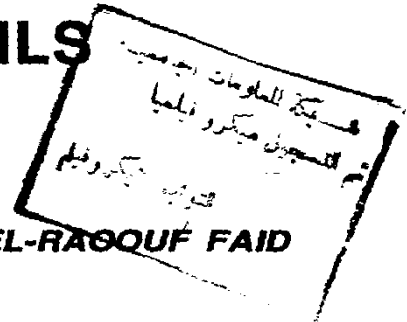


STUDIES ON BIOFERTILIZATION IN DESERT SOILS

By

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ABSTRACT

Two field experiments were carried out in two successive seasons (1989-1990 & 1990 - 1991) to investigate the effects of biofertilization using associative N_2 -fixers (*Azotobacter chroococcum* and *Azospirillum lipoferum*) and/or symbiotic ones (*Bradyrhizobium japonicum*) on the growth and yield of salt tolerant variety of wheat plants. Cultivation was carried out in desert loamy sandy soil (Ras-Sidr, South Sinai). The growing plants were irrigated with a salty water of 7000 ppm of total soluble salts

and supplemented with full or half the normal field dose of inorganic N-fertilizer. Organic manure (garbage compost) was applied at the rate of 0.5% one month before the beginning of experiments. Plant and rhizospheric soil samples were periodically collected during 120 days after wheat cultivation to determine soil total nitrogen, organic carbon content, CO₂ evolution, total microbial count, densities of fungi, actinomycetes, azotobacters, and azospirilla. At harvest time, straw and grain yields were determined as well as total nitrogen content of straw and grains.

The obtained results showed that inoculation with a multistrains inoculant (*Azotobacter*, *Azospirillum* and *Bradyrhizobium*) gave the highest growth and yield of wheat plants in the presence of the full dose of inorganic N-fertilizer.

Key Words:

Azotobacter chroococcum, *Azospirillum lipoferum*, *Bradyrhizobium japonicum*, biofertilizer, rhizosphere, fungi, actinomycetes, garbage compost.

LIST OF CONTENTS

	Page
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	3
2.1. Definitions.....	3
2.2. Nitrogen fixing microorganisms in soil and rhizosphere.....	3
2.3. Biofertilization using associative diazotrophs....	6
2.4. Biofertilization using symbiotic diazotrophs...	17
2.5. Effect of organic matter on the effectiveness of biofertilizers.....	19
2.6. Effect of available nitrogen compounds on the effectiveness of biofertilizers.....	22
2.7. Effect of salinity on the effectiveness of biofertilizers.....	24
3. MATERIALS AND METHODS.....	28
3.1. Materials.....	28
3.1.1. Location of experiments.....	28
3.1.2. Organic manure.....	28
3.1.3. Inorganic fertilizers.....	28
3.1.4. Cultivar.....	28
3.1.5. Inoculants.....	28
3.1.6. Media used.....	31
3.2. Methods.....	35

	Page
3.2.1. Layout of field experiments.....	35
3.2.1.1. The first experiment.....	35
3.2.1.2. The second experiment.....	36
3.2.2. Inorganic ^{and organic} fertilization.....	38
3.2.3. Inoculation procedure	38
3.2.4. Sampling and determinations.....	38
3.2.4.1. Mechanical analysis.....	39
3.2.4.2. Moisture content.....	39
3.2.4.3. Soil pH.....	39
3.2.4.4. Organic carbon.....	39
3.2.4.5. Total nitrogen.....	39
3.2.4.6. Calcium carbonate.....	39
3.2.4.7. Total soluble salts.....	39
3.2.4.8. Electrical conductivity.....	40
3.2.4.9. Exchangeable sodium percentage.....	40
3.2.4.10. Determination of CO ₂ evolution.....	40
3.2.4.11. Microbiological determinations.....	40
3.2.5. Statistical analysis.....	40
4. RESULTS.....	41
4.1. The 1st experiment.....	41
4.1.1. Total nitrogen and organic carbon in soil cultivated with wheat plants as affected by inoculation with associative N ₂ -fixers and N-supplementation.....	41
4.1.1.1. Soil total nitrogen.....	41

	Page
4.1.1.2. Soil organic carbon.....	43
4.1.2. CO ₂ evolved from soil cultivated with wheat plants as affected by inoculation with associative N ₂ -fixers and N-supplementation.....	43
4.1.3. Microbial changes in wheat rhizosphere as affected by inoculation with associative N ₂ -fixers and N-supplementation.....	46
4.1.3.1. Total microbial densities.....	46
4.1.3.2. Densities of azotobacters.....	48
4.1.3.3. Densities of azospirilla.....	50
4.1.3.4. Densities of fungi.....	50
4.1.3.5. Densities of actinomycetes.....	50
4.1.4. Wheat yield as affected by inoculation with associative N ₂ -fixers and N-supplementation ...	54
4.1.4.1. Biological yield.....	55
4.1.4.2. Root dry weight.....	55
4.1.4.3. Straw yield.....	58
4.1.4.4. Grain yield.....	58
4.1.4.5. Nitrogen content of wheat plants.....	61
4.1.4.6. Nitrogen content of wheat grains.....	61
4.2. The 2nd experiment.....	61
4.2.1. Total nitrogen and organic carbon in soil cultivated with wheat plants as affected by inoculation with N ₂ -fixers (associative and/or symbiotic) and N-supplementation.....	64

	Page
4.2.1.1. Soil total nitrogen.....	64
4.2.1.2. Soil organic carbon.....	66
4.2.2. CO ₂ evolved from soil cultivated with wheat plants as affected by inoculation with N ₂ -fixers (associative and/or symbiotic) and N-supplementation.....	67
4.2.3. Microbial changes in wheat rhizosphere as affected by inoculation with N ₂ -fixers (associative and/or symbiotic) and N-supplementation.....	70
4.2.3.1. Total microbial densities.....	70
4.2.3.2. Densities of azotobacters.....	72
4.2.3.3. Densities of azospirilla.....	74
4.2.3.4. Densities of fungi.....	74
4.2.3.5. Densities of actinomycetes.....	77
4.2.4. Wheat yield as affected by inoculation with N ₂ -fixers (associative and/or symbiotic) and N-supplementation.....	79
4.2.4.1. Biological yield.....	79
4.2.4.2. Root dry weight.....	81
4.2.4.3. Straw yield.....	81
4.2.4.4. Grain yield.....	84
4.2.4.5. Nitrogen content of wheat plants.....	86
4.2.4.6. Nitrogen content of wheat grains.....	86
5. GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	90
6. SUMMARY.....	98
7. REFERENCES.....	107
ARABIC SUMMARY.	

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Soil physical analysis of investigated area (Ras-Sidr, South Sinai).....	29
2	Soil chemical analysis of investigated area (Ras-Sidr, south Sinai).....	30
3	Total nitrogen in soil cultivated with wheat plants as affected by inoculation with associative N ₂ -fixers and inorganic N-supplementation.....	42
4	Organic carbon in soil cultivated with wheat plants as affected by inoculation with associative N ₂ -fixers and inorganic N-supplementation.....	44
5	CO ₂ evolution in soil cultivated with wheat plants as affected by inoculation with associative N ₂ -fixers and inorganic N-supplementation.....	45
6	Total microbial densities in the rhizosphere of wheat plants as affected by inoculation with associative N ₂ -fixers and inorganic N-supplementation.....	47
7	Most probable numbers of azotobacters in the rhizosphere of wheat plants as affected by inoculation with associative N ₂ -fixers and inorganic N-supplementation.....	49

Table		Page
8	Most probable numbers of azospirilla in the rhizosphere of wheat plants as affected by inoculation with associative N_2 -fixers and inorganic N-supplementation.....	51
9	Total fungal densities in the rhizosphere of wheat plants as affected by inoculation with associative N_2 -fixers and inorganic N-supplementation.....	52
10	Total actinomycetal densities in the rhizosphere of wheat plants as affected by inoculation with associative N_2 -fixers and inorganic N-supplementation.....	53
11	Effect of inoculation with associative N_2 -fixers and N-supplementation on biological yield of wheat plants.....	56
12	Effect of inoculation with associative N_2 -fixers and N-supplementation on wheat root dry weight after 120 days of cultivation.....	57
13	Effect of inoculation with associative N_2 -fixers and N-supplementation on straw yield of wheat plants.....	59
14	Effect of inoculation with associative N_2 -fixers and N-supplementation on grain yield of wheat plants.....	60
15	Effect of inoculation with associative N_2 -fixers and N-supplementation on nitrogen content of wheat plants.....	62

Table		Page
16	Nitrogen content of wheat grains as affected by inoculation with associative N_2 -fixers and N-supplementation.....	63
17	Soil total nitrogen as affected by inoculation with <i>Bradyrhizobium japonicum</i> + associative N_2 -fixers and supplementation with inorganic N-fertilizer.....	65
18	Soil organic carbon as affected by inoculation with <i>Bradyrhizobium japonicum</i> + associative N_2 -fixers and inorganic N-supplementation	68
19	CO ₂ evolution as affected by inoculation with <i>Bradyrhizobium japonicum</i> + associative N_2 -fixers and inorganic N-supplementation.....	69
20	Total microbial density in the rhizosphere of wheat plants as affected by inoculation with <i>Bradyrhizobium japonicum</i> + associative N_2 -fixers and inorganic N-supplementation.....	71
21	Most probable numbers of azotobacters in the rhizosphere of wheat plants as affected by inoculation with <i>Bradyrhizobium japonicum</i> + associative N_2 -fixers and inorganic N-supplementation.....	73
22	Most probable numbers of azospirilla in the rhizosphere of wheat plants as affected by inoculation with <i>Bradyrhizobium japonicum</i> + associative N_2 -fixers and inorganic N-supplementation.....	75

Table		Page
23	Total fungal densities in the rhizosphere of wheat plants as affected by inoculation with <i>Bradyrhizobium japonicum</i> + associative N ₂ -fixers and inorganic N-supplementation.....	76
24	Total actinomycetal densities in the rhizosphere of wheat plants as affected by inoculation with <i>Bradyrhizobium japonicum</i> + associative N ₂ -fixers and inorganic N-supplementation.....	78
25	Effect of inoculation with <i>Bradyrhizobium japonicum</i> + associative N ₂ -fixers and N-supplementation on biological yield of wheat plants.....	80
26	Effect of inoculation with <i>Bradyrhizobium japonicum</i> + associative N ₂ -fixers and N-supplementation on wheat root dry weight after 120 days of cultivation.....	82
27	Effect of inoculation with <i>Bradyrhizobium japonicum</i> + associative N ₂ -fixers and N-supplementation on straw yield of wheat plants.....	83
28	Effect of inoculation with <i>Bradyrhizobium japonicum</i> + associative N ₂ -fixers and N-supplementation on grain yield of wheat plants.....	85

Table		Page
29	Effect of inoculation with <i>Bradyrhizobium japonicum</i> + associative N ₂ -fixers and N-supplementation on nitrogen content of wheat plants.....	87
30	Nitrogen content of wheat grains as affected by inoculation with <i>Bradyrhizobium japonicum</i> + associative N ₂ -fixers and inorganic N-supplementation.....	88

1- INTRODUCTION

It is well known that cultivation of cereals in sandy soils is of a great importance especially in developing countries like Egypt, where desert lands are prevailing (about 94% of the whole area) and nutrition is mainly based on cereals.

Much interest is focussed on dinitrogen fixing systems to improve plant growth and consequently straw and grain yields of many of graminious plants. However, for a long time, stress has been given to such systems as important means for providing nitrogen to the growing plants and for overcoming the continuous loss of nitrogen resources from soil due to draining, denitrification processes and plant uptake.

Even under modern agriculture, only a fraction of the crop need for nitrogen comes from synthetic inorganic and natural organic fertilizers, the remaining portion is satisfied through biological N_2 -fixation. **Alexander (1977)** reported that an amount of 10^8 to 10^9 tons of nitrogen were introduced to the soil via biological N_2 -fixation per annum.

Biofertilization with associative and symbiotic N_2 -fixers gave appreciable increases in both grain and straw yields of different cereal crops (**Hegazi, et al 1979, Fouad, 1981; Hess, 1981; Ishac et al 1986 b; Subba-Rao, 1986; El-Borollosy et al 1986; Yousef, et al 1986; Saleh et al 1986; Arshad et al 1987; Abdel-Aziz et al 1989; Ishac et al 1991 a,b,c,d; El-Demerdash et al 1992, 1993**). The stimulatory effect of N_2 -fixers on plant growth can attributed not only to N_2 -fixation activity, but also to the production of growth promoting substances (**Reynders & Vlassak, 1982; El-Haddad, et al 1986**).