

wabal

(wb1 , wb2 , wb3)

rené gomes
rene.gomes@jrc.ec.europa.eu
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1. Introduction

waba1 (**water balance**) is a linux/windows command-line implementation on the standard FAO water balance as currently computed in AgroMetShell (FAO), GWSIViewer (JRC), CMBox¹ (FAO and EC) and some other tools. It is proposed here in three “flavours” (**wb1** , **wb2** , **wb3**) that differ only in the way in which inputs and outputs are handled.

The simple algorithm was first introduced by Frère and Popov (1979, 1986) as a tool to monitor cereals in the (semi-arid) Sahel at the regional scale. Various modifications were added over the years to enable the approach to be used in humid areas and on other crops as well. It is a very widely tested tool in and outside FAO (Verdin and Klaver, 2002; Rojas et al., 2005; Fischer et al., 2006) and is available, as mentioned, under various names and implementations.

Wabal produces a number of variables/indicators that are used in crop monitoring and forecasting. One of them is the Water Satisfaction Index (**WSI**), which many people use as their main crop monitoring variable². **WSI** measures the extent to which crop water requirements have been met. For instance, **WSI**=100% indicates no water stress; values close to 50% are usually associated with severely water stressed crop from which no yield is expected.

2. The Crop Specific Soil Water Balance³ (CSSWB)

The CSSWB is the standard implementation of the Frère and Popov algorithm. It is a coarse regional model⁴ that describes the water relations of a soil-plant-atmosphere system and puts out the variables (indicators, predictors) that will be used to estimate yields. Typical output variables include actual crop evapotranspiration (ETA) over certain crop growth phases (such as flowering), excess or deficit water, the above mentioned Water Satisfaction Index, and others.

The main reason why a water balance provides value-added variables that are related with crop yields derives from the direct link between the water balance and the energy balance of crops. Plants absorb solar energy for their photosynthesis: the radiant energy (light) is

¹ See http://www.fao.org/NR/climpag/pub/cm_box_4.pdf for an overview and additional links.

² In spite of some shortcomings, e.g. the fact that it is a standardised variable unrelated to production potential, of the fact that $yield=f(WSI)$ reaches a plateau before yields attain their maximum value.

³ Section largely borrowed from Gomes et al., 2009)

⁴ Regional (district, province...) as opposed to local (field scale)

converted to chemical energy but also to heat which, in turn, is used to evaporate water.

Although the mechanism is more complex (Gommes, 1998, 1999), there is a practically direct and linear relation between the amount of water (evapo)transpired and the amount of photosynthetates, provided water stress is not too severe, as has been known since the early work by the Wageningen school (De Wit et al., 1978) and innumerable studies since then. The linear relation holds across several orders of magnitude of spatial scales (from leaf to plant to field to region) and provides the theoretical basis why most quantitative crop modelling resorts to evapotranspiration as the main crop simulation variable.

The CSSWB⁵ is made "crop specific" through the use of crop specific coefficients (crop coefficients) which relate crop water demand to atmospheric evapotranspiration potential, cycle lengths and planting dates.

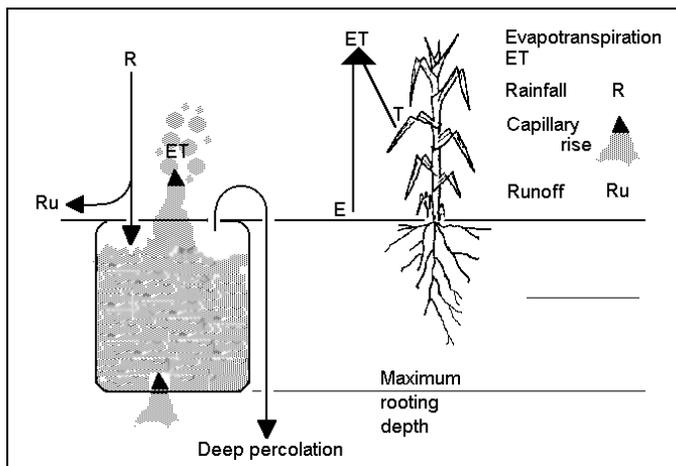


Figure 1: Schematic representation of a crop specific soil water balance. R: rainfall; Ru: run-off; E: soil water evaporation; T: plant water transpiration; ET: evapotranspiration, the sum of E and T. All variables are expressed in litres of water per m² per day or dekad (10-day period), or mm. Capillary rise of water from deeper layers was not taken into account. Illustration simplified from Gommes, 1999.

The CSSWB is typically computed for point locations (typically meteorological stations, or equally spaced gridpoints) at dekad⁶ time steps. Calculations start up to 10 dekads before planting ("pre-season period) in order to ensure that realistic soil moisture values are used at the time of planting, a most critical variable in crop forecasting.

At the end of each time step, soil moisture results from soil moisture at the beginning of the period plus water supply (rainfall and/or irrigation) less crop water requirements⁷ (fig. 1). Soil is mainly characterised by a water holding capacity (WHC⁸). Water supply that exceeds WHC is lost through deep percolation and run-off.

Crop water need and use are normally computed based on one of the numerous available formulae for Potential Evapotranspiration, but mostly using the standard equations proposed by Penman and subsequently modified by Monteith (Allen et al., 1998). The calculation of PET requires five meteorological variables: maximum temperature Tx, minimum temperature Tn, air humidity, wind speed and solar radiation. Unfortunately, the five variables are not always available, so that simplified method are often resorted too (e.g. Hargreaves, based only on extreme temperatures Tx and Tn).

⁵ A complete description is provided by Gommes, 1999.

⁶ A dekad is a ten-day period used in operational agrometeorology. The term derives from a WMO recommendation to distinguish dekads from decades. The dekad numbering starts in January (1-10 January, dekad 1) until December (21-31 December, dekad 36).

⁷ Provided sufficient water is available. If availability is less than requirement, crops undergo a stress.

⁸ The amount of water stored between the top layer and the maximum depth reached by the roots.

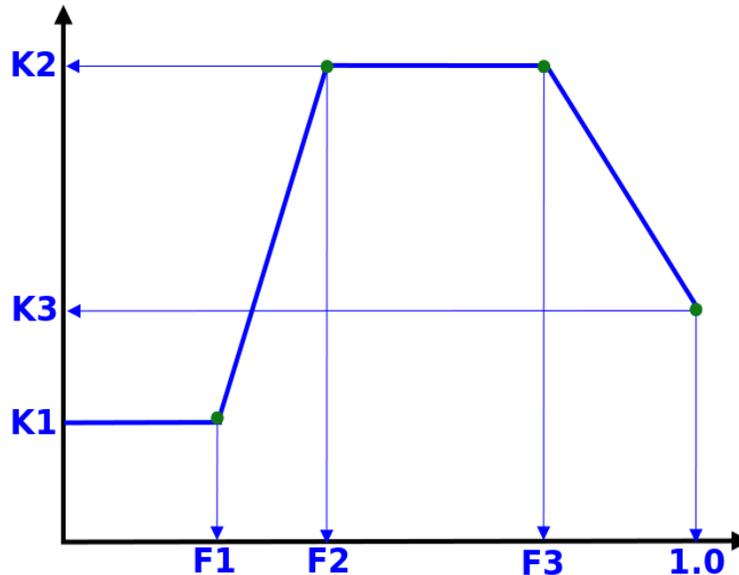


Figure 2: definition of crop coefficients based on six parameters. K_{cr} conventionally subdivides the crop cycle into 4 phenological phases: 1, initial; 2, vegetative; 3 flowering and 4, maturation.

Actual crop water requirements depend on PET as well as crop stage and are estimated, for each dekad of the crop cycle, by multiplying PET by the above-mentioned crop coefficient which depends on crop type and crop stage (phenology). This also assumes that crop phenology is known (especially planting dates and cycle lengths). Crop coefficients are usually defined using six coefficients as illustrated in fig. 2.

3. Format of command line

wb1, **wb2** and **wb3** adopt different command line formats, although most parameters are identical. For all of them, the number of data items (either provided on the command line or in files) can be variable depending on the parameters themselves. For instance, the water balance covers a certain number of “pre-season” dekads (symbolised by **Prs_dek**) as well as the dekads that make up the crop cycle length (symbolised by **Cyc_dek**). The total number of rainfall and PET items required is thus the sum of **Cyc_dek** + **Prs_dek**. The maximum number of dekads allowed (**Max_dek** = **Cyc_dek** + **Prs_dek**) is set to 50 for **wb1** and **wb2** and to 70 for **wb3**.

wb1 reads parameters from the command line, but weather variables (rainfall, PET and optionally irrigation water amounts – all in mm) and crop coefficients are taken from files; detailed results are output to files or to the console. Consistency and error checks are done on the parameters; **wb2** reads all inputs (parameters plus weather variables) from the command line, and does the same level of checks as **wb1**. **wb3** is a fast production version of **waba1**: it takes all inputs from the command line, carries out no checks on the data and writes only summary outputs to the console, where they can be intercepted by any other programme and used as input for further processing. Both **wb1** and **wb2** will intercept data or input errors, display a message and then halt. **wb3** will not diagnose any errors. The philosophy is that testing is to be done with **wb1** and **wb2**, but “production” with **wb3**.

4. Definition of input parameters

Not all parameters are used for all the versions of **waba1**. Details specific to **wb1**, **wb2** and **wb3** are given below.

Cyc_dek: crop cycle length in dekads

Prs_dek: number of pre-season dekads, i.e. the number of dekads before planting over which a soil water balance is computed

Prs_Kcr: pre-season crop coefficient, i.e. a fictitious crop coefficient that is applied to the fields before the crops are actually planted. This value is normally close to **K1** (see below)

WHC_mm: soil water holding capacity, i.e. the amount of water in litres/m² (= mm) that the crop stores in the rooting zone and that is easily available

Bund_mm: the height of the bund (mm) that surrounds the fields (as in irrigated or lowland rice) and that traps water over the soil

Stress_thresh: a number between 0 and 1 that expresses from which fraction of **WHC** the crop starts experiencing a water stress. For instance, with **stress_thresh** set to 0.3 and **WHC_mm** = 100, the crop being monitored is assumed to suffer a water stress if soil moisture drops below 30 mm. The **stress_thresh** is used to compute crop water stress for different phenological phases.

Ri and **xi**: two “atavistic” and very empirical variables that continue to be in demand. **Ri** is the amount (%) by which the water satisfaction index is reduced in the event excess rainfall exceeds **xi**. For instance, assume a crop is not water stressed, and the **WSI** is 100%. with **Ri**=3% and **xi**= 80 mm, the **WSI** drops from 100% to 97% when water excess reaches 80 mm per dekad.

F1, F2, F3, K1, K2, K3: the parameters defining the crop coefficient as well as the phenological phases (see fig. 2).

wb1

wb1 takes input from the command line and from files **RAIN.DAT**, **PET.DAT**, **IRRIG.DAT** and **KCR.DAT**⁹

The **wb1** parameters also include the following:

n/y/a: a switch to indicate the modality of irrigation. **n** denotes no irrigation, i.e. a rainfed crop. **y** specifies planned or farmer supplied irrigation, for which the amounts must be specified; with **a** (automatic irrigation), water is supplied automatically by the programme whenever there is a water stress, i.e. ever time soil moisture drops below the stress threshold. In that case, water is supplied up to the stress threshold (**stress_threshold*WHC**, mm)

v/s/f: specifies the type of output. **v** prints out verbosely detail of calculations to **OUT.TXT**,

⁹ Linux users: note the names are spelled with capitals.

while **s** directs them to the console (screen). With **f**, the summary outputs goes to file **OUT.CSV**.

path - with final / (or \ for windows users) specifies the complete path where input and output files are read/written, i.e. the path of files **RAIN.DAT**, **PET.DAT**, **IRRIG.DAT**, **KCR.DAT**, **OUT.TXT** and **OUT.CSV**.

Command line syntax:

```
wb1 Cyc_dek Prs_dek Prs_Kcr WHC_mm Bund_mm Stress_thresh Ri Xi n/y/a v/s/f path
```

Example

```
wb1 20 5 0.22 100 100 0.80 3 90 n f
/home/ergosum/myfiles/programs/freebasic/projects/wb1/
```

wb2 and wb3

wb2 and **wb3** take all inputs from the command line; as indicated, **wb3** does no check whatsoever on inputs, except for the empty command line, which generates a messages and halts the programme.

The syntax is slightly different for **wb2** and **wb3** (**wb3** does not require the **v/s** switch as all output is to the console)

```
wb2 Cyc_dek Prs_dek Prs_Kcr WHC_mm Bund_mm Stress_thresh Ri Xi n/y/a v/s F1 F2 F3
K1 K2 K3 rainfall_values PET_values [irrigation_values]
```

```
wb3 Cyc_dek Prs_dek Prs_Kcr WHC_mm Bund_mm Stress_thresh Ri Xi n/y/a F1 F2 F3 K1 K2
K3 rainfall_values PET_values [irrigation_values]
```

4. Output samples (all with wb2)

4.1 Pure rainfed crop

```
wb2 10 5 0.5 100 50 0.25 5 50 n v 0.2 0.5 0.8 0.5 1 0.5 21 22 231 24 25 10 11 12 13
14 15 161 171 18 19 23 22 21 120 19 18 17 16 151 141 131 12 11 10 9
```

writes the following output to **OUT.TXT**

Run of 08-17-2010 at 10:47:22

```
Cycle length in dekads                10
# of preseason wabal dekads           5
Pre-season Kcr                         0.5
Water holding capacity in mm          100
Bund height in mm                      50
Deficit threshold (0-1)                0.25
Excess water (Xi, mm) above which WSI_correction is applied 50
WSI_correction (%) when Excess>Xi (0 for no correction) 5
Irrigation ? Yes or No or Automatic I/N/A N
```

Dek	phase	KCr	rain	Irrig	ETP	WatReq	Soilwat	TwatReq	Def	Exc	ETA	Rix	AutIrr
1	0	0.500	21.0	0.0	23.0	11.5	9.5						

2	0	0.500	22.0	0.0	22.0	11.0	20.5						
3	0	0.500	231.0	0.0	21.0	10.5	150.0						
4	0	0.500	24.0	0.0	120.0	60.0	114.0						
5	0	0.500	25.0	0.0	19.0	9.5	129.5						
6	1	0.500	10.0	0.0	18.0	9.0	130.5	9.0	0.0	0.0	9.0	0.0	0.0
7	1	0.500	11.0	0.0	17.0	8.5	133.0	17.5	0.0	0.0	8.5	0.0	0.0
8	2	0.667	12.0	0.0	16.0	10.7	134.3	28.2	0.0	0.0	10.7	0.0	0.0
9	2	0.833	13.0	0.0	151.0	125.8	21.5	154.0	3.5	0.0	125.8	0.0	0.0
10	2	1.000	14.0	0.0	141.0	141.0	0.0	295.0	130.5	0.0	35.5	0.0	0.0
11	3	1.000	15.0	0.0	131.0	131.0	0.0	426.0	141.0	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0
12	3	1.000	161.0	0.0	12.0	12.0	149.0	438.0	0.0	0.0	12.0	0.0	0.0
13	3	1.000	171.0	0.0	11.0	11.0	150.0	449.0	0.0	159.0	11.0	5.0	0.0
14	4	0.750	18.0	0.0	10.0	7.5	150.0	456.5	0.0	10.5	7.5	5.0	0.0
15	4	0.500	19.0	0.0	9.0	4.5	150.0	461.0	0.0	14.5	4.5	5.0	0.0
Total ETA				239.50									
by phase				17.50									
by phase				172.00									
by phase				38.00									
by phase				12.00									
Total Surplus				184.00									
by phase				0.00									
by phase				0.00									
by phase				159.00									
by phase				25.00									
Total Deficit				275.00									
by phase				0.00									
by phase				134.00									
by phase				141.00									
by phase				0.00									
Total water requirement				461.00									
WSI (raw)				51.95									
WSI (corr. for surplus)				46.95									

If **s** is specified instead of **v**:

```
wb2 10 5 0.5 100 50 0.25 5 50 n s 0.2 0.5 0.8 0.5 1 0.5 21 22 231 24 25 10 11 12 13
14 15 161 171 18 19 23 22 21 120 19 18 17 16 151 141 131 12 11 10 9
```

the output to the console is

```
239.5 17.5 172 38 12 183.9 0 0 159 24.9 274.9 0 133.9 141 0 461 52
47
```

i.e. the 18 summary outputs from **OUT.TXT**:

```
Total ETA over crop cycle: 239.50 mm
ETA for phase 1 (initial): 17.50 mm
ETA for phase 2 (vegetative): 172.00 mm
ETA for phase 3 (flowering): 38.00 mm
ETA for phase 4 (maturation): 12.00 mm
Total water surplus over crop cycle: 184.00 mm
Excess water for phase 1: 0.00 mm
Excess water for phase 2: 0.00 mm
Excess water for phase 3: 159.00 mm
Excess water for phase 4: 25.00 mm
Total water deficit over crop cycle: 275.00 mm
Total water deficit for phase 1: 0.00 mm
Total water deficit for phase 2: 134.00 mm
Total water deficit for phase 3: 141.00 mm
Total water deficit for phase 4: 0.00 mm
Total water requirements: 461.00 mm
WSI without empirical excess correction: 51.95 %
WSI with empirical excess correction: 46.95 %
```

4.2 Automatic irrigation

wb2 10 5 0.5 100 50 0.25 5 50 a v 0.2 0.5 0.8 0.5 1 0.5 21 22 231 24 25 10 11 12 13
 14 15 161 171 18 19 23 22 21 120 19 18 17 16 151 141 131 12 11 10 9

writes the following output to **OUT.TXT**

Run of 08-17-2010 at 11:05:04

```
Cycle length in dekads                10
# of preseason wabal dekads          5
Pre-season Kcr                        0.5
Water holding capacity in mm          100
Bund height in mm                     50
Deficit threshold (0-1)               0.25
Excess water (Xi, mm) above which WSI_correction is applied 50
WSI_correction (%) when Excess>Xi (0 for no correction) 5
Irrigation ? Yes or No or Automatic I/N/A A
```

Dek	phase	KCr	rain	Irrig	ETP	WatReq	Soilwat	TwatReq	Def	Exc	ETA	Rix	AutIrr
1	0	0.500	21.0	0.0	23.0	11.5	9.5						
2	0	0.500	22.0	0.0	22.0	11.0	20.5						
3	0	0.500	231.0	0.0	21.0	10.5	150.0						
4	0	0.500	24.0	0.0	120.0	60.0	114.0						
5	0	0.500	25.0	0.0	19.0	9.5	129.5						
6	1	0.500	10.0	0.0	18.0	9.0	130.5	9.0	0.0	0.0	9.0	0.0	0.0
7	1	0.500	11.0	0.0	17.0	8.5	133.0	17.5	0.0	0.0	8.5	0.0	0.0
8	2	0.667	12.0	0.0	16.0	10.7	134.3	28.2	0.0	0.0	10.7	0.0	0.0
9	2	0.833	13.0	0.0	151.0	125.8	25.0	154.0	3.5	0.0	125.8	0.0	3.5
10	2	1.000	14.0	0.0	141.0	141.0	25.0	295.0	127.0	0.0	39.0	0.0	127.0
11	3	1.000	15.0	0.0	131.0	131.0	25.0	426.0	116.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	116.0
12	3	1.000	161.0	0.0	12.0	12.0	150.0	438.0	0.0	24.0	12.0	0.0	0.0
13	3	1.000	171.0	0.0	11.0	11.0	150.0	449.0	0.0	160.0	11.0	5.0	0.0
14	4	0.750	18.0	0.0	10.0	7.5	150.0	456.5	0.0	10.5	7.5	5.0	0.0
15	4	0.500	19.0	0.0	9.0	4.5	150.0	461.0	0.0	14.5	4.5	5.0	0.0

```
Total ETA                268.00
  by phase                17.50
  by phase                175.50
  by phase                 63.00
  by phase                 12.00
Total Surplus            209.00
  by phase                 0.00
  by phase                 0.00
  by phase                184.00
  by phase                 25.00
Total Deficit            246.50
  by phase                 0.00
  by phase                130.50
  by phase                116.00
  by phase                 0.00
Total water requirement  461.00
WSI (raw)                100.00
WSI (corr. for surplus)  95.00
```

4.3 Planned irrigation of 100 mm/dekad at 5 dekad intervals

wb2 10 5 0.5 100 50 0.25 5 50 i v 0.2 0.5 0.8 0.5 1 0.5 21 22 231 24 25 10 11 12 13
 14 15 161 171 18 19 23 22 21 120 19 18 17 16 151 141 131 12 11 10 9 100 0 0 0 0 100
 0 0 0 0 100 0 0 0 0

writes the following output to **OUT.TXT**

Run of 08-17-2010 at 11:11:59

```
Cycle length in dekads                10
# of preseason wabal dekads          5
Pre-season Kcr                        0.5
Water holding capacity in mm          100
Bund height in mm                     50
```

Deficit threshold (0-1) 0.25
 Excess water (Xi, mm) above which WSI_correction is applied 50
 WSI_correction (%) when Excess>Xi (0 for no correction) 5
 Irrigation ? Yes or No or Automatic I/N/A I

Dek	phase	KCr	rain	Irrig	ETP	WatReq	Soilwat	TwatReq	Def	Exc	ETA	Rix	AutIrr
1	0	0.500	21.0	100.0	23.0	11.5	109.5						
2	0	0.500	22.0	0.0	22.0	11.0	120.5						
3	0	0.500	231.0	0.0	21.0	10.5	150.0						
4	0	0.500	24.0	0.0	120.0	60.0	114.0						
5	0	0.500	25.0	0.0	19.0	9.5	129.5						
6	1	0.500	10.0	100.0	18.0	9.0	150.0	9.0	0.0	80.5	9.0	5.0	0.0
7	1	0.500	11.0	0.0	17.0	8.5	150.0	17.5	0.0	2.5	8.5	5.0	0.0
8	2	0.667	12.0	0.0	16.0	10.7	150.0	28.2	0.0	1.3	10.7	5.0	0.0
9	2	0.833	13.0	0.0	151.0	125.8	37.2	154.0	0.0	0.0	125.8	5.0	0.0
10	2	1.000	14.0	0.0	141.0	141.0	0.0	295.0	114.8	0.0	51.2	5.0	0.0
11	3	1.000	15.0	100.0	131.0	131.0	0.0	426.0	41.0	0.0	115.0	5.0	0.0
12	3	1.000	161.0	0.0	12.0	12.0	149.0	438.0	0.0	0.0	12.0	5.0	0.0
13	3	1.000	171.0	0.0	11.0	11.0	150.0	449.0	0.0	159.0	11.0	10.0	0.0
14	4	0.750	18.0	0.0	10.0	7.5	150.0	456.5	0.0	10.5	7.5	10.0	0.0
15	4	0.500	19.0	0.0	9.0	4.5	150.0	461.0	0.0	14.5	4.5	10.0	0.0

Total ETA 355.17
 by phase 17.50
 by phase 187.67
 by phase 138.00
 by phase 12.00
 Total Surplus 268.33
 by phase 83.00
 by phase 1.33
 by phase 159.00
 by phase 25.00
 Total Deficit 155.83
 by phase 0.00
 by phase 114.83
 by phase 41.00
 by phase 0.00
 Total water requirement 461.00
 WSI (raw) 77.04
 WSI (corr. for surplus) 67.04

```

WatSup=WatSoil+Rain+Irrigation
WatBal=WatSup-WatReq
SELECT CASE WatBal
  CASE is >WHCB
    WExc=WatBal-WHCB
    WatSoil=WHCB
    WDef=0
  CASE WHC to WHCB
    WatSoil=WatBal
    WDef=0
    WExc=0
  CASE WHCstress to WHC
    WatSoil=WatBal
    WDef=0
    WExc=0
  CASE 0 to WHCstress
    WatSoil=WatBal
    WDef=WHCstress-WatBal
    WExc=0
  CASE is <0
    WatSoil=0
    WDef=WHCstress-WatBal
    WExc=0
END SELECT

Eta=WatSup
IF WatSup>WatReq then Eta=WatReq

AutIrrig=0
IF AutIrrigOn and WatBal<WHCstress THEN
  AutIrrig=WDef
  Watsoil=WHCstress
end if

```

Figure 3: core of the water balance programme with determination of water surplus (WExc) and deficit (Wdef). WatSup stands for water supply, WatReq for water requirement (crop coefficient * PET), Watsoil for soil moisture. WHC, WHCB (soil WHC + bund height, both in mm), WHCStress and 0 are values the water balance (WatBal) is compared against.

5. Required files

As indicated, input files are required only for **wb1**. Note that output files are overwritten at every run of the programmes.

6. Overall methodology

The core of the algorithms is illustrated in fig. 3 and 4.

Fig. 3 contains a portion of the programme illustrating how the water balance (water supply – water requirements) is compared with various threshold values illustrated in fig. 4. The code is sufficiently clear and should not require any explanation.

The portion of the programme is run for every dekad of the crop cycle.

7. Software implementation

waba1 was programmed using FreeBasic (<http://www.freebasic.net>) version 0.21.0 Beta (released 20100722) in a linux (Ubuntu 10.04) environment. It was compiled under Linux and Windows XP running on a VirtualBox V.3.1.8. The windows version was subsequently tested as well under Windows 6.1.7600.

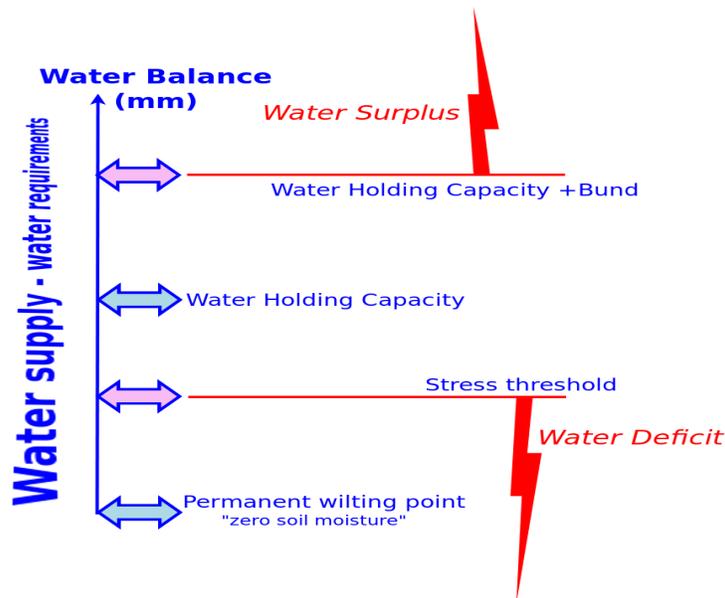


Figure 4: thresholds against which the water balance is compared to determine surplus, deficit and ETA

8. References

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