Enhance Banana Production with Application of Fertigation and Plastic Mulching in North Bihar Agro – Climatic Condition

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A B S T R A C T

Present study is based on three years research trials to evaluate the effect of Fertigation and Plastic Mulching on Banana crop. Field trials accomplished total five treatments, i.e. T1 (80% RDF+0.8V volume of water through drip irrigation+ mulch), T2 (80% RDF+0.6V volume of water through drip irrigation+ mulch), T3 (80% RDF+0.8V volume of water through drip irrigation without mulch), T4 (80% RDF+0.6V volume of water through Drip irrigation without mulch) and control treatment T5 (100% RDF+flood irrigation) with four replications. The results revealed that the reproductive parameters such as average number of fingers per bunch, average weight per finger, average yield (kg/bunch) and average yield (t/ha) was found in treatment T1 to the tune of 132.31, 219.95 g, 28.15 Kg and 94.87 t/ha followed by treatment T3 124.28, 211.79 g, 25.52 Kg and 85.88 t/ha. In control treatment T5 it was 103.75, 183.72 g, 18.05 Kg and 65.550 t/ha, respectively. The benefit cost ratio was also estimated to be height in treatment T1 i.e 2.66 while in control treatment T3 it was 1.65.

K e y w o r d s
Fertigation, plastic mulching, Drip irrigation, Yield of Banana and B/C ratio

Introduction

Banana (Musa sp.) is the second most important fruit crop in India next to mango. Its year round availability, affordability, varietal range, taste, nutritive and medicinal value makes it the favourite fruit among all classes of people. It has also good export potential. Hi-tech cultivation of the crop is an economically viable enterprise leading to increase in productivity, improvement in produce quality and early crop maturity with the produce commanding premium price. Banana and plantains are grown in about 120 countries.

Total annual world production is estimated at 86 million tonnes of fruits. India leads the world in banana production with an annual output of about 14.2 million tonnes.
Other leading producers are Brazil, Ecuador, China, Phillipines, Indonesia, Costarica, Mexico, Thailand and Colombia. In India banana ranks first in production and third in area among fruit crops. It accounts for 13\% of the total area and 33\% of the production of fruits. Production is highest in Maharashtra (3924.1 thousand tones) followed by Tamil Nadu (3543.8 thousand tones).

Within India, Maharashtra has the highest productivity of 65.70 metric t/ha against national average of 30.5 tones/ha, whereas the average yield in Bihar is very less it is about 20 t/ha. This might be due to inappropriate package and practices regarding the irrigation and fertigation. The other major banana producing states are Karnataka, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Assam.

Drip irrigation is a controlled method of irrigation, consisting of tubes with emitters. It allows increasing water use efficiencies by providing precise amounts of water directly to the root zone of individual plants (Burt and Styles, 2007). Banana is a perennial crop, depending up on age of plant and climatic parameters, the water requirement varied from 2 lit per plant per day to 8.00 lit per plant per day. The quantity of water requirement per plant per day vaired from 2.3 to 6.7 liter depending on the stage of crop and weather condition Srivanappan et al. (1987).

Fertigation is a technology for application of fertilizer to the crops along with irrigation water through drip or sprinkler irrigation on a continual basis in controlled manner as so as to allow for steady uptake of nutrients by plants and to effect saving in costly inputs of both water and fertilizer (Patel and Rajput 2011). Fertilizer and water use in trickler fertigated potato using different fertilizer application rates, frequencies of application and wetted soil volume were compared with a furrow irrigated and conventionally fertigated crop (Chawla and Narda 2001), results indicated that water and fertilizer saving to the extent of 30 and 70 \% respectively with comparable yield levels. Highest yield of 36.29 t/ha of fresh tubers was obtained under trickle irrigation as compared to 21.5 t/ha for the furrow irrigated crop.

An experiment was conducted to determine the effect of water soluble fertilizer through drip irrigation on the growth and yield of banana, during 1998 -2000 at Rahuri (Singh 2000). The banana yield was significantly higher with increase in the level of fertilizer and was found maximum 68 t/ha under 100 percent recommended dose. Studies were undertaken to assess the effects of fertigation through drip on the growth, yield and quality of banana during 1997-98 with twelve treatments comprising 2 fertilizer sources, 3 fertilizers levels and two planting system.

These treatments were also compared with surface irrigation methods using straight fertilizers application (Pawar et al., 2001). The results revealed that the banana fruit yield was significantly higher in normal planting (82.86t/ha) than paired row planting (75.75 t/ha).The fruit yield increased significantly in water soluble fertilizers (81.01 t/ha) as compared to only N through drip (77.59 t/ha).

Mulching in general is a beneficial practice for crop production. Mulch conserves soil moisture, retains heat as well as it suppress weed growth (Chakarborthy and Sadhu 1994 and Hooda et al., 1999). Polyethylene mulches are widely used in vegetables and horticultures crop and have contributed significantly to reduction of losses due to weed competition (Nguajio and Ernest, 2004).

Film color also affects effective weed seed germination, growth and development under the plastic (Brault et al., 2002).
Materials and Methods

Study area

The experiment was carried out at Dr Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University Pusa Samastipur Bihar under “Precision Farming Development Centre (PFDC)” financed by the National Committee on Plasticulture Application in Agriculture and Horticulture (NCPAH), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, GoI, New Delhi, running in the Department of Soil & Water Engineering, College of Agricultural Engineering, Pusa, Samastipur. It is situated at 25°59’N latitude and 85°48’E longitude. Altitude of the site is 52.92 m above mean sea level. Experimental site is under humid subtropical climate, greatly influenced by the south-west monsoon. The main characteristic of the climat...
During system operation, the water first goes to the main pipeline, to the sub-main pipeline, to the laterals and lastly to the ground near banana plantlets through drippers.

**Mulch**

Mulching was performed after one month of banana transplantation. For which, the banana plant rows were formed in the ridge shape of nominal size with outward slope. The laterals equipped with drippers are placed over the ridge shape banana row.

After that as per layout, the silver and block colours polythene sheets of 60 micron (0.06) thickness were spread over the ridge. The edges of polythene were covered with the help of loose soil.

**Crop water requirement**

The daily crop water requirement of banana plant was determined by using the method suggested by NCPH, Ministry of Agriculture, New Delhi (Anonymous, 1997). The formula of crop water requirement is given as under:

\[ V = E_p \cdot K_c \cdot K_p \cdot W_p \cdot A \]  

… (1)

Net volume of water \( V_n \), could be expressed as,

\[ V_n = V - R_e \cdot A \]  

… (2)

The total volume of water applied per plant per day is given by,

\[ = V_n \times \text{no. of plant} \]  

… (3)

Where, \( V \) = Water requirement of consumptive use of plant (l/plant/day), \( V_n \) = net volume of water, \( E_p \) = pan evaporation (mm/day), \( K_c \) = crop co-efficient, \( K_p \) = pan factor, \( W_p \) = wetted area factor, \( A \) = spacing of the plant (m²), \( R_e \) = effective rainfall (cm)

In equation 1 the daily pan evaporation values were collected from meteorological observatory located in crop research centre (CTRI – Old name) Pusa Farm, Samastipur, Bihar for banana crop period (March, 2009 to March, 2011). The pan factor (\( K_p \)) was taken as 0.8 for USWB type pan (Anonymous 1997). The wetted area factor (\( W_p \)) was considered as 0.9 for initial stage and 1 for full growth stage (anonymous, 1997). The value of crop co-efficient (\( K_c \)) was taken as 0.8 for initial stage and 1 for full growth stage of banana plants (Anonymous, 1997).

**Fertilizer dose**

The recommended dose of fertilizers for banana crop is 200 g nitrogen, 50 g phosphorus and 300 g potash per plant per year. The phosphorus and potash were applied as basal application in two split doses, i.e. first dose at 90 DAT (6th May) and second dose at 180 DAT (7th August). The nitrogen was applied at month interval through fertigation, before commencement of flowers in banana plants.

**Results and Discussion**

**Plant height, girth and plant canopy**

The biometrical parameters of banana plants such as plant height, girth, plant canopy etc under different treatments presented in table 1. Data revealed significantly maximum plant growth in terms of height (2.04 m), plant girth (53.69 cm) and canopy spread (4.15 sqm) with the treatment T1 (80% RDF+0.8V volume of water through drip irrigation+ mulch). This was followed by T3 (80% RDF+0.8V volume of water through drip irrigation+ without mulch) with plant height 1.96 m; plant girth 52.14 cm and canopy spread 3.76 sq m. In control treatment the plant height, girth and canopy spread was 1.45 m, 43.84 cm and 3.55 sq m respectively.
Table 1 Effect of fertigation and mulch on biometrics of Banana

| Treatments | Plant height (m) | Plant girth (cm) | Plant Canopy (sqm) | Days taken for maturity | Number of Fingers/bunch | Weight of fingers (g) |
|------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| T1         | 2.04            | 53.69            | 4.15               | 306.85                  | 131.51                  | 215.64                |
| T2         | 1.93            | 50.90            | 3.51               | 321.08                  | 95.46                   | 172.96                |
| T3         | 1.96            | 52.14            | 3.76               | 313.02                  | 124.30                  | 206.64                |
| T4         | 1.66            | 46.56            | 3.66               | 325.8                   | 84.20                   | 170.75                |
| T5         | 1.45            | 43.84            | 3.55               | 336.02                  | 109.50                  | 187.26                |
| CD         |                 |                  |                    |                         |                         |                       |
| SEM (s)    | 0.03            | 0.42             | 0.024              | 3.76                    | 2.74                    | 2.39                  |

Table 2 Effect fertigation and mulch on yield of banana (kg/bunch)

| Treatments | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | Average Yield (kg) / bunch |
|------------|---------|---------|---------|---------------------------|
| T1         | 28.49   | 27.60   | 28.36   | 28.15                     |
| T2         | 16.71   | 16.52   | 16.51   | 16.58                     |
| T3         | 25.80   | 25.07   | 25.68   | 25.52                     |
| T4         | 14.72   | 14.21   | 14.38   | 14.44                     |
| T5         | 18.91   | 18.20   | 20.51   | 19.21                     |
| C.D        | 1.006   | 1.69    | 1.02    |                           |
| SEM (s)    | 0.33    | 0.58    | 0.35    |                           |
| CV (%)     | 8.26    | 14.09   | 8.8     |                           |

Table 3 Effect fertigation and mulch on yield of banana (t/ha)

| Treatments | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | Average yield (t/ha) |
|------------|---------|---------|---------|----------------------|
| T1         | 94.95   | 95.15   | 94.52   | 94.87                |
| T2         | 55.69   | 56.10   | 55.03   | 55.61                |
| T3         | 85.99   | 86.05   | 85.60   | 85.88                |
| T4         | 49.06   | 49.70   | 47.93   | 48.90                |
| T5         | 63.68   | 64.60   | 68.37   | 65.55                |
| C.D        | 3.08    | 3.62    | 4.41    |                       |
| SEM (s)    | 1.03    | 1.21    | 1.46    |                       |
| CV (%)     | 8.72    | 10.14   | 12.26   |                       |
Average number of fingers and average weight of fingers

Table 1 also revealed that the treatment T1 has taken 306.85 days about 30 days less time to maturity as compare to control treatment T5 336.02 days, where as in treatment T3 it has 313.02 days. Number of banana fingers was maximum in treatment T1 i.e. 131.51 per bunch which is about 16.91 % greater than control treatment T2, it was 109.50, while in number of finger in T3 was 124.30. The effect of fertigation on weight of Banana finger was also recorded, which revealed that the maximum average weight of finger was in T1 215.64 g, followed by T3 206.64g , where as in control treatment it was 187.26 g.

Yield

The highest bunch weight (28.15kg) was recorded under T1 followed by T3 (80% RDF+0.8V volume of water through drip irrigation+ without mulch) with 25.52 kg bunch weight. Minimum bunch weight 14.44 kg was noted at T4 (80% RDF+0.6V volume of water through Drip irrigation without mulch) where as in control treatment it was recorded as 19.21 kg.

As per yield is concerned the height yield recorded in treatment T1 94.87 t/ha, which is about 44.72 greater than the control. In case of treatment T3 the yield was recorded as 85.61 t/ha, which is 31.00 % higher than control. In control the average yield was recorded as 65.55 t/ha. Thus the significant effect of fertigation and mulching was found treatment T1.

Economics

It has been found that, the treatment T1 resulted highest b/c ratio i’e 2.66, while in control treatment it was found as 1.65. In case of treatment T1, the net seasonal income was high to the tune of R. 158601.00 per ha, where as in control treatment T5 was Rs. 93965.00 per ha. The fertigation which combines irrigation with fertilizers is the most effective and convenient means of maintaining optimum fertility level and water supply according to the specific requirement of crops with drip system.

Drip irrigation is the precise water application method which saves water by reducing the size of wet soil surface and thus decreasing the amount of direct evaporation and excess water percolation from the root zone. On the basis of data recorded and analysed under different treatments the pertinent findings with respect to different objectives under taken, are concluded below:

The height plant growth was found under T1 (80% RDF+0.8V volume of water through drip irrigation+ mulch) followed by T3 (80% RDF+0.8V volume of water through drip irrigation+ without mulch).

The treatment T1 (80% RDF+0.8V volume of water through drip irrigation+ without mulch) also produced higher yield (94.87 t/ha) which is about 44.72 greater than the control followed by T3 was recorded as 85.61 t/ha, which is 31.00 % higher than control. In control the average yield was recorded as 65.55 t/ha.

In order to achieved the yield at par with conventional method, there is need of only 64% fertilizer of recommended dose in Banana cultivation, revealing thus a saving (Chopade et al., 1998) of about 35% fertilizers due to fertigation through dip.

The benefit cost ratio was estimated heightest in treatment T1 i’e 2.66 while in control treatment T3 it was 1.65.
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