

EFFECT OF BIOFERTILIZERS, MICRONUTRIENTS AND NPK FERTILIZATION ON COTTON YIELD

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ABSTRACT

Two field experiments were conducted in both 2000 and 2001 summer seasons at Sakha Exper. Station to study the effect of some nutritional treatments on cotton plant growth (var. Giza 86), seed cotton yield, lint percent, oil content of seeds, protein content of kernel seeds and the net return. The treatments included N, P, K, micronutrients (coatengien) and 3 biofertilizers being, Nitrobien, Phosphorine and Rhizobacterien such products are produced by the General Organization for Agriculture Equalization. These products were examined in combination with half recommended dose of NPK in order to improving seed cotton yield, quality, reducing the required mineral fertilizer by about 50%, increasing the highest net return and protect the agroecosystem from pollution.

The obtained results reveal that:

1. Each of the tested biofertilizer and micronutrient treatments could compensate more than one half the NPK need of cotton plant accompanied with a notable yield increased.
2. The balanced fertilization including micronutrients (Fe: Mn: Zn) used as coating and macronutrients (NPK), could increase the NPK fertilizers efficiency, obtaining high seed cotton yield under both NPK levels and increase lint percent, plant height, No. of open bolls/plant and boll weight.
3. The study showed the vital importance of soil analysis, which have low levels of available N, P, K and some micronutrients it must be fertilized with the economically beneficial amounts of these nutrients, when we cropped with cotton.
4. Protein, oil content in seeds and N, P & K content of cotton fully developed leaves at the beginning of flowering stage were increased by 1/2 NPK (35 - 15 + 12 kg/fed.), micronutrients (coatengien) and biofertilizers (Nitrobien, Phosphorine and Rhizobacterien) applications.
5. The highest cotton seed yield and net return were obtained by full cofertilization with $N_{70}P_{30}K_{24}$ and $N_{35}P_{15}K_{12}$ + biofertilizer (a + b + c) and micronutrients (coatengien).
6. These clearly confirmed that the biofertilizer treatments could be used under the Egyptian conditions as effective tool to compensate the quantities of used the chemical fertilizers and consequently reduce the consumption of these fertilizers which turn minimizing the agricultural costs as well as the Egyptian environmental pollution.

Keywords: Cotton, biofertilizers, micronutrients, chemical fertilizers, yield components

INTRODUCTION

Egyptian cotton *Gossypium barbadense* L. is an important cash crop for the Egyptian farmer and a vital source of raw material for Egyptian textile industry and thus plays an important role in the Egyptian economy. Its contribution to the national income is so great to the extent that we should study all the factors that affect cotton yield in order to maximize the yield per unit area. In addition, Egyptian cotton quality gives us a relative advantage for

cotton marketing worldwide. The intensive cultivation depletes the Egyptian soil of some plant nutrients, which could be compensated by fertilizer application. The early recorded results on cotton fertilization under local conditions indicated that nitrogen is one of the most important factors that exerts marked effects on the yield and yield components of cotton (Eid and Hamissa, 1969, Baker and Mahmoud 1977, Mahmoud *et al.* 1985, Yassen *et al.*, 1990, Gindy *et al.*, 1991 and El-Akabawy *et al.*, 2000).

The response of cotton to phosphorus and potassium is lower than that of nitrogen, but it is still profitable to the farmers.

Application of micronutrients to cotton was studied by several researchers who indicated that cotton plants responded positively to micronutrients (El-Aggory and Monged, 1980; Abd El-Hadi *et al.*, 1985 and Monged *et al.*, 1991).

Nowadays, on the way of clear agriculture with minimum pollution effects, the use of biofertilizers is recommended by several investigators to substitute the chemical fertilizers (Saber, 1993 and El-Aggory *et al.*, 1996 and 2001).

Therefore the present investigation was designed to study the ability of some biofertilizers and some micronutrients alone or combined with chemical fertilizers for covering the N, P and K requirements of cotton plants on cotton yield production and the net return and saving the environment against pollution by extra chemical fertilizers application.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Two field experiments were conducted during 2000 and 2001 summer seasons at the Exper. Farm of Sakha Agriculture Research Station using cotton var. Giza 86 to study the effect of some biofertilizers [Nitobien, Phosphorine, Rhizobacterien and Coatengien] alone or combined with $1/2$ NPK levels [35 kg N + 15 kg P_2O_5 + 12 kg K_2O /fed. (half recommended dose)] on cotton plant growth, seed cotton yield, some components and the net return. The experiment was designed in complete randomized block with four replicates. The plot size was 1/400 feddan.

The treatments were:

1. Control (without any fertilizers).
2. N + P + K = 70 kg N + 30 kg P_2O_5 + 24 kg K_2O /fed.
3. $1/2$ NPK.
4. $1/2$ NPK + Nitobien (a)
5. $1/2$ NPK + Phosphorine (b)
6. $1/2$ NPK + Rhizobacterien (c)
7. $1/2$ NPK + Coatengien (d)
8. $1/2$ NPK + a + b + c + d.

The tested biofertilizers and micronutrient are:

1. Nitobien: a set of nonsymbiotic N-fixing bacteria (*Azospirillum* sp. + *Azotobacter* sp.).
2. Phosphorine: a set of P-dissolving bacteria (*Bacillus megatherium* var. *phosphaticum*).

3. Rhizobacterien: containing symbiotic N-fixing bacteria (*Rhizobium leguminosarum*).
4. Coatengien: a chelating micronutrient fertilizer contains Fe, Mn and Zn at the ratio of 2: 1: 2 by weight and used at the rate of 15 g/1 kg seeds.

All these materials are produced and distributed commercially by the General Organization Equalization Fund. Ministry of Agriculture, Egypt.

The nitrogen as ammonium sulphate (20.5% N) was side dressed in two equal doses, the first after thinning (33 days after sowing) and the second after one month later. Phosphorus and potassium fertilizers were added during soil preparation.

Inoculation with biofertilizers were performed through mixing seeds with the appropriate amount of them after coating with Arabic gum as an adhesive material just prior to sowing. Sowing took place at April 19 and 18 in both seasons of 2000 and 2001, respectively. A soil sample from the experimental field was taken before P and K application to investigate soil fertility status. Soil and plant analysis were conducted according to Jackson (1973). The physical and chemical analysis of the soil are given in Table (1). Seeds content of soil was determined according to A.O.A.C. (1970). Lint percentage (%) was calculated as the ratio between weight of lint (g) and seed cotton weight (g). Data obtained were subjected to analysis of variance (Snedecor and Cochran, 1980). The treatment means were compared using the least significant differences test (L.S.D) at the 5% level of probability (Waller and Duncan, 1969).

Table 1: Some physical and chemical properties of the soil samples taken from the experimental field.

Seasons	Texture Class	O.M (%)	PH (1: 2.5)	CaCO ₃ (%)	EC dS m ⁻¹	Macronutrients		Micronutrients			
						Total N ppm	Available ppm				
							P	K	Fe	Mn	Zn
2000	Clayey	1.9	7.9	3.3	2.60	550	5.6	380	11.9	4.2	0.75
2001	Clayey	1.8	8.2	3.0	2.65	450	5.4	370	10.1	3.6	0.65

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Effect of nitrogen phosphorus and potassium on seed cotton yield:

Seed cotton yield, the most important parameter, was affected positively and significantly by NPK application and its splitting. Positive response of yield to NPK application of 70 + 30 + 24 kg/fed. rate in the two seasons are recorded in Table 2 177.83% increase over the control. However, the % increase value reached to 143.13% with biofertilizers combined with chemical fertilizers (1/2 NPK + a + b + c + d) treatment. This means that combination of biofertilizers with suitable doses of chemical fertilizers could help to increase the efficiencies of these fertilizers, saving the environment from the high chemical fertilizers (saving about 50% of chemical fertilizers) and accordingly producing satisfactory and good seed cotton yield. The results of El-Akabawy *et al.* (2000), Abd El-Hadi *et al.* (1997), Gindy *et al.* (1991), Makram *et al.* (1994) and Abd El-Hadi *et al.* (1987) on cotton crop confirm these findings. The data of cotton seed yield also indicate that the

application of chemical fertilizers alone yielded a significantly better effect than that of biofertilizers alone, this may be attributed to the slow release of biofertilizers can not provide the N, P and K requirements of cotton crop alone (Prasad and Prasad, 1995).

Similar results were recorded in Egypt (El-Aggory *et al.*, 1996). As presented in Table (2) seed cotton yield show marked increases due to micronutrient fertilizers treatment. The increases range between 116.04% (Coatingien alone) and 143.13% (with combination of 1/2 NPK + a + b + c + d) in comparison to control treatment. Similar results were reported by several researchers (Abd El-Latif *et al.*, 1990; Monged *et al.*, 1991; Genaidy *et al.*, 1994; Abd El-Hadi *et al.*, 1997 and El-Akabawy *et al.*, 2000).

Cotton yield and its components:

Regarding lint percent, the results in Table (2) show clearly that the increases in lint % were insignificant when Coatingien, Nitroben, Phosphorine and Rhizobacterien. Remarkable higher lint % was gained by NPK (18.85%). The increase became higher (15.15%) under the 1/2 NPK + a + b + c + d treatment. It is interesting to note that the highest lint % was obtained with biofertilizer when associated with both coatingien and 1/2 NPK.

As shown in Table (3), cotton plant characteristics were significantly affected by biofertilizers and micronutrients (coatingien). All of the characters increased compared with that of the control treatment. NPK and 1/2 NPK + a + b + c + d treatments had the greater influence on growth than other treatments. The plant height, open bolls per plant, boll weight and seed cotton yield increased with the biofertilizers and micronutrients in both seasons.

As seen in Table (4) the mean values of N, P, K and ten leaves dry weight as influenced by biofertilizers and micronutrients NPK and 1/2 NPK + a + b + c + d treatments applications were cased the greater influenced on N, P, K and dry weight. These increase in N, P, K and dry weight contents in the developed cotton leaves at the beginning of flowering stage were cased increase in cotton yield may be due to the biofertilizers and micronutrients treatments to cotton plants which led to the depletion of N, P and K in the soil solution during the growth period of plants. Therefore the N, P and K contents in the developed cotton leaves were in the range of satisfactory nutrients content. Cotton yield response to biofertilizers and micronutrients has been recorded by several Egyptian authors (El-Agory *et al.*, 1996; El-Akabawy *et al.*, 2000; Abdel-Reheem *et al.*, 1991; Ragaa, 1976 and Mahmoud *et al.*, 1985). Also in India Prasad and Prasad (1995) found that, N-fixing bacteria was reported as improving cotton yield factor, by several investigators.

Seeds content of oil and kernel seeds content of protein:

Data in Table (5) indicate that addition of chemical fertilizers and biofertilizers to cotton crop leads generally to an increase in oil and protein percentage in the seeds compared with that of the control regardless of the rate of application. Protein percent increased to somewhat by splitting NPK.

Table 2: Seed cotton yield per feddan and lint percent as affected by different fertilization treatments.

Fert. Treatments	Rates kg/fed.	Seed cotton yield/fed. kg				Lint %			
		2000 season	2001 seasons	Average	Increase %	2000 season	2001 seasons	Average	Increase %
Control	00	425.5	695.6	682.3	-	31.53	32.35	31.94	-
NPK	70+30+24	1215.2	1473.5	1344.4	177.83	37.40	38.52	37.96	18.85
1/2 NPK	35+15+12	813.6	985.4	899.5	85.89	33.65	35.10	34.38	7.64
1/2 NPK + Nitroben (a)	35+15+12	985.4	1095.3	1040.4	115.00	35.45	36.45	35.95	12.55
1/2 NPK + Phosphorine (b)	35+15+12	1030.2	1062.5	1046.4	116.24	35.30	36.60	35.95	12.55
1/2 NPK + Rhizobacterin (c)	35+15+12	1095.3	1121.8	1108.6	129.10	35.75	37.10	36.43	14.06
1/2 NPK + Coatengien (d)	35+15+12	915.5	1065.3	990.4	104.67	34.80	35.35	35.08	9.83
1/2 NPK + a + b + c + d.	35+15+12	1117.5	1235.4	1176.5	143.13	36.10	37.45	36.78	15.15
L.S.D. 0.05		19.60	21.34	20.92	20.82	0.58	0.87	0.75	12.32

Table 3: Cotton characteristics as affected by different fertilization treatments.

Fert. Treatments	Cotton characteristics	Rates kg/fed.	First season (2000)					Second season (2001)						
			Plant height cm.	Ten leaves dry wt. g.	OB	BW g	SCP g	SCF kg	Plant height cm.	Ten leaves dry wt. g	OB	BW g	SCP g	SCF kg
Control		0	65.00	4.32	3.9	1.53	6.08	425.5	68.52	4.65	4.8	1.63	7.75	542.3
NPK		70+30+24	81.45	7.86	7.4	2.36	17.36	1215.2	89.16	7.94	8.8	2.38	21.05	1473.5
1/2 NPK		35+15+12	73.16	6.35	4.7	2.47	11.62	813.6	75.95	6.89	5.7	2.45	14.08	985.4
1/2 NPK + Nitroben (a)		35+15+12	78.52	7.17	5.8	2.43	14.08	985.4	81.20	7.28	6.5	2.42	15.65	1095.3
1/2 NPK + Phosphorine (b)		35+15+12	71.50	6.77	6.2	2.39	14.72	1030.2	72.42	6.95	6.4	2.39	15.18	1062.5
1/2 NPK + Rhizobacterin (c)		35+15+12	77.30	7.20	6.6	2.36	15.65	1095.3	79.15	7.37	6.7	2.38	16.03	1121.8
1/2 NPK + Coatingin (d)		35+15+12	78.16	6.90	5.3	2.47	13.08	915.5	82.13	7.15	6.3	2.41	15.22	1065.3
1/2 NPK + a + b + c + d		35+15+12	79.60	7.05	6.8	2.35	15.96	1117.5	82.93	7.18	7.4	2.37	17.65	1235.4
L.S.D. 0.05			6.14	2.13	1.15	0.31	1.06	19.60	5.52	2.35	0.56	0.36	1.72	21.34

OB = Open bolls per plant
BW = Boll weight

SCP = Seed cotton yield per plant
SCF = Seed cotton yield per feddan.

Table 4: Mean values of N, P, K and dry weight contents of fully developed cotton leaves at the beginning of flowering stage as affected by different fertilization treatments.

Fert. Treatments	Rates kg/fed.	Ten leaves dry weight g		Concentration %					
				N		P		K	
		2000 season	2001 season	2000 season	2001 season	2000 season	2001 season	2000 season	2001 season
Control	00	4.32	4.65	3.10	2.80	0.19	0.17	1.90	1.80
NPK	70+30+24	7.86	7.94	4.30	4.90	0.32	0.39	3.40	3.90
1/2 NPK	35+15+12	6.35	6.89	4.10	3.80	0.25	0.27	2.80	3.10
1/2 NPK + Nitroben (a)	35+15+12	7.17	7.28	4.50	4.80	0.24	0.26	3.20	3.40
1/2 NPK + Phosphorene (b)	35+15+12	6.77	6.95	4.30	4.70	0.29	0.30	3.10	3.50
1/2 NPK + Rhizobacterin (c)	35+15+12	7.20	7.37	4.20	4.60	0.23	0.27	2.70	3.40
1/2 NPK + Coatingin (d)	35+15+12	6.90	7.15	4.10	4.40	0.26	0.28	2.90	3.30
1/2 NPK + a + J + c + d	35+15+12	7.05	7.18	4.60	4.80	0.28	0.35	3.10	3.40
L.S.D. 0.05		2.13	2.35	0.22	0.32	0.07	0.08	0.38	0.45

Table (5): Oil and protein contents of the cotton seeds as affected by different fertilization treatments.

Fert. Treatments	Rates kg/fed.	Oil %		Protein %		Increase %	Average	Increase %
		2000 season	2001 seasons	2000 season	2001 seasons			
Control	00	17.93	18.15	41.35	42.52	-	41.94	-
NPK	70+30+24	21.23	22.45	21.06	59.15	21.06	58.15	38.65
1/2 NPK	35+15+12	19.23	20.42	9.92	57.25	9.92	56.45	34.60
1/2 NPK + Nitroben (a)	35+15+12	19.56	20.80	11.86	57.95	11.86	57.05	36.03
1/2 NPK + Phosphorine (b)	35+15+12	19.42	21.10	12.31	57.35	12.31	56.65	35.07
1/2 NPK + Rhizobacterin (c)	35+15+12	19.65	21.75	14.75	58.20	14.75	57.55	37.22
1/2 NPK + Coatingin (d)	35+15+12	18.95	20.65	9.76	56.90	9.76	56.50	34.72
1/2 NPK + a + b + c + d	35+15+12	19.82	21.75	15.24	56.95	15.24	57.70	37.58
L.S.D. 0.05		0.54	0.58	1.58	0.83	1.58	0.87	1.98

Table (6): Cost benefit of different treatments applied to cotton plants.

Fert. Treatments	Kentar/fed.				Economical value L.E./fed.									
	Yield		Yield increase		Total price		Cost of application		Total cost		Yield increase value		Net return of treatment	
	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd	1 st	2 nd
	2.70	3.44	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Control	7.72	9.36	5.02	5.92	215.1	215.1	20.0	24.0	235.1	239.1	2259.0	2664.0	2023.9	2424.9
NPK	5.17	6.26	2.47	2.82	107.6	107.6	15.0	18.0	122.6	125.6	1111.5	1269.0	988.9	1143.4
1/2 NPK + Nitroben (a)	6.26	6.95	3.56	3.51	109.6	109.6	25.0	30.0	134.6	139.6	1602.0	1579.5	1467.4	1439.9
1/2 NPK + Phosphorine (b)	6.54	6.75	3.84	3.31	109.6	109.6	25.0	30.0	134.6	139.6	1728.0	1489.5	1593.4	1349.9
1/2 NPK + Rhizobacterien (c)	6.95	7.12	4.25	3.68	109.6	109.6	25.0	30.0	134.6	139.6	1912.5	1656.0	1777.9	1516.4
1/2 NPK + Coatingien (d)	5.81	6.76	3.11	3.32	109.6	109.6	25.0	30.0	134.6	139.6	1399.5	1494.0	1264.9	1354.4
1/2 NPK + a + b + c + d.	7.10	7.84	4.40	4.40	115.6	115.6	25.0	30.0	140.6	145.6	1980.0	1980.0	1839.4	1834.4

Kentar of seed cotton yield 157.5 kg
 450.0 L.E. (local price, 2000 and 2001)
 Biofertilizer = 2 L.E. (local price of pure chemicals).
 1 kg N = 1.35 L.E.
 1 kg P = 2.5 L.E.
 1 kg K = 1.90 L.E.
 Coatingin=2L.E.
 1st = First season (2000)
 2nd = Second season (2001)

Seed content of protein reached the maximum (on an average of about 38.65% and 37.58%) when plants received NPK (70 + 30 + 24) kg/fed. and 1/2 NPK (35 + 15 + 12 kg/fed.) + biofertilizers (Nitrobien, Phosphorine and Rhizobacterien) + micronutrients (Coatingien). The increase in protein percent over the control amounted reached to 57.15% in the first season and to 58.12% in the second one. On the other hand, it can be noticed from Table (5) that there is a little increase association between oil content in the seeds. This result is in good agreement with that obtained by El-Akabawy *et al.* (2000) and Ragaa (1976).

Economic benefit study:

Data presented in Table (6) show the net return values obtained by different treatments. It is clearly shown that higher values "net return" were gained by the treatment NPK (70 + 30 + 24 kg/fed), compared with that 1/2 NPK (35 + 15 + 12 kg/fed.). In addition, the highest benefit value was obtained with the treatment of biofertilizers (Nitrobien + Phosphorine + Rhizobacterien) associated with micronutrients (Coatingien) under the 1/2 NPK (35 + 15 + 12 kg/fed.). Similar economical trend on cotton seed yield was reported by El-Akabawy *et al.* (2000); Genaidy *et al.* (1994) and Abd El-Latif *et al.* (1990).

CONCLUSION

These clearly confirmed that the biofertilizer treatments could be used under the Egyptian conditions as effective tool to compensate the quantities of used the chemical fertilizers and consequently reduce the consumption of these fertilizers which turn minimizing the agricultural costs as well as the Egyptian environmental pollution.

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تأثير التسميد بالمخصبات الحيوية والعناصر الصغرى والاسمدة النتروجينية والفوسفاتية والبيوتاسية على إنتاجية محصول القطن
عبدالمجيد أبوالمعاطى عبدالمجيد
قسم بحوث تغذية النبات - معهد بحوث الأراضى والمياه والبيئة - مركز البحوث الزراعية - الجيزة - مصر

أقيمت تجربتان حقليتان بالمزرعة البحثية لمحطة البحوث الزراعية بسخا - محافظة كفر الشيخ خلال موسمي ٢٠٠٠ ، ٢٠٠١م لدراسة تأثير استخدام ثلاثة من المخصبات الحيوية التجارية من انتاج هيئة صندوق الموازنة الزراعية وهي النيتروبيين ، الفوسفورين ، الريزوبكتيرين ، وكذلك بعض العناصر الصغرى فى صورة كوتججين مع استخدام مستويين من السماد النيتروجينى والفوسفور والبيوتاسيوم وهم ٧٠+٣٠+٢٤ ، ٣٥+١٥+١٢كجم/فدان وذلك على تحسين انتاجية وجودة محصول القطن من ناحية خفض معدل السماد المعدنى وتقليل النفقات والتلوث البيئى من ناحية أخرى.

وقد أوضحت النتائج المتحصل عليها كما يلى:

- ١- باستخدام المخصبات الحيوية وأسمدة العناصر الصغرى أمكن تعويض أكثر من نصف الاحتياجات السمادية المعدنية لمحصول القطن مع زيادة واضحة للمحصول.
- ٢- التسميد المتوازن المتضمن العناصر الكبرى (ن - فو - بو) والعناصر الصغرى (ح - من - ز) خلط مع البذرة عمل على زيادة كفاءة السماد المعدنى والحصول على محصول أعلى تحت كل مستوى من ن - فو - بو بجانب زيادة محصول القطن الزهر وكذلك زيادة تصافى الحليج ومعدل التيلة. وزيادة طول النبات وزيادة عدد اللوز المتفتح وزيادة وزن اللوزة.
- ٣- أظهرت الدراسة الأهمية الكبرى لاختبارات التربة قبل عمل التوصيات السمادية.
- ٤- زيادة نسبة البروتين والزيت فى بذور القطن ومحتوى أوراق القطن كاملة النمو من الأزوت والفوسفور والبيوتاسيوم عند بداية الأزهار نتيجة استخدام نصف معدل ن - فو - بو والعناصر الصغرى والمخصبات الحيوية إلا أن زيادة نسبة الزيت فى البذور كانت أقل .
- ٥- أعلى محصول القطن الزهر وعائد اقتصادى تم الحصول عليه كان فى حالة التسميد المشترك بـ (ن ٧٠ - فو ٣٠ - بو ٢٤) وكذلك بـ (ن ٣٥ - فو ١٥ - بو ١٢) كجم /فدان مع الأسمدة الحيوية والعناصر الصغرى خلطاً مع البذرة.
- ٦- هذه النتائج تؤكد بوضوح مدى فاعلية استخدام الأسمدة الحيوية تحت الظروف المصرية فى توفير الإسراف من استخدام الأسمدة الكيماوية المضافة مما يؤدي إلى تقليل التكاليف الزراعية والتلوث البيئى فى مصر.