout the state than occurs in Indiana. The observation that the two normalized fittes spectral emergerice curves for Iowa and Indiana were similar leads one to suspect that normalization for planting date variation can be valuable for any agricultural multitemporal spectral data processing. This of course was the idea behind UCB's dynamic stratification work. However the large variation in the lowa data even after normalization seems to suggest that crop calendar "strata" in lowa are smaller than CRD size. In Indiana on the other hand CRD size strata seem to be reasonable.

The above observations are relevant to the Through-the-Season effort in that it suggests that any Through-the-Season Labeling Procedure or Area Estimation Procedure based on certain kinds of models (i.e. models that have some variable based on crop calendar) would be more effective If normalization for planting date can first be performed. Another method for controlling the variation would be through crop calendar stratification.

Which method would be more desirable would be totally dependent upon the over-all area estimation procedure design and the operational environment of the procedure.

### 6.0 EARLY SEASON TEMPORAL-SPECTRAL CHARACTERISTICS: SUMMER CROPS VS OTHER

Edwin J. Sheffner

### 6.1 GREEN VEGETATION INDICATOR-GRABS

Differences between summer crops and non-summer crop temporal profiles become more apparent when examined within the context of the Through-the Season Labeling Accuracy Model where $t_{2}$ is defined as a reference noint. Note: The following analysis was performed prior to the latest estimation of $t_{2}=t_{0}+57$ days, and so the analysis was performed relative to the original estimate of $t_{2}=t_{0}+40$ days.

### 6.1.1 Summer Crops vs. Other

## Spectral Emergence

Mean GRABS values for corn, soybean and sorghum fields rarely exceeded the decision threshold GRABS $=5.0$ on acquisitions prior to the $t_{0}+40$ date. 1572 was the only segment with summer crop mean GRABS values above 5.0 on any acquisition prior to $t_{0}+40$ (sorghum), and no segments had two consecutive acquisitions prior to $t_{0}+40$ with summer crop values above 5.0 . Sixteen of the 18 sampled segments had alfalfa/pasture fields. Mean GRABS values of alfalfa/pasture exceeded 5.0 on at least one acquisition prior to $t_{0}+40$ in an 16 segments. Fourteen of the 16 segments with alfalfappasture fields had more than two acquisitions prior to $t_{0}+40$; in 12 of the segments alfalfa/pasture field mean GRABS values exceeded 5.0 on at least three acquisitions prior to $t_{0}+40$.

Idle cover and fallow fields also tended to have higher GRABS values than summer crops early in the season. Eight segments had sampled idle cover fields and six segments had sampled fallow fields. Idle cover field mean GRABS values exceeded 5.0 on more than one acquisition prior to $t_{0}+40$ in five of the eight segments and exceeded 5.0 on more than two acquisitions prior to $t_{0}+40$ in four of the eight segments. Fallow field mean GRABS values exceeded 5.0 on more than two acquisitions prior to $t_{0}+40$ in three of six segments.

The sampled summer crop confusers tended to reach maximum GRABS values earlier in the season than summer crops. All summer crop fields reached maximum GRABS values after the $t_{0}+40$ date, but alfalfa/ pasture fields reached peak GRABS values prior to $t_{0}+40$ in 12 of 16 segments, idle cover fields reached peak GRABS values prior to $t_{0}+40$ in two of six segments.

A dip in summer crop mean GRABS values prior to the $t_{0}+40$ date pecurred in several segments. The GRABS temporal plots of corn and soybean in segment 127, (Figure 5), illustrate the dip in GRABS values which occurred between the third and fifth acquisitions. The CRABS value uip was a inore common occurrence in soybean and sorghum fields than in corn fields. The dip occurred in soybean fields in 14 of 17 segments and in three of four segments with sorghum, but only in half the segments ( 9 of 18) with corn. Similar dip phenomenon was noted in non-summer crops. Nine of 16 segments' with alfalfa/pasture, two of eight segments with idle cover fields and two of six segments with fallow fields had similar dips prior to $t_{0}+40$. The cause of the dip is uncertain. It may be a response to cultivation practices or weather or variation in sensor calibration. In either case, its appearance in the spectral data is acquisition dependent.

### 6.1.2 Differences Between Summer Crops

The GRABS temporal plots showed differences among the summer crops in timing and range of peak GRABS values. Corn fields generally peaked earlier than soybean fields and sorghum fields were mixed. Mean corn
fleld values reached a peak between $t_{0}+40$ and $t_{0}+85$ in 11 of 17 segments, whereas sojibean fields reached peak GRABS values after date $t_{0}+85$ in 10 of 15 segments. Three segments lacked adequate acquisitions to use in this analysis. Segments with sorghum fields were evenly split--two of the four segments had sorghum fields which peaked in the period $t_{0}+40$ and $t_{0}+85$ and two segments had sorghum fields which peaked in the period after $t_{0}+85$. During specified periods of the growing season, mean summer crop GRABS differed. In the period between $t_{0}+40$ and $t_{0}+57$, corn mean GRABS values varied between 14.42 and 31.12 . Mean soybean field values were lower, varying between 1.03 and 27.62. Later in the season, the situation reversed. For acquisitions obtained between $t_{0}+85$ and $t_{0}+102$, mean corn values were between 17.62 and 22.63. Soybean mean field values were between 31,52 and 45,65 during the same period: Sorghum field GRABS values varied between 7.17 and 12.18 in the earlier period and between 15.67 and 31.12 later in the season.

GRABS emerged as a significant feature for early season separm ation of summer and non-summer crops. Vegetation within fields of major summer crop confusers tend to be detectable on landsat in the GRABS feature earlier than summer crops, reach peak values before summer crops, and generally described difrerent spectral deyelopment patterns. The descriptions of the development of the various cover types given above and the conclusions drawn from them are based on mean values of ali field means of a given cover type. Individual fields varied significantly from the mean as can be seen in Appendix A by the plots of standard deviation. Some non-summer crop fields, particularly idle cover and fallow fields, mímic summer crops in GRABS development pattern, and, occasicnally, a field identified as summer crop on ground data was observed to follow a typical alfalfa/pasture pattern. The possibility that anomalies are present must be kept in mind during the labeling process.

### 6.2 BRIGHTNESS VALUES

The dip noted in the GRABS feature for summer crops is also observed in the tassel-cap brightness feature. Mean TCl values for corn fields in 12 of 17 segments dipped and then increased in value prior to $t_{0}+40$. The same behavior occurred for soybean fields in 14 of 16 segments and 3 of 4 segments with sorghum. The TCl dip also occurred in some non-summer crop fields. Mean values for idle cover fields in five of eight segments and for fallow fields in 4 of 6 segments had a TCl dip, but the dip was evident in only 5 of 15 segments with alfalfa/pasture.

The time of maximum $T C I$ values varied among the summer crops and between the summer crops and non-summer crops. Maximum TCl values occurred prior to $t_{0}+40$ in corn fields in 13 of 17 segments and in 3 of 4 segments with sorghum fields, but only in 4 of 16 segments with soybean. Maximum soybean TCl values were attained between $\mathrm{t}_{0}+40$ and $\mathrm{t}_{0}+85$ in 6 segments and after $t_{0}+85$ in 6 additional segments.

Maximum TCl values were reached in half the segments with alfalfal pasture fields prior to $t_{0}+40$ and between $t_{0}+40$ and $t_{0}+85$ in the majority of the remaining alfalfa/pasture segments.

TCl values for soybeans remained consistently higher than corn or sorghum values after the $t_{0}+40$ date. Soybean field mean values of TCI varied between 56.38 and 81.68 on acquisitions between $t_{0+40}$ and $t_{0}+57$ and between 75.10 and 90.74 for acquisitions between $t_{0}+85$ and $t_{0}+102$. Corn field values for the same periods varied between 61.73 and 74.98 , and 61,79 and 83.76 respectively. Sorghum TCI values were similar to corn in both time frames.

### 7.0 SUMMARY

Landsat data has proven to be effective in large scale agricultural inventories. However, prior to AgRISTARS, the usefulness of Landsat data was 1 imited by the lack of labeling logic for identification of crops other than small grains and earlier than at-harvest.

To improve the timeliness of Landsat area estimates, UCB under took the experiment described in this report. The results of the experiment included a framework for understanding how Landsat data can be used in conjunction with ancillary data to identify crop groups (in the corn Belt) at any time during the growing season (labeling accuracy plateaus) and the demonstration that first detectability of green vegetation on Landsat was a critical event in the spectral development of summer crops in the Corn Belt which could be used to separate summer crops from non-summer crops as early as 40 days after the $50 \%$-planted date statewide for corn ( $t_{0}+40$ ). Maximum green development was identified as the earliest time in the growing season when corn and soybeans are separable.

While the results of this experiment indicate that procedures for summer crop labeling prior to harvest are feasible, there are a number of significant problems that remain to be examined. The method described in this report for determining the boundaries of the labeing accuracy plateaus assume that a season-specific starting date (from crop calendar information or a planting model) will be avallable, The assumption may not be realistic.

Although $t_{0}+40$ may have no meaning outside the Corn Belt, the labeling accuracy plateau appraoch may be appropriate in other regions. The nature of summer crop cultivation in non-Corn Belt regions needs to be studied before Through-the-Season labeling procedures can be written.

Within the Corn Belt, additional research is required to quantitatively establish the remaining boundaries of the labeling accuracy plateaus. A multiyear approach which incorporates information on crop rotation and planting patterns may yield a reliable date prior to $\mathrm{t}_{0}+40$ for summer crop/non-summer crop discrimination.

TABLE 1. List of "Important Questions" for Crop Type Identification

| Question * | Question Statement | Determinant Characteristic |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | When (during what time period) is a green vegetation canopy detectable or present within the given feature? | Temporal |
| OR THREE MOPE SIMPLE, ALTERNATIVE QUESTIONS: |  |  |
| 1 a | Is there a bare soil stage observable? When? |  |
| 1 b | When is a green vegetation canopy first detectable within the spectral data for a given feature? | Temporal |
| 16 | When is a green vegetation canopy last detectable within the spectral data for a given feature? | Temporal |
| 2 | When do the maximum (or minimum) values for specific spectral variables occur? | Temporal |
| 2a | When does the maximum value for the measure of "infraredness," the green vegetation indicator, occur? | Temporal |
| 2b | When does the maximum or minimum value for the brightness measure (Brightness) occur? | Temporal |
| 2 C | When does the maximum or minimum value for the visual yellow-green measure occur? (Can not be adequately measured with Landsat at this time) | Temporal |
| 3 | What is the value of the maximum for the Green Vegetation Indicator? | Spectral |
| 4 | Is there a senescent biostage observable for the feature? | Spectral |
| 5 | If there is a senescent biostage observable for the feature, when does it occur? | Temporal |
| 6 | What is the shape of the temporal 'profile (Temporal plot) of the green vegetation indicator vs. time? (Does the profile have a plateau, is it broad-peaked, narrowpeaked, tall, squat, etc.?) | Temporal-Spectral |

TAble 2. Location and Acquisition Dates - Data Set Segments

| Segment | Location |  |  |  | cquis | ion | tes |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 123 | Hamilton Co. Indiana | 89 | 107 | 152 | 161 | 197 | 233 | 269 |  |  |
| 127 | Montgomerv Co. Indiana | $\begin{array}{r} 89 \\ 269 \end{array}$ | 107 | 152 | 161 | 197 | 207 | 216 | 243 | 252 |
| 141 | Madison Co. Iowa | 86 | 103 | 130 | 166 | 167 | 212 | 220 |  |  |
| 144 | Wapello Co. Iowa | 130 | 165 | 183 | 219 | 220 | 238 | 246 | 264 | 274 |
| 205 | Clark Co. Missouri | $\begin{array}{r} 93 \\ 282 \end{array}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 101 \\ & 290 \end{aligned}$ | 137 | 155 | 164 | 209 | 218 | 246 | 272 |
| 809 | Ogle Co. Illinois | 101 | 163 | 164 | 209 | 218 | 244 | 254 |  |  |
| 832 | Adams Co. Indiana | 88 | 97 | 151 | 160 | 178 | 232 | 268 |  |  |
| 843 | Henry Co. Indiana | 88 | 97 | 151 | 152 | 160 | 178 | 197 | 251 |  |
| 852 | Randolf Co. Indiana | 88 | 97 | 151 | 160 | 178 | 232 | 250 | 268 |  |
| 853 | Randolf Co. Indiana | 88 | 97 | 151 | 160 | 178 | 232 | 250 | 268 |  |
| 860 | Wells Co. Indiana | $\begin{array}{r} 88 \\ 197 \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{r} 97 \\ 232 \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{r} 107 \\ 251 \end{array}$ | 116 | 151 | 152 | 160 | 161 | 178 |
| 864 | Crawford Co. Iowa | $\begin{array}{r} 87 \\ 258 \end{array}$ | 96 | 141 | 150 | 159 | 186 | 222 | 231 | 248 |
| 865 | Crawford Co. Iowa | $\begin{array}{r} 87 \\ 267 \end{array}$ | 96 | 141 | 153 | 159 | 168 | 186 | 231 | 249 |
| 880 | Monona Co. Iowa | 87 | 96 | 141 | 150 | 186 | 204 | 222 |  |  |
| 881 | Monona Co. Iowa | $\begin{array}{r} 87 \\ 267 \end{array}$ | 96 | 141 | 159 | 186 | 213 | 222 | 231 | 249 |
| 882 | Palo Alto Co. Iowa | $\begin{array}{r} 86 \\ 231 \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{r} 96 \\ 258 \end{array}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 131 \\ & 267 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 141 \\ & 293 \end{aligned}$ | 150 | 159 | 186 | 213 | 221 |
| 1572 | Custer Co. Nebraska | 134 | 153 | 170 | 189 | 206 | 224 | 243 |  |  |
| 1591 | Webster Co. Nebraska | 134 | 152 | 169 | 188 | 205 | 223 | 241 | 259 |  |

TABLE 3: Number of Fields Sampled From Data Set


TOTAL: Summer Crops $=338 \quad$ Non-Summer Crops $=236$

| $C$ | $=$ Corn | $A$ | $=$ Alfalfa |
| ---: | :--- | ---: | :--- |
| $S Y$ | $=$ Soybean | $P$ | $=$ Pasture |
| $S R$ | $=$ Sorghum | $H$ | $=$ Hay |
| $S B$ | $=$ Sugar Beet | $I C$ | $=$ Idle Cover |
| $S U$ | $=$ Sunflower | $F$ | $=$ Fallow |
|  |  |  | $=$ Trees |

Table 4: Calculation of maximum number of days between $50 \%$ planted day of Corn and 50\% planted day of soybean in Indiana.


[^2]TABLE 5: Accuracy to $t_{0}+40$ Date in Predicting Summer Crop Detectability on Landsat

| Segment | $t_{0}+40$ Day | $A$ | $B$ | $C$ | $D$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 123 | 192 | 5 | 12 | $12(100)$ | $12(100)$ |
| 127 | 192 | 5 | 20 | $20(100)$ | $20(100)$ |
| 141 | 174 | 38 | 13 | $13(100)$ | $13(100)$ |
| 144 | 174 | 9 | 15 | $15(100)$ | $15(100)$ |
| 205 | 178 | 31 | 21 | $21(100)$ | $21(100)$ |
| 809 | 184 | 25 | 20 | $20(100)$ | $20(100)$ |
| 832 | 192 | 40 | 20 | $20(100)$ | $20(100)$ |
| 843 | 192 | 5 | 20 | $20(100)$ | $19(95.0)$ |
| 852 | 192 | 40 | 20 | $20(100)$ | $20(100)$ |
| 853 | 192 | 40 | 20 | $20(100)$ | $20(100)$ |
| 860 | 192 | 5 | 16 | $16(100)$ | $15(93.8)$ |
| 864 | 174 | 12 | 16 | $16(100)$ | $16(100)$ |
| 865 | 174 | 12 | 24 | $24(100)$ | $24(100)$ |
| 880 | 174 | 12 | 23 | $23(100)$ | $23(100)$ |
| 881 | 174 | 12 | 20 | $19(95.0)$ | $18(90.0)$ |
| 882 | 174 | 12 | 20 | $20(100)$ | $20(100)$ |
| 1572 | 175 | 14 | 10 | $8(80.0)$ | $8(80.0)$ |
| 1591 | 175 | 13 | 20 | $20(100)$ | $20(100)$ |

$A=$ Number of days from $t_{0}+40$ date to first acquisition after $t_{0}+40$.
$B=$ Number of sampled summer crop fields.
$\mathrm{c}=$ Number of sampled summer crop fields with mean GRABS values above GRABS $=0$ on first acquisition after $t_{0}+40(\%)$.
$D=$ Number of sampled summer crop fields with mean GRABS values above GRABS $=5$ on first acquisition after $t_{0}+40(\%)$.
$*=t_{0}+40$ Day $=40$ days after $50 \%$ corn planted day, statewide.

Summary of Above Data
Number of Segments

| 4 | 5 | 68 | $68(100)$ | $66(97.1)$ |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| 1 | 9 | 15 | $15(100)$ | $13(86.7)$ |
| 5 | 12 | 103 | $102(99.0)$ | $101(98.1)$ |
| 2 | $13 / 14$ | 30 | $28(93.3)$ | $27(90.0)$ |
| 6 | $20+$ | 114 | $114(100)$ | $114(100)$ |

TABLE 6: Evaluation of ( $t_{2}-t_{0}$ ) using accumulated 's-curve' approach.

| \% Corn + Soybean Spectrally Emerged | $t_{\%}$ emerged - .top ${ }_{0}$ (days) |  | $t_{\text {\% emerged }-t_{0}}$ (days) |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Non-Norm $t_{0}=\text { sta }$ <br> pla | zed ide 50\% d date n | Normal $t_{0}=c$ | planted corn |
|  | 1 OWA | INDIANA | IOWA | INDIANA |
| 95\% | 70 days | 51 days | 58 days | 56 days |
| 90\% | 57 days | 45 days | 52 days | 52 days |
| 75\% | 49 days | 41 days | 47 days | 48 days |
| 50\% | 42 days | 33 days | 39 days | 40 days |
| 25\% | 29 days | 17 days | 25 days | 25 days |

Coefficients from $y=a e^{b x}$ curve fit

| $a$ | 6.95 | 10.38 | 7.22 | 7.91 |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| $b$ | .05 | .05 | .05 | .05 |
| $r^{2}$ | .57 | .86 | .46 | .84 |

$A_{m}=$ accuracy estimate from multiyear moiel
$A_{0}=\frac{\text { initial labeling accuracy based on first }}{}$
$t_{0}=50 \%$ of first summer crop planted

$$
t_{1}=\text { all of first sumer crop planted }
$$

## $t_{2}=$ all summer crops detectable


high

high $\begin{aligned} & A_{0}=\text { initial labeling accuracy based on first acquisition after } t_{0} \\ & t_{0}=50 \% \text { corn (or first summer crop) planted }\end{aligned}$
$t_{1}=$ all corn (or first sumer crop) planted
$t_{2}=$ all summer crops detectable (GRABS>0)
$t_{3}=\begin{gathered}\text { peak GRABS value detectable for all probable corn } \\ \text { (or firgt summer crop) }\end{gathered}$
$t_{3}=$ peak GRABS value detectable for all pr
$t_{4}=$ peak GRABS values detectable for all summer crops
$t_{5}=$ all sumer crops at harvest maturity

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FIGURE 3
LOCATION OF SAMPLE SEGMENTS

Figure 4
Method for Determining when Sunmer Crops Have Passed
Landsat Threshold of Green Vegetation Detectability
Figure 4
Method for Determining when Summer Crops Have Passed
Landsat Threshold of Green Vegetation Detectability
Figure 4
Method for Deterwining when Summer Crops Have Passed
Landsat Threshold of Green Vegetation Detectability
-23-

$\Delta T=$ number of days after $50 \%$ planting date
FOR CORN WHEN WINDOW FOR EARLY SEASON
ESTIMATE CLOSES
$\Delta T=X_{1}+x_{2}$

Acquisitions
MR30 (89)
AP17 (107)
JNOI (152)
JN10 (161)
JY16 (197)
JY26 (207)
AGO4 (216)

Figure 5
GRABS/Temporal Plots of
Corn and Soybean Field Means, Segment 127
$X$-axis scales are equal. All fields are detectable 40 days after $50 \%$ planted day for corn.

FlGURE 6. Percentage of Corn and Soybean Pixels above GRABS $=5.0$ us a Function of Time from Statewide Corn 50\% Planted Date.



FIGURE 7. Percentage of Corn and Soybean Pixels above GRABS $=5.0$ as Function of Time from Statewide Corn 50\% Planted Dated Adjusted to CRD Level.



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## APPENDIX A

## GRABS and Brightness versus Time Plots

Plots of GRABS ( $A-1$ to $A-36$ ) and Brightness ( $A-37$ to $A-72$ ) versus time for corn, soybeans and other crops for sample segments listed in Table 2. The actual values equal the plotted value minus 10 . The horizontal line indicates the detection threshold (GRABS $=0$ ). The first vertical line equals $t_{0}+40$; the second vertical line equals $t_{0}+85$.


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[^0]:    *Labeling guidelines for a period st? are called Very-Early season guidelines by definition and may not rely on detectable vegetation for all potential sumner crop fields.

[^1]:    From work at ERIM it has been estimated that approximately $20 \%$ ground cover is necessary in order to reach the threshold of spectral detectability.
    **
    Two GRABS detectability thresholds were used, 0 and 5 , because temporal plots of summer crop field mean values indicated that GRABS values sometimes fluctuated between 0 and 5 prior to $t_{0}+40$. GRABS values did not exceed 5 on any consecutive acquisitions prior to $t_{0}+40$.

[^2]:    * From Indiana Annual

    Crop and Livestock
    Summaries

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[^4]:    ##  <br> $\because$

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