

Summary Report 5th Open Session of the 75th ICAC (World café)

For The fifth open session 74 participants from the 75th ICAC Plenary convened at 8 round tables to discuss issues of water management that had been previously addressed during the 3rd Open Session.

This event format, usually referred to as World Café, aims to allow a high interaction among participants. The fact that most participants could conduct these discussions in their preferred language – in addition to the five official ICAC languages, two Urdu-speaking tables were also offered – contributed to an intensive and in-depth exchange. Also the differentiation between questions referring to rain-fed areas and questions that focused on irrigated regions allowed participants to discuss aspects which are relevant to cotton production conditions in their home countries.

The questions discussed by the participants were:

- For rain-fed areas:
What challenges exist for water management in rain-fed cotton production?
What can cotton farmers do on an individual and on a group level to improve water management in rain-fed cotton production?
- For irrigated areas:
What can cotton farmers do as a group to improve irrigation water management?
What are the five most important actions a farmer group could do to improve the management of irrigation water?

The groups discussing the water management in rain-fed cotton production regions emphasized the close link between climate change and water scarcity. Good and timely tillage and crop management helped to mitigate the corresponding risks. Retention ponds could serve as a local adaptation measure that villages or cotton farmer groups could establish in order to ensure good practices for water management, thereby not only creating emergency solutions for drought situations, but also income opportunities via aquaculture.

The groups discussing water management challenges in irrigated cotton production regions emphasized the need for well-managed farmers associations that jointly create awareness and assume responsibility for sustainable water management. Training farmers for high water efficiency technologies and measures in cotton production (e.g. alternate furrow irrigation, short furrow, etc.) was regarded as a further pre-requisite for establishing good water management practices in regions with irrigated cotton production.

Further results from the various reports of the table moderators will be available in due course.