Studies on the Effects of Liming Acidic Soils on Improving Soil Chemical Properties and Yield of Crops: A Review

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Abstract
Soil acidity is one of the main factors that limit and prevent sustained agricultural productivity and production in many parts of the world (Sumner and Noble, 2003). It is estimated that approximately 50% of the world’s arable soils are acidic and may be subjected to the effect of aluminum (Al) toxicity of which the tropics and sub-tropics account for 60% of the acid soils in the world (Sumner and Noble, 2003). It is mostly distributed in developing countries, where population growth is fast and demands for food and fiber is increasing. Moreover, the cause of soil acidity is high amount of precipitation that exceeds evapotranspiration, which leaches appreciable amounts of exchangeable bases from the soil surface and continuous application of acid forming chemical fertilizers on highly weathered tropical soils increase soil acidity problem (Nekesa, 2007; Temesgen et al., 2014). Therefore, acid soils possess toxic concentrations of Al\(^{3+}\) and Mn\(^{2+}\), deficient concentrations of P, and a low availability of bases, which together cause a reduction in crop yield (Schroder et al., 2010). The presence of Al in plant tissues interferes with Ca and Mg uptake from soil, as well as damaging the chloroplast and mitochondrial membrane (Meriño-Gergichevich et al., 2010).

Soil acidity affects the growth of crops because acidic soil contain toxic levels of aluminum and manganese and characterized by deficiency of essential plant nutrients such as P, N, K, Ca, Mg, and Mo when the soil pH falls below 5.5; and the plant root system is affected by high Al concentrations because of Al interferes with the uptake, transport, and utilization of essential plant nutrients such as P, K, Ca, Mg, and water, as well as enzyme activity in the roots (Wang et al., 2006; Lofoton et al., 2010; M Abdulaha-Al Baquy et al., 2016). The degree of toxicity depends upon how high the concentration of soluble or exchangeable Al\(^{3+}\) is and how low the pH is (Crawford et al., 2008). Soil acidity can also reduce the availability of phosphorous by forming insoluble compounds when combined with Fe and Al oxide at pH < 5.0 (Chude et al., 2004; Kim, 2010). Thus, due to the increased acidity of the soil, inorganic phosphorous applied to the soil becomes fixed or immobilized (Tinker and Nye, 2000). Therefore, acid soils possess toxic concentrations of Al\(^{3+}\) and Mn\(^{2+}\), deficient concentrations of P, and a low availability of bases, which together cause a reduction in crop yield (Schroder et al., 2010). The presence of Al in plant tissues interferes with Ca and Mg uptake from soil, as well as damaging the chloroplast and mitochondrial membrane (Meriño-Gergichevich et al., 2010).

To make soils less acid, it is a common practice to apply a material that contains calcium and/or magnesium oxides or carbonates. Amelioration of acidic soils is beneficial to plant growth because it improves soil pH and replenishes nutrients (Moon et al., 2014). Moreover, lime applied to acidic soils raises the pH of soils, resulting in enhanced availability of nutrients, such as P, N, Ca, Mg, Mo etc. and improved crop yields though it reduces exchangeable acidity (Caires et al., 2005; Nekesa, 2007; Kisinyo et al., 2009). Lime has been known as effective ameliorant to reduce soil acidity, decrease exchangeable Al as well as Al saturation (Caires et al., 2008; Achalu et al., 2012; Sadiq and Babagana, 2012). Moreover, the fixed P would be released for plant uptake after liming, the amount of additional P needed has to be determined experimentally (Waigwa et al., 2003). This review article is presenting the causes and forms of soil acidity and lime treatment of acidic soil with the objective to review the effect of lime treatment of acid soil on soil chemical property and crop performance.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Effect of liming on soil chemical properties

In an attempt to address soil acidity problems, the application of lime has remarkably improved soil pH to be optimum desired for crops, increased availability of essential nutrients and ultimately increased crop yield. According to Abdissa et al. (2018) showed that the highest increment of pH from 4.83 at the control to 6.05 and reduction of exchangeable Al from 1.70 to 0.09 cmolc·kg$^{-1}$ were obtained from combined application of lime at 4 t ha$^{-1}$. The most significant decrease in exchangeable acidity (0.17 cmolc kg$^{-1}$) was observed in soil that was treated with 6 t ha$^{-1}$lime applied alone (93%) and combined application of lime at 4 t ha$^{-1}$ with vermicompost at 7.5 tons ha$^{-1}$ by (81%). The highest contents of OM (4.1%) and total nitrogen (0.29%) were obtained from combined application of lime at 4 tons CaCO$_3$ ha$^{-1}$ and vermin-compost at 7.5 tons ha$^{-1}$.

According to Sultana et al. (2009) also observed the application rates of lime levels to soil progressively increased soil pH and increased availability of P, Ca and Mg in soils. Liming is beneficial for wheat production in the Ranishankail soil series of Dinajpur. The application of lime 2 t ha$^{-1}$ appears to be optimum for desired soil pH for wheat (>pH 6.0), increased availability of essential nutrients and ultimately increased wheat productivity. Application of lime improves soil pH above 5.5 for about four years only (Kisinyo, 2016). Getachew et al. (2017) showed that application of lime rates raised soil pH close to the optimum pH requirement of barley; but radically decreased the exchangeable Al$^{3+}$ to a minimum level of 0.1 cmol kg$^{-1}$ which enhanced available phosphorus as a result of increased pH and decreased acidity level.

The Domagoj et al. (2012) studied the significant liming impact on soil chemical properties and maize grain yield. Application of different rates of lime progressively raised soil pH (5.27 to 8.4). Available phosphorus content was improved 8.6 to 13.1 mg/100g soil by higher liming rates. Andy and Abdullah (2016) indicated that soil chemical analysis after harvest showed that liming increased soil pH, soil N, organic C, available P, exchangeable of K and Mg, decreased of Al exchangeable and Al saturation compared with no lime plot.

Achalu et al. (2012) reported that applied the different rates of lime and soil pH were developed to establish optimum lime required to reduce the severity of exchangeable acidity raise the soil pH under different land use systems. According to Tadesse et al. (2018) revealed that the highest application of 6 t ha$^{-1}$ lime rate increased the soil pH from 5.07 to 5.64 and high significantly reduced the exchangeable acidity from 0.96 to 0.19cmolc kg$^{-1}$ and exchangeable Al from 0.37 to 0.0cmolc kg$^{-1}$. As Adane (2014) study indicated that application of 3.75 t ha$^{-1}$ lime increased soil pH from 5.03 to 6.72 and significantly reduced the exchangeable acidity 0.97 to 0.36 mg kg$^{-1}$. Moreover, liming significantly (P ≤ 0.05) increased Cation Exchange Capacity 19.18 to 33.34 cmol (+) kg$^{-1}$; available Phosphorus 5.36 to 7.04 mg kg$^{-1}$ and decreased available micronutrients.

The Fageria et al., (2008) studied that application of lime influence on common bean changes in soil chemical properties of an Oxisol under no-tillage system. Application of lime significantly affect soil chemical properties in the top (0-10 cm) as well as in the sub (10-20 cm) soil layer in favor of higher bean yield (Table 1). The soil pH and base saturation values were significantly increased with increasing application of lime rate in the top (0-10 cm) as well as in the sub-soil layer (10-20 cm). Whereas acidity saturation significantly (P < 0.01) decreased with increasing application of lime rate as expected. Soil pH and base saturation values were higher in the top (0-10cm) soil layer compared with sub-soil layer (10-20 cm). The acidity saturation and H$^+ +$ Al values were significantly decreased with increasing application lime rate and values of these two soil chemicals properties were higher in the sub-soil (10-20 cm) layer compared with top soil layer (0-10 cm). The CEC significantly decreased at 12 and 24 Mg lime ha$^{-1}$ rates compared with control (no lime) treatment.
Table 1. Selected soil chemical properties after harvest of common bean crops at two soil depths as influenced by liming treatments

| Soil property          | Lime rate (Mg ha\(^{-1}\)) | F-Test | CV % |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|------|
|                        | 0  | 12 | 24 |        |
|                        | (0–10 cm depth)              |        |     |
| pH                     | 5.4c | 6.7b | 7.1a | ** 2  |
| Base saturation (%)    | 27.9c | 70.5b | 84.3a | ** 21 |
| H+Al (cmol c kg\(^{-1}\)) | 7.0a | 2.3b | 1.2c | ** 19 |
| Acidity Saturation (%) | 7.2a | 2.1b | 1.6c | ** 25 |
| Ca (cmol kg\(^{-1}\)) | 1.9c | 3.9b | 4.7a | ** 10 |
| Mg (cmol kg\(^{-1}\)) | 0.5b | 1.4a | 1.4a | ** 13 |
| CEC (cmolc kg\(^{-1}\)) | 9.7a | 7.9b | 7.5b | ** 8  |
| (10–20 cm depth)       |        |     |     |
| pH                     | 5.3c | 6.1b | 6.5a | ** 2  |
| Base Saturation (%)    | 24.6c | 49.5b | 62.8a | ** 21 |
| H+Al (cmol c kg\(^{-1}\)) | 7.1a | 4.4b | 3.1c | ** 14 |
| Acidity Saturation (%) | 7.6a | 5.2b | 3.7c | ** 7  |
| Ca (cmol kg\(^{-1}\)) | 1.7c | 2.9b | 3.8a | ** 15 |
| Mg (cmol kg\(^{-1}\)) | 0.4c | 1.1b | 1.3a | ** 15 |
| CEC (cmolc kg\(^{-1}\)) | 9.4a | 8.7ab | 8.4b | ** 11 |

Values are averages of three bean crops at harvest.

**, NS Significant at the 1% probability level and no significant, respectively. Means followed by the same letter in the same line for the same parameter under different lime treatments are statistically not significant at the 5% probability level by Tukeys test.

Source: (Fageria et al., 2008)

Kebede and Dereje (2017) showed that application of lime results in reduction of exchangeable acidity 3.55±0.07 to 0.93 cmol Kg\(^{-1}\), Al saturation 2.86±0.01 to 0.027cmol/kg and thereby increasing soil pH (H\(_2\)O) 5.3 to 6.9. Asmare et al. (2015) revealed that the highest lime rate (11.2 to n ha\(^{-1}\)) significantly increased the pH from 4.89 to 6.03 and reduced the exchangeable acidity from 2.22 to 0.14 cmolc kg\(^{-1}\) and exchangeable Al from 1.28 to 0.07 cmolc kg\(^{-1}\). The highest lime rates (11.2 t ha\(^{-1}\)) also significantly increased Bray I extractable P by 96% and the Olsen P by 1 24%, over the control.

Effect of lime treatment on crops yield

Application of lime improves the yield of crops if an acidic soil has essential nutrients reduced unavailable to crops due to low pH. However, if the soils are already depleted of nutrients, limited response is expected to application lime only (Marschner, 2011). According to Osundwa et al. (2013), soil acidity problems can be corrected by the use of lime. Applications of lime improved soil conditions resulting in increase in, available P, yield and nutrient uptake (N and P). A combination of lime and phosphorus fertilizer resulted in higher grain production than that with lime or P used independently (Kisinyo, 2016).

Sultana et al. (2009) observed that the grain yields of wheat were positively correlated with soil pH, available P, Ca and Mg contents of postharvest soils. Tiller number per plant, grains per spike, grain and straw yields were significantly affected by liming. The application rate of 2.0 ton lime ha\(^{-1}\) produced grain yield of 4659 kg ha\(^{-1}\) which was statistically similar to those treatments in 2.5, 3 and 3.5 t ha\(^{-1}\) lime rates but higher to those in applications of 0, 05, 1 and 1.5 t ha\(^{-1}\) lime rates. Application of lime was increased total uptake of P, S, Ca and Mg which was mainly associated with increased wheat yields.

Liming is an important practice to achieve optimum yields of all crops grown on acid soils. Shiferaw and Anteneh (2014) have reported increase in barley yield as a result of increased pH and reduced exchangeable aluminum and in part due to improved nutrients recovery as a result of lime application. Sole application of 3.7 ton lime ha\(^{-1}\) has also been reported to have increased wheat grain yield by twice of the control treatment (no limed) (Guangdi et al., 2009).

The application of lime showed to increase the overall production of various crops. The previous studies done on different crops demonstrated that when 2, 1.5 and 2.2 t ha\(^{-1}\) of lime applied in wheat; there were yield increases of 1767, 2020 and 1090 kg ha\(^{-1}\), respectively. The lime rate of 10, 6 and 1.65 t ha\(^{-1}\) applied in the fields of barley; there were yield increases of 361, 670 and 2057 kg ha\(^{-1}\), respectively. The lime rate of 10 and 6 t ha\(^{-1}\) applied in the fields of maize; there were yield increases of 2640, 1400 and 6100 kg ha\(^{-1}\), respectively. The lime rate of 5.6 and 1t ha\(^{-1}\) applied in the fields of soybean; there were yield increases of 148 and 481 kg ha\(^{-1}\), respectively. The lime rate of 4.2 t ha\(^{-1}\) applied in the field of potato the yield increase was 10,000 kg ha\(^{-1}\). The lime rate of 2 t ha\(^{-1}\) applied in the field of cabbage and cauliflower the yield increases were 10,000 kg ha\(^{-1}\) and 5,000 kg ha\(^{-1}\), respectively (Table 2).
Table 2. Effects of lime on yield of some main crops

| Crops   | Control Grain Yield (kg ha⁻¹) | Lime treated grain Yield (kg ha⁻¹) | Yield Advantages (%) | Amount of Lime (t ha⁻¹) | References                  |
|---------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Wheat   | 2895                          | 4659                              | 61                   | 2                        | (Sultana et al., 2009)     |
| Wheat   | 2710                          | 4730                              | 75                   | 1.5                      | (Kamaruzzaman et al., 2013) |
| Wheat   | 890                           | 1980                              | 123                  | 2.2                      | (Mekonnen et al., 2014)    |
| Barley  | 675                           | 1036                              | 53                   | 10                       | (Achalu et al., 2012)      |
| Barley  | 2270                          | 2940                              | 30                   | 6                        | (Tadesse et al., 2018)     |
| Barley  | 3060                          | 5117                              | 67                   | 1.65                     | (Getachew et al. 2017)     |
| Maize   | 9240                          | 11880                             | 29                   | 0.725                    | (Mihiretu et al., 2014)    |
| Maize   | 2200                          | 3600                              | 64                   | 3.2                      | (Mbakaya et al., 2011)     |
| Maize   | 4100                          | 10200                             | 249                  | 0.725                    | (Mihiretu et al., 2014)    |
| Potato  | 14000                         | 24000                             | 71                   | 4.2                      | (Nduwumuremyi et al., 2013) |
| Soybean | 613                           | 761                               | 24                   | 5.6                      | (Dessalegn et al., 2018)   |
| Soybean | 2013                          | 2494                              | 25                   | 1                        | (Maria et al., 2014)       |
| cabbage | 56000                         | 66000                             | 18                   | 2                        | (Nazarl and Shaheb, 2016)  |
| cauliflower | 47000                      | 52000                             | 11                   | 2                        | (Nazarl and Shaheb, 2016)  |
| Beans   | 1030                          | 2300                              | 123                  | 4.42                     | (Beernaert, 1999.)         |

Abreha et al. (2013) reported that the applications of combined NP fertilizers along with Wukro and Sheba limes (NP + Wukro lime and NP + Sheba lime) revealed significant increase over control by about 239 and 233% in grain yield and by 174 and 172% in biomass yield, respectively. As a result of the application of NP + Wukro lime and NP + Sheba lime, the grain yield obtained by application of only NP rise by about 86 and 90%, respectively. Mekonnen et al. (2014) revealed the combined application of 5 t manure and 2.2 t ha⁻¹ lime increased grain yield and straw yield by 279% and 187%, respectively over the control treatment. As Fageria et al. (2008) study indicated that liming is an effective method of increasing common bean yield in Brazilian Oxisols. Application of 12 Mg lime ha⁻¹ increased mean bean yield about 40% compared with control treatment (no limed). Increases in shoot dry weight and pod number were mainly responsible for yield increase with liming treatments.

According to Temesgen et al. (2014), that studies on the effects of lime on grain yield and yield components of barley combined over two years is presented in Table 2. The highest mean grain yield, biomass yield, plant height and number of tillers were recorded in the lime amended plots. The results showed that the highest significant grain yield and biomass yield were recorded by application of only NP rise by about 86 and 90%, respectively. Mekonnen et al. (2014) revealed the combined application of 5 t manure and 2.2 t ha⁻¹ lime increased grain yield and straw yield by 279% and 187%, respectively over the control treatment. As Fageria et al. (2008) study indicated that liming is an effective method of increasing common bean yield in Brazilian Oxisols. Application of 12 Mg lime ha⁻¹ increased mean bean yield about 40% compared with control treatment (no limed). Increases in shoot dry weight and pod number were mainly responsible for yield increase with liming treatments.

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Table 3. Number of tillers per square meter, TSW, HLW, grain yield, biomass yield and plant height as affected by lime combined over two years.

| Lime rate L (Mg ha⁻¹) | No. of tillers/m² | NSPS | TSW | HLW | Grain yield (kg ha⁻¹) | Biomass yield (kg ha⁻¹) | Plant height (cm) |
|-----------------------|------------------|------|-----|-----|----------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| 0                     | 285.4d†          | 31.2d| 45.2b| 65.0a| 2544.4d              | 7619.7d                | 100.2c           |
| 0.55                  | 303.1c           | 34.6c| 46.6a| 65.2a| 3334.9c              | 9420.3c                | 107.1b           |
| 1.10                  | 312.4bc          | 39.7b| 47.2a| 65.2a| 3796.0b              | 11005.0b               | 109.3ab          |
| 1.65                  | 323.8ab          | 45.1a| 47.6a| 65.4a| 4213.1a              | 11956.7a               | 111.6a           |
| 2.20                  | 335.0a           | 46.3a| 47.7a| 65.5a| 4297.5a              | 12325.4a               | 111.7a           |
| LSD (0.05)            | 16.9             | 2.2  | 1.1  | ns  | 200.5                | 770.5                 | 2.8              |

Note: NSPS = number of seeds per spike; TSW = thousand seed weight; HLW = hectaroliter weight; †Mean values within a column that share similar letters are not significantly different at p<0.05; respectively; ns = Not significant

Source: Temesgen et al. (2014).

Getachew et al. (2017) reported that the application of lime and P fertilizer had significantly improved grain yield of barley and soil chemical properties. Mean barley yield increment in the combined analysis at 1.65 t ha⁻¹ lime combined with 20 kg ha⁻¹ P application was 183.5% control.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Soil acidity associated to Al toxicities, soil erosion and soil nutrient depletion are the main soil related constraints to agricultural development in parts of developing countries relying on agricultural to feed their growing
population. The smallholder farmers possess small sizes of land and are resource poor and have difficulties in managing acidic soils. The potentials of using lime for soils sustainable management are among the other options to explore in restoring soil health and fertility. In agriculture, the limes play a great importance in improving soil acidity and hence favor plant nutrition. In addition, lime requirement calculation is of help tool in avoiding under or over liming acidity soils which are detrimental and compromising soil health and plant growth in general. Therefore, there is a need of advocating the use of lime in proper manner and take precaution before liming any acidic soils.

The review articles are support the idea that liming ameliorates soil acidity and improve soil chemical properties making it favorable for the crop growth. Further research would have been required on the same farmer be vital as farmers adoption for lime application to their acidic soils is another challenge and they need to be convinced it will be worth investing in. Lime is a recent agriculture input, in Ethiopian context, which worsen the livelihood of smallholder farmers unless credit service or subsidy is facilitated; which also requires an in-depth research.

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