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# New polymer to get high yield in rain-deficit areas

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## KEY CHARACTERISTICS

**New Delhi:** The Indian Agriculture Research Institute (IARI) has developed a novel hydrophilic super-absorbent polymer which will help farmers use water with utmost efficiency in arid and semi-arid regions.

The technology, comprising super-absorbent hydrogels, will be commercialized by National Research Development Corporation (NRDC)—a ministry of science and technology vehicle—and Reliance Industries Limited (RIL).

Since hydrogel has capacity to absorb a minimum of 350 times its weight of pure water at 50 degrees celsius, its use will help farmers in getting high productivity by using

- > Less affected by presence of salts in immediate environment
- > Improves physical properties of soils and soil less media
- > Improves seed germination and rate of seedling emergence

- > Improves root growth and density
- > Helps plants withstand prolonged moisture stress
- > Reduces nursery establishment period
- > Reduces irrigation and fertilization requirements of crops

much less quantity of water in rain-deficit areas.

Scientists claim its use will also improve physical properties of soil such as porosity, aggregate stability and hydraulic conductivity. After successfully testing its potential, NRDC and RIL have executed an agreement for its commercialization.

An official statement of the earth science ministry said, "NRDC is about to execute another agreement with a Chennai-based firm for transfer of the same technology."

The ministry claimed "no undesirable effect on crops raised in fields treated with hydrogel has ever been observed or reported".

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