

**USE OF ARTIFICIAL NEURAL NETWORKS TO
STUDY ENGINEERING FACTORS FOR
APPLYING DIFFERENT SOIL
AMENDMENTS**

By

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ABSTRACT

Diia Said Mounir Boulos: Use of Artificial Neural Networks to Study Engineering Factors for Applying Different Soil Amendments. Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Department of Agricultural Engineering, Faculty of Agriculture, Ain Shams University, 2011.

The main objective of this study is to use artificial neural network (ANN) models to predict some physico-engineering factors: bulk density, hydraulic conductivity, infiltration rate, soil penetration resistance and available water. Models also dealt with sorghum yield productivity, profit and WUE related to applying different soil amendments. The inputs for two ANN models included: Bitumen Emulsion (BE), Polyacrylamide (PAM), Organic Manure (OM), Sand (S), Silt (Si), Clay (C), Initial bulk density (IBd), Initial hydraulic conductivity (IKa), Initial infiltration rate (IIr), Initial soil penetration resistance (ISp) and Initial available water (IAW). The predicting outputs of one ANN model are: (Bd), (Ka), (Ir), (Sp) and (AW) and for a second ANN model are: productivity, profit and WUE.

Multilayer feedforward ANN was trained using a backpropagation learning algorithm. The optimal configuration for the first ANN model consisted of 3 layers (11-15-5) with sigmoid transfer function at 100,000 training runs. The optimal configuration for the second ANN model consisted of 4 layers (11-20-10-3) with hyperbolic tangent transfer function at 50,000 training runs.

During recall process, the results showed that the variation between observed and predicted outputs were very small and the correlation coefficients were 0.9850, 0.9903, 0.9946, 0.9987 and 0.9901 for Bd, Ka, Ir, Sp and AW respectively. Meanwhile, they were 0.9989, 0.9915 and 0.9856 for productivity, profit and WUE respectively.

Key Words:

Artificial neural network, soil amendments, physico-engineering factors, productivity, profit, WUE.

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CONTENTS

SUBJECT	Page
LIST OF TABLES	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	v
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	2
2.1. Feature of the brain.	2
2.2. Biological neurons.	2
2.3. Artificial Neural Networks (ANN).	4
2.3.1. What is ANN.	4
2.3.2. Basic ANN.	4
2.3.3. Electronic Implementation of ANN.	5
2.3.4. The McCulloch-Pitts Model of Neuron.	6
2.4. The Perceptron.	7
2.4.1. Single-layer Perceptron.	8
2.4.2. Multi-layer Perceptron.	10
2.5. Learning Processes.	12
2.5.1. Supervised learning.	12
2.5.2. Unsupervised learning.	14
2.6. Learning rates.	16
2.6.1. Learning rules.	17
2.6.2. Hebb's rule.	17
2.6.3. Hopfield rule.	18
2.6.4. Delta rule.	18
2.6.5. Gradient descent rule.	19
2.6.6. Kohonen rule.	19
2.7. Soil amendments.	20
2.7.1. Definition of soil amendments.	20
2.7.2. Categories of soil amendments.	20
2.7.3. Effect of soil amendments on soil physical properties.	21
2.8. ANN applications in agricultural engineering.	30

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS	37
3.1. Experimental site.	37
3.2. Types of soil amendments.	37
3.2.1. Bitumenous emulsion.	37
3.2.2. Polyacrylamide.	38
3.2.3. Organic manure.	38
3.3. Land preparation.	38
3.4. Experimental design.	39
3.5. Soil physical properties determinations.	40
3.5.1. Soil bulk density.	40
3.5.2. Soil penetration resistance.	40
3.5.3. Infiltration rate.	40
3.5.4. Hydraulic conductivity.	41
3.5.5. Soil moisture constants.	41
3.6. Water Use Efficiency.	42
3.7. The ANN model.	42
3.7.1. The first ANN model.	43
3.7.2. The second ANN model.	44
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	45
4.1. Effect of soil amendments on engineering factors.	45
4.1.1. Soil bulk density.	45
4.1.2. Soil hydraulic conductivity.	47
4.1.3. Soil infiltration rate.	51
4.1.4. Soil penetration resistance.	53
4.1.5. Soil available water.	56
4.2. Productivity, Water Use Efficiency and profit.	59
4.3. The first ANN model.	62
4.3.1. The first ANN model algorithm.	62
4.3.2. The first ANN model training.	63
4.3.3. The first ANN model accuracy.	65
4.3.4. The first ANN model input and output.	68
4.3.5. The first ANN model recall.	73

4.4. The second ANN model.	75
4.4.1. The second ANN model algorithm.	75
4.4.2. The second ANN model training.	78
4.4.3. The second ANN model accuracy.	80
4.4.4. The second ANN model input and output.	83
4.4.5. The second ANN model recall.	86
5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	91
6. REFERENCES	94
7. APPENDIX	113
ARABIC SUMMARY	

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Subject	page
1	Textural class of the experimental soil.	37
2	Chemical properties of the experimental soil.	37
3	Effect of Bitumen Emulsion on soil hydraulic conductivity.	48
4	Effect of Polyacrylamide on soil hydraulic conductivity.	48
5	Effect of Organic Manure on soil hydraulic conductivity.	48
6	Effect of Bitumen Emulsion on soil penetration resistance.	53
7	Effect of Polyacrylamide on soil penetration resistance.	53
8	Effect of Organic Manure on soil penetration resistance.	53
9	Effect of Bitumen Emulsion on soil available water.	56
10	Effect of Polyacrylamide on soil available water.	56
11	Effect of Organic Manure on soil available water.	57
12	Effect of different soil amendments on sorghum productivity, water use efficiency and profit.	59
13	The first ANN model recall statistics.	74
14	The second ANN model recall statistics.	90
15	Data inputs and outputs from literatures used in training first ANN model.	121
16	Observed and predicted physico-engineering factors from recall first ANN model.	124
17	Data inputs and outputs from literatures used in training second ANN model.	125
18	Observed and predicted parameters from recall second ANN model.	128

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. No.	Subject	Page
1	A real simple neuron.	3
2	Basic ANN.	5
3	Model of processing element.	6
4	Various transfer function.	6
5	Symbolic illustration of linear threshold gate.	7
6	More general neural model.	8
7	Linearly separable pattern.	9
8	AND function.	9
9	OR function.	9
10	NOT function.	10
11	XOR function.	10
12	Multilayer perceptron architecture.	11
13	Supervised learning paradigm.	13
14	Kohonen network.	15
15	Error and changes in weight for ANN model.	19
16	Spraying machine.	38
17	Layout of field experiment.	39
18	Hydraulic conductivity of the soil.	42
19	Effect of Bitumen Emulsion on soil bulk density at different depths.	46
20	Effect of Polyacrylamide on soil bulk density at different depths.	46
21	Effect of Organic Manure on soil bulk density at different depths.	47
22	Effect of different soil amendments on soil bulk density at different depths.	47
23	Effect of Bitumen Emulsion on soil hydraulic conductivity at different depths.	49
24	Effect of Polyacrylamide on soil hydraulic conductivity at different depths.	49

25	Effect of Organic Manure on soil hydraulic conductivity at different depths.	50
26	Effect of different soil amendments on soil hydraulic conductivity at different depths.	50
27	Effect of Bitumen Emulsion on soil infiltration rate.	51
28	Effect of Polyacrylamide on soil infiltration rate.	51
29	Effect of Organic Manure on soil infiltration rate.	52
30	Effect of different soil amendments on soil infiltration rate.	52
31	Effect of Bitumen Emulsion on soil penetration resistance.	54
32	Effect of Polyacrylamide on soil penetration resistance.	54
33	Effect of Organic Manure on soil penetration resistance.	55
34	Effect of different soil amendments on soil penetration resistance.	55
35	Effect of Bitumen Emulsion on soil available water.	57
36	Effect of Polyacrylamide on soil available water.	57
37	Effect of Organic Manure on soil available water.	58
38	Effect of different soil amendments on soil available water.	58
39	Effect of different soil amendments on sorghum productivity, water use efficiency and profit.	61
40	Backpropagation learning process.	62
41	The architecture of the first ANN model.	63
42	Network definition for the first ANN model.	64
43	Correlation coefficient vs. 100,000 iterations for first ANN model.	65
44	Root Mean Square Error vs. 100,000 iterations for first ANN model.	66
45	Targets/Outputs vs. pattern sequence for soil bulk density under 100,000 iterations.	66

46	Targets/Outputs vs. pattern sequence for soil bulk density under 100 iterations.	67
47	Scatter comparison of normalized training targets vs. first ANN outputs for 100,000 iterations.	67
48	Scatter comparison of normalized training targets vs. first ANN outputs for 100 iterations.	68
49	Contribution percent of input nodes on soil bulk density for first ANN model.	70
50	Contribution percent of input nodes on soil hydraulic conductivity for first ANN model.	70
51	Contribution percent of input nodes on soil infiltration rate for first ANN model.	71
52	Contribution percent of input nodes on soil penetration resistance for first ANN model.	71
53	Contribution percent of input nodes on soil available water for first ANN model.	72
54	Contribution percent of hidden layer nodes on output layer for first ANN model.	72
55	Recall window for first ANN model.	73
56	Observed vs. predicted soil bulk density for the first ANN model.	74
57	First ANN predicted and observed soil bulk density.	75
58	The architecture of the second ANN model.	79
59	Network definition for the second ANN model.	79
60	Root Mean Square Error vs. 50,000 iterations for second ANN model.	80
61	Correlation coefficient vs. 50,000 iterations for second ANN model.	81
62	Targets/Outputs vs. pattern sequence for sorghum productivity under 50,000 iterations.	81
63	Targets/Outputs vs. pattern sequence for profit under 50,000 iterations.	82

64	Targets/Outputs vs. pattern sequence for water use efficiency under 50,000 iterations.	82
65	Scatter comparison of normalized training targets vs. second ANN outputs for 50,000 iterations.	83
66	Contribution percent of input nodes on sorghum productivity for second ANN model.	84
67	Contribution percent of input nodes on profit for second ANN model.	84
68	Contribution percent of input nodes on water use efficiency for second ANN model.	85
69	Contribution percent of first hidden layer nodes on output layer for second ANN model.	85
70	Contribution percent of second hidden layer nodes on output layer for second ANN model.	86
71	Recall window for second ANN model.	86
72	Observed vs. predicted productivity for the second ANN model.	87
73	Second ANN predicted and observed productivity.	88
74	Observed vs. predicted profit for the second ANN model.	88
75	Second ANN predicted and observed profit.	89
76	Observed vs. predicted WUE for the second ANN model.	89
77	Second ANN predicted and observed WUE.	90
78	Targets/Outputs vs. pattern sequence for soil hydraulic conductivity under 100,000 iterations.	113
79	Targets/Outputs vs. pattern sequence for soil hydraulic conductivity under 100 iterations.	113
80	Targets/Outputs vs. pattern sequence for soil infiltration rate under 100,000 iterations.	114
81	Targets/Outputs vs. pattern sequence for soil infiltration rate under 100 iterations.	114
82	Targets/Outputs vs. pattern sequence for soil penetration resistance under 100,000 iterations.	115

83	Targets/Outputs vs. pattern sequence for soil penetration resistance under 100 iterations.	115
84	Targets/Outputs vs. pattern sequence for soil available water under 100,000 iterations.	116
85	Targets/Outputs vs. pattern sequence for soil available water under 100 iterations.	116
86	Observed vs. predicted soil hydraulic conductivity for the first ANN model.	117
87	Observed vs. predicted soil infiltration rate for the first ANN model.	117
88	Observed vs. predicted soil penetration resistance for the first ANN model.	118
89	Observed vs. predicted soil available water for the first ANN model.	118
90	First ANN predicted and observed soil hydraulic conductivity.	119
91	First ANN predicted and observed soil infiltration rate.	119
92	First ANN predicted and observed penetration resistance.	120
93	First ANN predicted and observed soil available water.	120

1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of food security has the biggest concern for third world countries. The decrease in cultivated area in Egypt, is a result of population growth and urban sprawl and encroaching on farmland by concrete forests. Solution lies in reclamation of desert land, which is characterized by poor physical and engineering properties.

Soil amendments play an important role in the growth of crops. They achieve significant economic returns and suitable seed bed for germination, root growth and increased productivity. There are several types and rates of soil amendments such as Bitumen Emulsion, Polyacrylamide and Organic Manure.

On the other hand, computer applications, based on the use of disaggregated data, and knowledge deal with needed data and information about the problem to be solved. However, we must make decisions based on partial information to close this gap. Artificial intelligence and artificial neural networks, could acquire the ability to learn and solve the problems and make decisions in a way mimic to human capabilities.

Therefore, this study aims to assist and guide the farmer or the investor on how to get the fastest and most reliable predicted results as a result of the use of different types and rates of soil amendments and their impact on the engineering factors of soil to improve crop productivity, especially in newly reclaimed lands through the use of neural networks.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Feature of the brain.

The exact workings of the human brain are still a mystery. Yet, some aspects of this amazing processor are known. In particular, the most basic element of the human brain is a specific type of cell which, unlike the rest of the body, doesn't appear to regenerate. Because this type of cell is the only part of the body that is not slowly replaced, it is assumed that these cells are what provide us with our abilities to remember, think, and apply previous experiences to our every action. These cells, all 100 billion of them, are known as neurons. Each of these neurons can connect with up to 200,000 other neurons, although 1,000 to 10,000 are typical.

The power of the human mind comes from the sheer numbers of these basic components and the multiple connections between them. It also comes from genetic programming and learning.

The individual neurons are complicated. They have a myriad of parts, sub-systems, and control mechanisms. They convey information via a host of electrochemical pathways. There are over one hundred different classes of neurons, depending on the classification method used. Together these neurons and their connections form a process which is not binary, not stable, and not synchronous.

2.2. Biological neurons.

All natural neurons have the same four basic components Fig. (1). These components are known by their biological names - dendrites, soma, axon, and synapses. Dendrites are extensions of the soma which act like input channels. These input channels receive their input through the synapses of other neurons. The soma then processes these incoming signals over time. The soma then turns that processed value into an output which is sent out to other neurons through the axon and the synapses.