



RESEARCH ARTICLE

GROWTH PARAMETERS OF AMAN RICE AS INFLUENCED BY THE FOLIAR APPLICATION OF UREA AND MAGIC GROWTH LIQUID FERTILIZER

^{1,*}Mominul Haque Rabin, ¹Md. Abdur Razzaque, ^{1,*}Sheikh Shawkat Zamil,
¹Kh. Ashraf-Uz-Zaman, ²Md. Abubakar Siddik and ²Shahidul Islam

¹Department of Agricultural Chemistry, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

²Department of Agricultural Botany, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

An experiment was conducted at the farm of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka-1207 during the Aman season from July to December, 2013 to find out the influence of foliar application of urea along with magic growth spray on the growth parameters of Aman rice. The one factorial experiment was laid out in a RCBD design with three replications. The treatments were : different nitrogen doses and application methods [$T_0=N_0$ (No nitrogen applied), $T_1=N_{00+10\%}$ (Urea was applied only 10% of the recommended dose (RD) with magic growth as foliar spray), $T_2=N_{50+5\%}$ (50% Urea was applied as top dressing and 5% Urea was applied with magic growth as foliar spray), $T_3=N_{50+10\%}$ (50% Urea was applied as top dressing and 10% Urea was applied with magic growth as foliar spray), $T_4=N_{75+5\%}$ (75% Urea was applied as top dressing and 5% Urea was applied with magic growth as foliar spray), $T_5=N_{75+10\%}$ (75% Urea was applied as top dressing and 10% Urea was applied with magic growth as foliar spray), $T_6=N_{100}$ (100% of RD of N applied as Urea topdressing), $T_7=N_{100+10\%}$ (100% Urea was applied as top dressing and 10% Urea was applied with magic growth as foliar spray)]. The 75% Urea top dressing and 10% Urea with magic growth as foliar application gave higher results in most of the growth parameters. In case of plant height, number of tillers, number of leaves, effective tillers hill⁻¹ results were maximum and minimum in non-effective tillers hill⁻¹ with 75% Urea top dressing and 10% Urea with magic growth as foliar spray. Moreover, 75% Urea top dressing and 10% Urea of the recommended dose with magic growth as foliar spray increased all the growth attributes with a saving of 15% of the recommended nitrogen fertilizer compared to recommended practice.

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INTRODUCTION

Rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) belongs to the cereal crops under Gramineae family. It is one of the world's most widely consumed grains which play a unique role in combating global hunger. Rice is intensively cultivated in Bangladesh covering about 80% of arable land. As staple food rice alone constitutes 95% of the food grain production in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, the yield of rice is low in Bangladesh as compared to that of other rice growing countries like South Korea and Japan where the average yield is 7.00 and 6.22 t/ha, respectively (FAO, 1999).

Bangladesh is an agro-based country with population of about 160 millions living in 14.84 million hectares of land and according to the estimate of World Bank, the population will have possibly increased to 230 million by the year 2030 (BBS, 2010). Rice alone provides 76% of the calorie intake and 66% of total protein requirement (Bhuiyan et al., 2002). Rice is the staple dietary item for the people and per capita consumption 166 kg/year, which covers about 81% of the total cropped area and employs about 43.6% of total labor forces (BBS, 2010). Rice alone shares about 96% of the total cereal food and 9.5 % of the total agricultural GDP in the country. Among all crops, rice is the driving force of Bangladesh agriculture (MoFDM, 2012). On the other hand, the demand for increasing rice production is mounting up to feed the ever-increasing population of this country. Rice is grown in three seasons namely Aus (mid March to mid August), Aman (mid June to November) and Boro (Mid December to mid June). The largest

*Corresponding author: Sheikh Shawkat Zamil,
Department of Agricultural Chemistry, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

part of the total production of rice comes from Aman rice. T. aman (Transplanted Aman) rice covers about 50.92% of the rice areas of Bangladesh of which modern T. aman varieties covers 60% (BBS, 2005). In Bangladesh total cultivable land is 10 million hectare and near about 70 per cent of this land is occupied by rice cultivation. In the year 2011, the total production of rice was 33.5 million metric ton. In the year 2010 among the *aman* rice varieties modern varieties covered 69.15% and yield was 2.4 t ha⁻¹ on the other hand local varieties covered 31.91% and yield was 1.37 t ha⁻¹ (BBS, 2011).

Nitrogen plays a key role and the most important limiting nutrient in rice production and it is required in large amount. Nitrogen has a positive influence on the production of effective tiller per plant, yield and yield attributes (Jashim *et al.*, 1984, BRRI, 1990). Among the nutrients, nitrogen is the kingpin in rice farming (Alam *et al.*, 2012) for crop growth and development. Nitrogen is an essential constituent of chlorophyll and well-supplied nitrogen which enhanced crop growth vigorously (Dobermann and Fairhurst, 2000). On the contrary, nitrogen deficiency results reduced tillering (Peng *et al.*, 2003). However, only optimum dose of N applied can play a vital role on the growth and development of rice plant (Hasanuzzaman *et al.*, 2009). The absorption patterns of applied nitrogen vary with growth stages. About 52 to 60 % of total plant nitrogen in the high yielding plants has been absorbed by early panicle formation stage (De Datta, 1981). Generally, the nitrogenous fertilizer (urea) is applied as basal and as top dressed at different growth stages for rice cultivation (BRRI, 2011). Unfortunately, N use efficiency in the wetland rice culture is very low, rarely exceeding 30-40 % and more than 50 % of the applied nitrogen is lost through denitrification, volatilization, leaching and runoff (Khan *et al.*, 2009). High price of urea fertilizer and its availability at the right time jeopardize rice production occasionally, so it is necessary to improve the efficiency of applied nitrogenous fertilizer utilization by rice plant. However, foliar application can improve nutrient utilization and lower environment pollution through reducing amount of fertilizers added to soil (Abou-EI-Nour, 2002). In many cases aerial spray of nutrients is preferred and give quicker and better results than the soil application, which minimizes N losses (Jamal *et al.*, 2006). Most plants absorb foliar applied urea rapidly and hydrolyze the urea in the cytosol (Nicoulaud and Bloom, 1996). Recently foliar application of nutrients has become an important practice in the production of crops while application of fertilizers to the soil remains the basic method of feeding the majority of the crop plants (Alam *et al.*, 2012).

In case of foliar feeding, nutrients are absorbed directly where they are needed, the rate of the photosynthesis in the leaves is increased, nutrient absorption by plant roots is stimulated and foliar nutrition applied at critical times. Other advantages are low application rates, uniform distribution of fertilizer, reduction in plant stress, plant's natural defense mechanisms to resist plant disease and insect infestations, improvement of plant health and yield (Finck, 1982). Nitrogen fertilizer is more urgent for security rice production. Liquid fertilization might reduce the use of chemical fertilizer specially the nitrogenous fertilizer in soil. In this aspect, the present study was

undertaken to find out the effect of liquid fertilization (Magic Growth) on performance of Aman rice and to calculate how much urea can be saved by using liquid fertilization of Magic Growth without the reduction of grain yield.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The experiment was conducted at Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University Farm, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh which located at 90°22' E longitude and 23°41' N latitude at an altitude of 8.6 meters above the sea level under the agro-ecological zone of Modhupur Tract, AEZ-28 during Kharif 2 season, July 2013 to December 2013 to examine the response of foliar application of urea along with magic growth spray on the growth parameters of Aman rice. A high yielding variety seed of Aman rice was collected from the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI), Joydebpur, Gazipur. Before sowing of the seed in the experimental plot, germination test was done in the laboratory and results of percentage of germination were over 90%. The experiment was laid out in single factors randomized complete block design with three replications.

Treatments of the experiment was eight doses of N viz. $T_0=N_0$ (No nitrogen applied), $T_1=N_{00+10\%}$ (Urea was applied only 10% of the recommended dose (RD) with magic growth as foliar spray), $T_2=N_{50+5\%}$ (50% Urea was applied as top dressing and 5% Urea was applied with magic growth as foliar spray), $T_3=N_{50+10\%}$ (50% Urea was applied as top dressing and 10% Urea was applied with magic growth as foliar spray), $T_4=N_{75+5\%}$ (75% Urea was applied as top dressing and 5% Urea was applied with magic growth as foliar spray), $T_5=N_{75+10\%}$ (75% Urea was applied as top dressing and 10% Urea was applied with magic growth as foliar spray), $T_6=N_{100}$ (100% of RD of N applied as Urea topdressing), $T_7=N_{100+10\%}$ (100% Urea was applied as top dressing and 10% Urea was applied with magic growth as foliar spray). The total plot number was 3 x 8 = 24. The unit plot size was 3.0 m x 2.0 m = 6 m². The distance between blocks was 1 m and distance between plots was 0.5 m and plant spacing was 15 cm x 25 cm. The land was ploughed with a rotary plough and power tiller for four times. Ploughed soil was then brought into desirable fine tilth and leveled by laddering. The weeds were clean properly.

Whole experimental land was divided into sub plots. Finally basal doses of phosphorus, potassium and sulphur fertilizers were applied in sub plots and the plots were made ready by thorough spading and leveling before transplantation. Doses of nitrogen were applied as per treatments. Magic Growth is a liquid fertilizer invented by Md. Arif Hossain Khan, Joint Director (Seed Marketing), Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) which is ready for government recognition and it contains 10.51% total Nitrogen, 5.58% Phosphorous, 6.33% Potassium, 0.10% Sulphur, 0.16% Zinc, 0.04% Copper, 0.0006% Iron, 0.006% Manganese, 0.25% Boron, 0.07% Calcium and 0.007% Magnesium, pH = 1. During plant growth stage hand weedings were done according to needs. Irrigation and drainage channels were made around the plot, water was applied keeping a standing water of about 2-3 cm during the whole growing period. As per preventive measure seed was treated with a fungicide Vitavax

200 @ 2 g kg⁻¹ before showing and fungal disease, Diazinon 60 EC @ 20 mL per 10 Liter of water was applied. Previous randomly selected ten plants from each plot were selected as random and were tagged for the data collection. Some data were collected from 30, 60 and 90 days of transplanting (Plant height, number of tillers hill⁻¹, No. of leaves plant⁻¹) and some data were collected at different time. The data obtained from the experiment were subjected to statistical analysis following analysis of variance technique (Russell 1986). The mean differences were tested through, least significant difference (LSD) method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Plant Height

Nitrogen fertilizer doses and application methods had significant effect on plant height of rice at 30 DAT, 60 DAT and 90 DAT (Table 1). At 30 DAT, the highest plant height (68.77 cm) was observed from the T₅ treatment which was statistically similar with T₇ (67.47 cm) and the lowest (61.42 cm) was observed from T₀ treatment. At 60 DAT, the highest plant height (118.0 cm) was observed from the T₅ treatment which was statistically similar to T₄ (112.6 cm), T₆ (113.5 cm) and T₇ (116.4 cm) whereas, the lowest (105.9 cm) was observed from T₀ treatment. At 90 DAT, the highest plant height (126.4 cm) was observed from the T₃ treatment which was statistically similar with T₇ (124.0 cm) whereas, the lowest (113.9 cm) was observed from T₀ treatment which was statistically similar with T₁ (115.9 cm). It was observed that higher doses of nitrogen gave better plant height than those of no nitrogen or lower nitrogen. These results are similar to the findings of Ahmed *et al.* (2005) who studied the effect of nitrogen on different characteristics of transplanted local aman rice variety and found that higher N dose produced higher plant height.

Table 1. Effect of different doses of nitrogen fertilizer and application methods on plant height (cm) at different days after transplanting (mean of two varieties)

Treatments	Plant height (cm)		
	30 DAT	60 DAT	90 DAT
T ₀	61.42 f	105.9 d	113.9 c
T ₁	63.27 e	108.9 cd	115.9 c
T ₂	64.63 de	110.5 bcd	117.8 bc
T ₃	65.13 cd	111.4 bcd	117.8 bc
T ₄	66.65 bc	112.6 abc	119.8 abc
T ₅	68.77 a	118.0 a	126.4 a
T ₆	66.83 bc	113.5 abc	118.0 bc
T ₇	67.47 ab	116.4 ab	124.0 ab
LSD _(0.05)	1.792	6.220	6.681
Significant level	*	*	*
CV (%)	2.32	4.70	4.75

* Significant at 5% level

T₀=N₀ (No nitrogen applied), T₁=N_{00+10%} (Urea was applied only 10% of the recommended dose (RD) with magic growth as foliar spray), T₂=N_{50+5%} (50% Urea of the RD was applied as top dressing and 5% Urea of the RD was applied with magic growth as foliar spray), T₃=N_{50+10%} (50% Urea as top dressing and 10% Urea with magic growth as foliar spray), T₄=N_{75+5%} (75% Urea as top dressing and 5% Urea with magic growth as foliar spray), T₅=N_{75+10%} (75% Urea as top dressing and 10% Urea with magic growth as foliar spray), T₆=N₁₀₀ (100% Urea

topdressing), T₇=N_{100+10%} (100% Urea as top dressing and 10% Urea with magic growth as foliar spray).

Number of tillers

Nitrogen doses and application methods had significant effect on number of tillers hill⁻¹ of rice at 30, 60 and 90 DAT (Table 2). At 30 DAT, the highest number of tillers hill⁻¹ (15.80) was observed from the T₅ treatment and the lowest (13.70) was observed from T₀ treatment which was statistically similar with T₁ (13.90) and T₃ (14.05). At 60 DAT, the highest number of tillers hill⁻¹ (18.13) was observed from the T₅ treatment which was statistically similar to T₇ (17.40) whereas, the lowest (15.67) was observed from T₀ treatment which was statistically similar to T₂ (15.95). At 90 DAT, the highest number of tillers hill⁻¹ (16.67) was observed from the T₅ treatment which was statistically similar to T₇ (15.88) whereas, the lowest (13.47 cm) was observed from T₀ treatment which was statistically similar with T₁ (14.08) and T₂ (14.22). Foliar application of Urea with Magic growth gave higher performances than soil application. Though 100% urea topdressing + 10% urea as foliar spray with magic growth showed detrimental effect on number of tillers hill⁻¹. Ndaeyo *et al.* (2008) conducted an experiment where they found that higher rates of NPK resulted higher number of tillers per plant.

Table 2. Effect of different doses of nitrogen fertilizer and application methods on number of tillers hill⁻¹ at different days after transplanting (mean of two varieties)

Treatments	Number of tillers hill ⁻¹		
	30 DAT	60 DAT	90 DAT
T ₀	13.70 d	15.67 d	13.47 e
T ₁	13.90 cd	16.22 cd	14.08 e
T ₂	14.18 bcd	15.95 d	14.22 de
T ₃	14.05 cd	16.33 cd	15.00 cd
T ₄	14.32 bcd	16.95 bc	15.42 bc
T ₅	15.80 a	18.13 a	16.67 a
T ₆	14.58 bc	16.88 bc	15.50 bc
T ₇	14.97 b	17.40 ab	15.88 ab
LSD _(0.05)	0.8101	0.9011	0.8576
Significant level	*	*	*
CV (%)	4.76	4.58	4.84

* Significant at 5% level

T₀=N₀ (No nitrogen applied), T₁=N_{00+10%} (Urea was applied only 10% of the recommended dose (RD) with magic growth as foliar spray), T₂=N_{50+5%} (50% Urea of the RD was applied as top dressing and 5% Urea of the RD was applied with magic growth as foliar spray), T₃=N_{50+10%} (50% Urea as top dressing and 10% Urea with magic growth as foliar spray), T₄=N_{75+5%} (75% Urea as top dressing and 5% Urea with magic growth as foliar spray), T₅=N_{75+10%} (75% Urea as top dressing and 10% Urea with magic growth as foliar spray), T₆=N₁₀₀ (100% Urea topdressing), T₇=N_{100+10%} (100% Urea as top dressing and 10% Urea with magic growth as foliar spray).

Number of leaves

Nitrogen fertilizer doses and application methods showed significant effect on number of leaves hill⁻¹ of rice at 30, 60 and 90 DAT (Table 3). At 30 DAT, the highest number of leaves hill⁻¹ (49.30) was observed from the T₅ treatment and the lowest (40.20) was observed from T₀ treatment. At 60

DAT, the highest number of leaves hill⁻¹ (68.05) was observed from the T₅ treatment whereas, the lowest (57.97) was observed from T₀ treatment. At 90 DAT, the highest number of leaves hill⁻¹ (58.00) was observed from the T₅ treatment which was statistically similar with T₄ (54.22) whereas, the lowest (49.03) was observed from T₀ treatment. Ndaeyo *et al.* (2008) conducted an experiment where they found that higher rates of NPK resulted higher number of leaves per plant.

Table 3. Effect of different doses of nitrogen and application methods on number of leaves hill⁻¹ at different days after transplanting (mean of two varieties)

Treatments	Number of leaves hill ⁻¹		
	30 DAT	60 DAT	90 DAT
T ₀	40.20 e	57.97 d	49.03 c
T ₁	42.83 d	59.67 bcd	50.93 bc
T ₂	43.47 cd	58.23 cd	50.92 bc
T ₃	43.77 cd	58.43 cd	52.05 bc
T ₄	44.58 bcd	61.82 bc	54.22 ab
T ₅	49.30 a	68.05 a	58.00 a
T ₆	45.60 bc	60.38 bcd	52.80 bc
T ₇	46.43 b	62.85 b	53.55 b
LSD _(0.05)	2.172	3.771	4.203
Significant level	*	*	*
CV (%)	4.14	5.25	6.77

* Significant at 5% level

T₀=N₀ (No nitrogen applied), T₁=N_{00+10%} (Urea was applied only 10% of the recommended dose (RD) with magic growth as foliar spray), T₂=N_{50+5%} (50% Urea of the RD was applied as top dressing and 5% Urea of the RD was applied with magic growth as foliar spray), T₃=N_{50+10%} (50% Urea as top dressing and 10% Urea with magic growth as foliar spray), T₄=N_{75+5%} (75% Urea as top dressing and 5% Urea with magic growth as foliar spray), T₅=N_{75+10%} (75% Urea as top dressing and 10% Urea with magic growth as foliar spray), T₆=N₁₀₀ (100% Urea topdressing), T₇=N_{100+10%} (100% Urea as top dressing and 10% Urea with magic growth as foliar spray).

Number of effective tillers

Nitrogen fertilizers doses and application methods had significant effect on the number of effective tillers hill⁻¹ of rice (Table 4). The highest number of effective tillers hill⁻¹ (14.43) was observed from the T₅ treatment which was statistically similar with T₇ (13.85) and the lowest (10.80) was observed from T₀ treatment. Rasheed *et al.* (2003) reported that the number of effective tillers per hill was increased when NP levels were increased.

Table 4. Effect of different doses of nitrogen and application methods on number of effective tillers hill⁻¹ (mean of two varieties)

Treatments	Number of effective tillers hill ⁻¹	Number of non effective tillers hill ⁻¹
	T ₀	10.80 d
T ₁	11.33 cd	1.908 ab
T ₂	11.47 cd	1.767 bc
T ₃	11.68 c	1.593 bcd
T ₄	11.85 c	1.533 cd
T ₅	14.43 a	0.9167 f
T ₆	12.82 b	1.375 de
T ₇	13.85 a	1.150 ef
LSD _(0.05)	0.7045	0.3710
Significant level	*	*
CV (%)	4.86	20.23

* Significant at 5% level

T₀=N₀ (No nitrogen applied), T₁=N_{00+10%} (Urea was applied only 10% of the recommended dose (RD) with magic growth as foliar spray), T₂=N_{50+5%} (50% Urea of the RD was applied as top dressing and 5% Urea of the RD was applied with magic growth as foliar spray), T₃=N_{50+10%} (50% Urea as top dressing and 10% Urea with magic growth as foliar spray), T₄=N_{75+5%} (75% Urea as top dressing and 5% Urea with magic growth as foliar spray), T₅=N_{75+10%} (75% Urea as top dressing and 10% Urea with magic growth as foliar spray), T₆=N₁₀₀ (100% Urea topdressing), T₇=N_{100+10%} (100% Urea as top dressing and 10% Urea with magic growth as foliar spray).

Number of non-effective tillers

Number of non-effective tillers hill⁻¹ was significantly varied due to nitrogen fertilizer at all growth stages (Table 4). The highest number of non-effective tillers hill⁻¹ (2.183) was recorded from T₀ treatment which was statistically similar with T₁ (2.183). In contrast the lowest number of non-effective tillers hill⁻¹ (0.9167) was recorded from T₅ treatment which was statistically similar with T₇ (1.150).

Conclusion

Nitrogen fertilizer doses and application methods had significant effect on growth and yield of aman rice. Therefore, the present experimental results suggest that when Urea was applied as foliar spray (10% of RD along with magic growth) and top-dressing (75% of RD) then it performed better than sole top-dressing or foliar spray. Foliar spray along with top dressing though performed better, but still foliar spray can not completely replace the top dressing of urea. If 75% Urea is top-dressed and 10% of the urea is applied as foliar spray along with magic growth then at least 8.27% grain yield increased and 15% urea can be saved.

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