

## **Original Research Article**

### **Productive and economic potential assessment of four maize (*Zea mays* L.) varieties under fertilizers effect in the coastal zone of Togo**

#### **Abstract**

The sustainable improvement of maize productivity and smallholders' incomes ~~in order to~~ contribute to food security is the objective of this study carried out on two consecutive years (2020 and 2021) at the University of Lomé Agronomic Experiment Station. The experiment was set up in a split-plot design, composed of sixteen (16) treatments in three (03) replicates each. Four varieties: Ikenné ( $V_1$ ) Tzee ( $V_2$ ), Sotubaka ( $V_3$ ) and Sammaz 52 ( $V_4$ ) and four fertilization schemes: 0  $\text{kg ha}^{-1}$  ( $F_0$ ); 200 $\text{kg ha}^{-1}$  of NPK:15-15-15+100 $\text{kg ha}^{-1}$  of urea 46%N ( $F_1$ ); 6 000 $\text{kg ha}^{-1}$  of chicken dungs ( $F_2$ ) and 6 000 $\text{kg ha}^{-1}$  of small ruminant dungs ( $F_3$ ) were the studied factors. Maize grain yields were ~~determined~~ determined, and an economic analysis was done. The results analysis showed that varieties and fertilization schemes had significant effects on maize grain yields. Sotubaka ( $V_3$ ) was the most productive variety during the two years of experiment. Average yield obtained under  $V_3$  ( $3.56 \pm 0.65 \text{ t ha}^{-1}$ ) was higher than those of Ikenné, Tzee and Sammaz 52 varieties respectively by 20; 57 and 5%. Average yields recorded under  $F_2$  was higher than those of  $F_0$ ,  $F_1$  and  $F_3$  by 54; 3 and 17% respectively. On 2-year average basis, the application of 200 $\text{kg ha}^{-1}$  of NPK:15-15-15+100 $\text{kg ha}^{-1}$  of urea 46%N ( $F_1$ ) gave the highest maize grain yields under  $V_1$  ( $3.43 \pm 0.13 \text{ t ha}^{-1}$ ) and  $V_2$  ( $2.60 \pm 0.15 \text{ t ha}^{-1}$ ); while the highest maize grain yields under  $V_3$  ( $4.29 \pm 0.12 \text{ t ha}^{-1}$ ) and  $V_4$  ( $3.95 \pm 0.11 \text{ t ha}^{-1}$ ) were obtained with the supply of 6 000 $\text{kg ha}^{-1}$  of chicken dungs ( $F_2$ ). On the same 2-year average basis, the highest profits were obtained under Ikenné (343 000 FCFA  $\text{ha}^{-1}$ =US\$ 512.46) and Tzee (177 000 FCFA  $\text{ha}^{-1}$ =US\$ 264.45) with the application of  $F_1$ . For Sotubaka (480 000 FCFA  $\text{ha}^{-1}$ =US\$ 717.14) and Sammaz 52 (415 000 FCFA  $\text{ha}^{-1}$ =US\$ 620.03), the highest profit ~~was~~ were obtained with the application of  $F_2$ . For successful maize cultivation, it was advisable to use  $F_1$  for Ikenne and Tzee varieties and  $F_2$  for Sotubaka and Sammaz 52 varieties.

**Key words:** Maize grain, Variety, Fertilization scheme, Yields and Profit.

## 1. Introduction

Agriculture, the engine of economic growth in most countries of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), was characterized by ~~a majority of most~~ smallholder farmers and above all by low crop productivity. This decline in productivity is mainly due to physical degradation of soil surface horizons [1]; to climatic variability; to low adoption of improved varieties [2] and to ~~the~~ genetic potential degradation of varieties used by the producers. The problem of soil-fertility depletion in smallholder farms was the fundamental biophysical root cause for declining per capita food production in sub-Saharan Africa [3]. Agricultural smallholder in SSA ~~apply~~ applies insufficient amounts of nutrients in their farms, which leads to overuse of soil nutrient stocks by plants, which leads ~~to the~~ gradual depletion of nutrients in soil and their eventual degradation [4]. Diagnostic studies on the use of fertilizers in Africa revealed that their use was low, particularly because of their high cost, due to their production abroad, unit quantities and high transport costs [5; 6].

Maize is staple food crop most widely practiced in SSA [2], ~~in particular in~~ Togo, where maize is one of the main food crops. Despite, the efforts made in agriculture by the various stakeholders to improve its production and the assets available in the country to success its cultivation, yields were still low. Since 2010, average maize grain yields at national level had never exceeded 1.50 t ha<sup>-1</sup> [7]. Low crop yields were largely explained by climate variability, lack of water control and especially soil fertility decline. Studies in SSA [8; 9] indicated that soil fertility degradation particularly in terms of poor mineral and organic content in soils was the major cause of food shortages, decreased livestock productions and poverty.

To solve the problem of soil chemical degradation leading to a lack of nutrients for plants, several authors [10; 11] showed that improving soil fertility through the nutrient inputs in mineral or organic form increased water efficiency and crop yields. For Mosier *et al.* [12], the application of fertilizers was an essential lever to meet the increased food demand. The use of organic manures maintains or improves soil fertility with very good crop yields and this, in a sustainable way [13; 14; 15]. Smallholder farmers in SSA were more inclined to using organic matter namely farm yard manure (FYM), toward restoring soil fertility than the use of synthetic fertilizers because of their unavailability and/or inaccessibility together with increasing costs [16]. In addition to the negative effects of land degradation on food security in SSA, this region was further impacted by the phenomenon of climate change as demonstrated by Lansigan *et al.* [17]. Several studies [18; 19] clearly indicated that climate change and variability is a threat to global socio-economic development especially through its negative impact on the agricultural sector.

Concrete research-development efforts are therefore needed in SSA to overcome these constraints through soil fertility restoration, maximization of nutrient and water use efficiency and identification of resilient crop varieties [20]. It is in this perspective that this study was carried out with the aim of finding production techniques, which could sustainably improve maize productivity and profitability in the current context of climate change and degradation of soil fertility. The specific objectives of the study were: (i) to determine the most productive maize variety; (ii) evaluate the effect of fertilizers on maize grain yield and (iii) determine the most profitable production strategy.

## 2. Material and methods

### 2.1 Experimental site

The study was carried out at the Lomé Agronomic Experiment Station (SEAL), located at the University of Lomé -Togo (6°22' N, 1°13'E; altitude of 50 m, slope less than 1 %). The soil type was a rhodic Ferralsol locally called “Terres de barre”, developed from the continental deposit [21]. This type of soil represents 47% of the soils of the maritime region [22] and covers part of the arable land in Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria [23; 24]. The climate of the experimental site is the guinean type, bimodal and allows for two maize cropping seasons, one from April to July and another from September to December [20]. Annual rainfall at the site is between 800 and 1100 mm. The annual average temperature is between 24 and 27°C [22; 25].

The experimental plot was under fallow for three years. Before the maize sowing in April 2020, initial soil properties including total C and total N levels, exchangeable base concentrations ( $\text{Ca}^{++}$ ,  $\text{Mg}^{++}$ ,  $\text{Na}^+$  and  $\text{K}^+$ ), pH, cation exchange capacity (CEC) and soil texture were determined on the first 20 cm soil layer (0-20 cm depth) on the experimental site. It was done through twenty-four (24) composite soil samples obtained by using the standard methods of the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture [26]. These composite soil samples were analyzed at the Laboratory of Soil Water Plant Fertilizer of the Togolese Institute for Agronomic Research (LSEVE-ITRA). The soil of the experimental site is slightly acidic (pH=6.77) and has low total C (0.55%) and total N (0.05%) levels. It is sandy and contains 79.82% sand, indicating that this soil is well drained with low contents of P (42  $\text{mg kg}^{-1}$ ) and K (58.84  $\text{mg.kg}^{-1}$ ) contents. Its CEC is very low (2.86  $\text{cmol.kg}^{-1}$ ), as are the exchangeable bases  $\text{Ca}^{++}$ ,  $\text{Mg}^{++}$ ,  $\text{Na}^+$  and  $\text{K}^+$ , with respective values of 32.23; 4.19; 1.22 and 1.51  $\text{cmolkg}^{-1}$  (table 1).

**Table 1:** Soil physical and chemical properties at onset of experiment

Parameters	Values
pH (H <sub>2</sub> O)	6.77
MO (%)	0.95
C total (%)	0.55
N total (%)	0.05
NO <sub>3</sub> -N ( $\text{mgkg}^{-1}$ )	2.30
P available ( $\text{mgkg}^{-1}$ )	42
K available ( $\text{mgkg}^{-1}$ )	58.84
Exchangeable bases ( $\text{mmolkg}^{-1}$ )	
Ca <sup>2+</sup>	32.23
Mg <sup>2+</sup>	4.19
Na <sup>+</sup>	1.22
K <sup>+</sup>	1.51
Total CEC ( $\text{cmolkg}^{-1}$ )	2.86
Sable content (%)	79.82
Silt content (%)	7.40
Clay content (%)	12.78

## 2.2 Material

### 2.2.1 Biological material

Four maize varieties were used as biological material: Ikenne 9449 SR (Ikenne), TZEE W pop STR QPM (Tzee), Sotubaka and Sammaz 52. Table 2 presents the characteristics of the four varieties.

**Table 2:** Varieties characteristics

Varieties	Genetic nature	Breeder	Maintainer	Height (cm)	Grain colour	Production cycle (days)	Potential yield (t.ha <sup>-1</sup> )	References
Ikenne 9449 SR (Ikenne)	Composite	CIMMYT/IITA	ITRA	190-210	White	90-100	5	[27; 28]
TZEE W pop STR QPM (Tzee)	Composite	IITA	ITRA	170-185	White	80-85	3.50	[28]
Sotubaka	Composite	IER	ITRA	210-230	Yellow	100-110	6	[28]
Sammaz 52	Improved population	MENKIR ABEBE	IAR, Zaria	190-195	Orange	95 (medium)	6	[29]

### 2.2.2 Fertilizers:

Four types of fertilizers such as NPK: 15-15-15; Urea 46%N; chicken dungs and small ruminant dungs were used in this experiment.

## 2.3 Methods

### 2.3.1 Experimental design

The experiment took place during the first growing seasons (April to August) of two consecutive years (2020 and 2021). The trial was set up using a split-plot design with three replications of each treatment. The main plots included the varieties: Ikenne (V<sub>1</sub>), Tzee (V<sub>2</sub>), Sotubaka (V<sub>3</sub>) and Sammaz 52 (V<sub>4</sub>) and the sub-plots, the fertilization schemes: 0 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> (F<sub>0</sub>); 200 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of NPK:15-15-15 + 100 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of urea 46%N (F<sub>1</sub>); 6 000 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of chicken dungs (F<sub>2</sub>) and 6 000 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of small ruminant dungs (F<sub>3</sub>). Twelve (12) main plots (9m x 7.40m) and forty-eight (48) subplots (4m x 3.20m) were delimited. The distance between the blocks is equivalent to that between the plots and which was 1m. Each experimental unit contains five lines separated from each other by 0.80 m.

Samples of 100 g of chicken dungs and small ruminant dungs were taken and analysed at the Laboratory of Soil-Water-Plant-Fertilizer of the Togolese Institute for Agronomic Research (LSEVE-ITRA). The chemical composition of animal waste is recorded in the table 3.

**Table 3:** Chemical composition of small ruminant and chicken dungs

Parameters	Small ruminant dungs	chicken dungs
pH (H <sub>2</sub> O)	9.03	8.42
MO (%)	28.67	34.18
Total C total (%)	16.63	19.83
Total N (%)	1.05	1.70
Total P (mg/kg)	1 280.85	8 217.40
Exchangeable bases (mmol kg <sup>-1</sup> )		
Ca <sup>2+</sup>	294.13	333.66
Mg <sup>2+</sup>	79.62	168.08
Na <sup>+</sup>	25.50	32.48
K <sup>+</sup>	19.43	24.19

The quantity of N in eau manure was determined and was recorded in table 4

**Table 4:** N amount corresponding to fertilizers amount used

Fertilization schemes	Nutrients form				N (Nitrogen)
	Chicken dungs	Small ruminant dungs	N <sub>15</sub> P <sub>15</sub> K <sub>15</sub>	Urea (46%N)	
			Quantity (kg ha <sup>-1</sup> )		
F <sub>0</sub>	0	0	0	0	0
F <sub>1</sub>	0	0	200	100	76
F <sub>2</sub>	0	6000	0	0	102
F <sub>3</sub>	6000	0	0	0	63

### 2.3.2 Soil and crop management

At the beginning of each growing season, the experimental site was prepared through the following successive operations: clearing, deep plowing, levelling, demarcation of blocks and plots. The maize seeds were sown on April 10, 2020 and April 20, 2021 at three seeds per pocket, follow-up of thinning at one plant per pocket, giving a density of 50 000 plants ha<sup>-1</sup> were carried out ten (10) days after sowing. NPK: 15-15-15, chicken and small ruminant dungs were applied to the plants on the 15<sup>th</sup> day after sowing. Animal ~~dungs~~ dung were subjected to composting for three months before application. The urea 46% N was applied at the beginning of flowering (42<sup>th</sup> day after sowing). The mineral and organic fertilizers were applied in a localized mode at around 5 cm from the foot of the plants and at a depth varying from 3 to 5 cm. Two weeding and one hilling were carried out respectively on the 14<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> day after sowing. Two insecticide treatments against the caterpillars were done. The harvests took place on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and 21<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

### 2.3.3 Data collection

Maize grain yields were determined from the three centre lines of each experimental plot. The harvested cobs were dried and then shelled. The maize grain weights were taken when the moisture content of the grains was around 12%.

### 2.3.4 Data analysis

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the data obtained was done by using the GenSTAT discovery edition 12 software at the 5% threshold (P=0.05) and Duncan's test was used to discriminate the means at this threshold.

### 2.3.5 Economic analysis method

The average profitability of maize production in the two years (2020 and 2021) from each treatment (combination of varieties and fertilization schemes), was determined through a partial budget analysis. The profitability is the difference between output and inputs. Output consisted of the amount of cash values corresponding to the average maize grain produced in the two years, which was assumed to be sold at 200 F CFA (US\$0.30) kg<sup>-1</sup>, the average sale price of maize grain at harvest (august) on the local market of the two years. The inputs consisted of the production costs under each treatment, including those for soil preparation, seeds, crop planting and related tasks, ~~fertilizers~~ fertilizers, and insecticide (Emacot 050 WG) purchase and their application, weeding, and crop harvesting and associated tasks. Labor costs were estimated at 2 000 F CFA (US\$2.99) per person day [30] and fertilizer costs were based

on current prices which were determined to be 250 F CFA (US\$ 0.37) kg<sup>-1</sup>. Chicken and small ruminant dungs was estimated at 20 000 F CFA (US\$ 29.88) ton each one [30].

**Table 5:** Labor costs for the different activities carried out under each treatment

Planting operations	F <sub>0</sub>	F <sub>1</sub>	F <sub>2</sub>	F <sub>3</sub>
	Person-day per ha <sup>-1</sup>			
Soil preparation	24	24	24	24
Sowing and related works	10	10	10	10
Weeding and ridging	32	32	32	32
Fertilizers and insecticid application	8	18	13	13
Harvesting and related works	35	35	35	35
Total labor	109	119	114	114
Total labor cost (F CFA ha <sup>-1</sup> )	218 000 (US 325.70)	238 000 (US\$ 355.58)	228 000 (US\$ 340.64)	228 000 (US\$ 340.64)

1 US\$= 669.325 of West Africa franc CFA on [https://fr.coinmill.com/USD\\_XOF.html](https://fr.coinmill.com/USD_XOF.html), 29/09/2022 at 20h 02

F<sub>0</sub> = 0 kg ha<sup>-1</sup>; F<sub>1</sub> = 200 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of NPK: 15-15-15 + 100 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of urea 46% N; F<sub>2</sub> = 6 000 kgha<sup>-1</sup> of chicken dungs and F<sub>3</sub> = 6 000 kgha<sup>-1</sup> of small ruminant dungs

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Maize varieties performance

The maize grain yields obtained under the different varieties used for the experiment were recorded in Table 6. They ranged from 2.31±0.51 to 3.91±0.61 t ha<sup>-1</sup> and 2.16±0.58 to 3.20±0.66 t ha<sup>-1</sup> respectively in the first year and second year of experiment. The average maize grain yields for the two years obtained under these varieties varied from 2.24±0.55 to 3.56±0.65 t ha<sup>-1</sup>. The varieties had a significant effect on maize grain yields. Yields differences observed between varieties were due to their genetic characteristics and their potential yields. Indeed, Sotubaka (V<sub>3</sub>) and Sammaz 52 (V<sub>4</sub>) varieties having the highest and same potential yield (6 t ha<sup>-1</sup>) gave yields which are statistically identical and were higher than those obtained under Ikenné (V<sub>1</sub>) and Tzee (V<sub>2</sub>), varieties having respectively 5 t ha<sup>-1</sup> and 3.50 t ha<sup>-1</sup> as potential yields.

For the two years of experiment, the highest maize grain yield was obtained under Sotubaka variety. This performance could be explained by the genetic characteristics of this variety which allowed it to use nutrients supply more efficiently than Sammaz 52 variety. In addition, V<sub>3</sub> was a long cycle variety and this cycle (115 days) could contribute to get the highest yield under normal rainfall conditions with the application of appropriate nutrients. But when comparing the yield differences between the two years under each variety, it should be more reassuring to succeed maize production in the current climate change context by using Tzee variety which is a short cycle variety (85 days) and if applicable, Ikenné and Sammaz 52 varieties which were medium cycle varieties. Indeed, the cumulative rainfall obtained on the period from April to August 2020 (342.50 mm) in the study area was lower than that recorded in the year 2021 (540.90 mm) at the same period; but the rainfall for the year 2020 was better distributed in the growing season than that of the year 2021. This situation also explained the superiority of the maize grain yields of the first year compared to those of the second year. Some studies demonstrated the dynamics of rainfall and their effects on maize grain yield [31] or their effects on maize varieties performance [20].

**Table 6:** Maize grain yields under varieties for each year and 2-year average

Years	Varieties				Means	P	CV (%)
	Ikenné (V <sub>1</sub> )	Tzee (V <sub>2</sub> )	Sotubaka (V <sub>3</sub> )	Sammaz 52 (V <sub>4</sub> )			
Maize grain yields in t ha <sup>-1</sup>							
Year 1 (2020)	3.23±0.56b	2.31±0.51c	3.91±0.61a	3.68±0.52a	3.28±0.79	<.001	16,8
Year 2 (2021)	2.68±0.59b	2.16±0.58c	3.20±0.66a	3.12±0.66a	2.79±0.76	<.001	17,4
Means	2.95±0.53b	2.24±0.55c	3.56±0.65a	3.40±0.61a	3.04±0.74	<.002	15,6

CV= Coefficient of variation. The data were discriminated in the horizontal direction (P=0.05). Values that were followed by the same letters are statistically identical.

### 3.2 Effect of fertilization schemes on maize grain yield

Table 7 presents maize grain yields obtained under fertilization schemes. The analysis of variance showed that fertilization schemes significantly influenced maize grain yields during the two years of experiment. In the first year, the highest maize grain yield ( $3.72 \pm 0.61$  t ha<sup>-1</sup>) was obtained with the supply of 200 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of NPK: 15-15-15 + 100 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of urea 46% N (F<sub>1</sub>), but this yield was statistically identical to that obtained with the application of 6 000 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of chicken dungs (F<sub>2</sub>). On the other hand, in the second year of cultivation, the highest maize grain yield ( $3.31 \pm 0.60$  t ha<sup>-1</sup>) was recorded with the application of F<sub>2</sub>. On 2-year average basis, the application of 6 000 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of chicken dungs (F<sub>2</sub>) gave the highest maize grain yield ( $3.50 \pm 0.58$  t ha<sup>-1</sup>). This yield was higher than those obtained under the control (F<sub>0</sub>), 200 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of NPK: 15-15-15 + 100 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of urea 46% N (F<sub>1</sub>) and 6 000 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of small ruminants dungs (F<sub>3</sub>) respectively by 53; 3 and 17%.

The superiority of maize grain yields in first year compared to those of the second year were due to the poor distribution of rainfall. Indeed, the cumulative rainfall obtained on period from April to August 2020 (342.50 mm) in the study area was lower than that recorded in the year 2021 (540.90 mm) at the same period; but the rainfall for 2020 year was better distributed on the growing season than that of 2021 year. Several authors [32; 33] demonstrated the impact of rainfall on grain maize yield. The highest maize grain yield obtained in the first year of cultivation with the application of 200 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of NPK: 15-15-15 + 100 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of urea 46% N (F<sub>1</sub>) could be explained by the rapid mineralization of this manure and by the effect of previous crops. This contributed to make available to the plants in right time, ~~the sufficient quantity~~ enough of the nutrients necessary for their growth and development. The advantage of fertilizers was that they not only improve the yield but also the crop residues (biomass) that was used as organic fertilizer by the previous crop [34].

The highest maize grain yields observed with the application of 6 000 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of chicken dungs (F<sub>2</sub>) in two cropping years and their average could be explained, not only by the rapid mineralization of chicken dungs than small ruminant dungs; but also, by the residual effect of this manure applied in the first year. Kabrah et al. [35] proved the significant effect of organic matter on the number of grains per cob and the average weight of maize grain in the second cropping season compared to the first cropping season.

**Table 7:** Maize grain yields under fertilization schemes for each year and 2-year average

Years	Fertilization schemes				Means	P	CV (%)
	F <sub>0</sub>	F <sub>1</sub>	F <sub>2</sub>	F <sub>3</sub>			
Maize grain yields in t ha <sup>-1</sup>							
Year 1 (2020)	2.77±0.58b	3.72±0.61a	3.69±0.66a	2.96±0.64b	3.28±0.79	<.001	18.10
Year 2 (2021)	1.78±0.45c	3.07±0.54ab	3.31±0.60a	2.99±0.52b	2.79±0.76	<.001	18.80
Means	2.27±0.45c	3.40±0.52a	3.50±0.58a	2.98±0.54b	3.04±0.74	<.001	17.70

F<sub>0</sub> = 0 kg ha<sup>-1</sup>; F<sub>1</sub> = 200 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of NPK: 15-15-15 + 100 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of urea 46% N; F<sub>2</sub> = 6 000 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of chicken dungs and F<sub>3</sub> = 6 000 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of small ruminant dungs. CV = Coefficient of variation. The data were discriminated in the horizontal direction (P=0.05). Values that were followed by the same letters are statistically identical.

### 3.3 Effect of variety and fertilization scheme interaction on grain maize yield.

The results of the response of maize varieties to different fertilization schemes, in terms of maize grain yields were presented in Table 8. The maize grain yields varied from 2.08±0.14 to 4.71±0.13 t ha<sup>-1</sup> and from 1.42± 0.12 to 3.86±0.14 t ha<sup>-1</sup> respectively in the first and second year of experiment. The average yields of the two years varied from 1.75±0.11 to 4.29±0.12 t ha<sup>-1</sup>. Overall, maize grain yields under each variety-fertilization scheme interaction in the first year of production were higher than those of the second year. The highest maize grain yields were recorded in the first year of production under Ikenné (3.80±0.19 t ha<sup>-1</sup>); Tzee (2.78±0.15 t ha<sup>-1</sup>) and Sammaz 52 (4.18±0.16 t ha<sup>-1</sup>) with the application of 200 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of NPK: 15-15-15 + 100 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of urea 46% N (F<sub>1</sub>). In the same year, the application of 6 000 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of chicken dungs (F<sub>2</sub>) gave the highest maize grain yield under Sotubaka (4.71±0.13 t ha<sup>-1</sup>). On the other hand, in the second year of production, the highest yields were recorded under the four varieties with the application of F<sub>2</sub>. On 2-year average yields basis, the highest yields under Ikenné (3.43±0.13 t ha<sup>-1</sup>) and Tzee (2.60±0.15 t ha<sup>-1</sup>) were obtained with the supply of F<sub>1</sub> while the application of F<sub>2</sub> gave the highest yields under Sotubaka (4.29±0.12 t ha<sup>-1</sup>) and Sammaz 52 (3.95±0.11 t ha<sup>-1</sup>).

The yields of the second year experiment were negatively impacted by rainfall. This explains the superior maize grain yields in the first year compared to those in the second year under different interactions. According to Baulcombe *et al.* [36], the vulnerability of farming systems to climate variability leads risks of economic instability and food insecurity. The highest yields recorded in the first year under Ikenné, Tzee and Sammaz 52 varieties with the application of mineral fertilizers (F<sub>1</sub>) would be due, not only, to the rapid mineralization and the availability of nutrients to the plants at the right time; but also to the back-effect of previous crops and especially to the production cycles of its varieties. Indeed, Tzee being a short cycle variety (85 days); Ikenné (90 days) and Sammaz (95 days) being medium cycle varieties, this fertilizer (F<sub>1</sub>) permitted to provide the maize plants, at the right time, the nutrients necessary for their growth and development. As the Sotubaka variety had a long cycle (115 days), the application of 6 000 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of chicken dungs (F<sub>2</sub>), through to its richness in nutrients and its faster mineralization than small ruminant dungs, permitted to obtain the highest maize grain yield. The highest maize grain yields obtained in the second year under all varieties with the application of chicken dungs (F<sub>2</sub>) could be explained by the rapid mineralization and nutrient richness of this organic manure and by the back-effect of this manure brought in the first year. According to Gomgnimbou *et al.* [37], the use of organic manure especially poultry manure improved not only the yield but also soil chemical parameters. The superiority of maize grains yields with application of chicken dungs (F<sub>2</sub>) than those obtained with application of mineral fertilizer (F<sub>1</sub>) in the second year, under the varieties

had been shown by Useni *et al.* [38]. Indeed, these authors [38] found in their study that the exclusive application of mineral fertilizers is generally effective only during the first years of continuous inputs; there is often yield decline after a few years of application due to the degradation of soil properties.

On 2-year average basis, the highest yields obtained under the Ikenné and Tzee with the application of mineral manure (F<sub>1</sub>) could be explained by the effect induced by this manure on yields in the first year, which was clearly higher than that induced in the second year by the chicken dungs under these two varieties. On the other hand, the effect induced by this mineral manure (F<sub>1</sub>) under Sammaz 52 in the first year was lower than that induced by the chicken dungs in the second year under this variety. It should be noted that maize grain yields obtained in the first year under Ikenné, Tzee, Sammaz 52 with the application of 200 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of NPK: 15-15-15 + 100 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of urea 46% N (F<sub>1</sub>) were higher than those obtained with the supply of 6 000 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of chicken dungs (F<sub>2</sub>) to these varieties respectively by 4; 20 and 1%. However, in the second year, the application of chicken dungs (F<sub>2</sub>) to Ikenné, Tzee, Sammaz 52 gave maize grain yields which were higher than those obtained with application of mineral manure (F<sub>1</sub>) respectively by 3; 2 and 11%.

The superiority of the yields obtained under Sotubaka with the application of 6 000 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of chicken dungs (F<sub>2</sub>) was not only due to the richness in nutrients of the chicken dungs; but also to the cropping cycle of this variety which allowed it to use efficiently the nutrients supplied. The use of short (Tzee) and medium (Ikenné) cycles varieties whose potential yields were less than or equal to 5 t ha<sup>-1</sup> with the application of 200 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of NPK: 15-15-15 + 100 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of urea 46% N (F<sub>1</sub>) would give the highest maize grain yields over the first two years of cultivation. For long (Sotubaka) or medium (Sammaz 52) cycles varieties with potential yields greater than 5 t ha<sup>-1</sup>, the application of 6 000 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of chicken dungs (F<sub>2</sub>) seems more advantageous under good rainfall conditions.

**Table 8:** Maize grain yields under treatments for each year and 2-year average

Varieties	Fertilizers				P	CV (%)
	F <sub>0</sub>	F <sub>1</sub>	F <sub>2</sub>	F <sub>3</sub>		
Maize grain yields in t ha <sup>-1</sup>						
Year 1 (2020)						
Ikenné (V <sub>1</sub> )	2.73±0.18b	3.80±0.19a	3.64±0.21a	2.74±0.20b	0.045	16.60
Tzee (V <sub>2</sub> )	2.08±0.14b	2.78±0.15a	2.30±0.16b	2.10±0.12b	0.031	15.40
Sotubaka (V <sub>3</sub> )	3.22±0.13c	4.12±0.19b	4.71±0.13a	3.61±0.11c	0.008	16.00
Sammaz 52 (V <sub>4</sub> )	3.05±0.17b	4.18±0.16a	4.12±0.12a	3.38±0.14b	0.009	15.20
Year 2 (2021)						
Ikenne (V <sub>1</sub> )	1.77±0.16c	3.05±0.15ab	3.15±0.13a	2.74±0.17b	0.003	16.10
Tzee (V <sub>2</sub> )	1.42±0.12b	2.42±0.20a	2.46±0.22a	2.34±0.20a	0.035	17.40
Sotubaka (V <sub>3</sub> )	2.01±0.13c	3.42±0.12b	3.86±0.14a	3.52±0.16b	<.001	16.00
Sammaz 52 (V <sub>4</sub> )	1.92±0.12c	3.40±0.14b	3.78±0.15a	3.37±0.13b	0.002	15.70
Means of the two years						
Ikenne (V <sub>1</sub> )	2.25±0.12c	3.43±0.13a	3.39±0.12a	2.74±0.15b	0.003	16.20
Tzee (V <sub>2</sub> )	1.75±0.11b	2.60±0.15a	2.38±0.15a	2.22±0.16a	0.035	17.00
Sotubaka (V <sub>3</sub> )	2.61±0.13c	3.77±0.13b	4.29±0.12a	3.57±0.12b	0.002	15.50
Sammaz 52 (V <sub>4</sub> )	2.49±0.12c	3.79±0.11a	3.95±0.11a	3.37±0.13b	0.002	15.10

$F_0 = 0 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$ ;  $F_1 = 200 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  of NPK: 15-15-15 +  $100 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  of urea 46% N;  $F_2 = 6\,000 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  of chicken dungs and  $F_3 = 6\,000 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  of small ruminant dungs. CV= Coefficient of variation. The data were discriminated in the horizontal direction ( $P=0.05$ ). Values that were followed by the same letters are statistically identical.

### 3.4 Economic analysis of maize production techniques

The average balances (difference between outputs calculated from average yields and inputs) obtained under the different treatments were presented in Table 9. They were all positive and had almost kept pace with the evolution of maize yields grains obtained.

For Ikenné, the highest profit (343 000 FCFA  $\text{ha}^{-1}$  or US\$ 512.46) was obtained with the application of  $200 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  of NPK: 15-15-15 +  $100 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  of urea 46% N ( $F_1$ ). This profit under  $V_1F_1$  was higher than those under  $V_1F_0$ ;  $V_1F_2$  and  $V_1F_3$  by 70; 14 and 102% respectively. The highest profit (177 000 FCFA  $\text{ha}^{-1}$  or US\$ 264.45) under Tzee, was also recorded with the supply of  $F_1$ . This profit under  $V_2F_1$  was higher than those of  $V_2F_0$ ,  $V_2F_2$  and  $V_2F_3$  by 74; 81 and 168% respectively. For Sotubaka, the application of  $6\,000 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  of chicken dungs ( $F_2$ ) gave the highest profit (480 000 FCFA  $\text{ha}^{-1}$  or US\$ 717.14). This profit is higher than those obtained under  $V_3F_0$ ;  $V_3F_1$  and  $V_3F_3$  respectively of 75; 17 and 43%. The highest profit (415 000 FCFA  $\text{ha}^{-1}$  or US\$ 620.03) under Sammaz 52, was obtained with the application of  $F_1$ . This profit was higher than those obtained under  $V_4F_0$ ;  $V_4F_2$  and  $V_4F_3$  respectively of 66; 1 and 40%.

The highest profits obtained under the different interactions variety and fertilization scheme were correlated with the highest maize grain yields obtained under each interaction. But under the combinations of Sotubaka or Sammaz 52 variety and organic the profits were mainly correlated with inputs and secondly, maize grain yields. This study indicated that, to success the maize production, it should be better to use  $F_1$  for Ikenne, Tee and Sammaz 52 varieties; but for Sotubaka variety apply  $F_2$ .

**Table 9:** Mean partial balance for each treatment

Varieties	Fertilization schemes	Labor cost	Seeds cost	Fertilizers cost	Insecticide cost	Total Input	Out put	Balance
Ikenné	$F_0$	218 000	10 000	0	20 000	248 000	450 000	202 000 (US\$ 301.80)
	$F_1$	238 000	10 000	75 000	20 000	343 000	686 000	343 000 (US\$ 512.46)
	$F_2$	228 000	10 000	120 000	20 000	378 000	678 000	300 000 (US\$ 448.21)
	$F_3$	228 000	10 000	120 000	20 000	378 000	548 000	170 000 (US\$ 253.99)
Tzee	$F_0$	218 000	10 000	0	20 000	248 000	350 000	102 000 (US\$ 152.39)
	$F_1$	238 000	10 000	75 000	20 000	343 000	520 000	177 000 (US\$ 264.45)
	$F_2$	228 000	10 000	120 000	20 000	378 000	476 000	98 000 (US\$ 146.42)
	$F_3$	228 000	10 000	120 000	20 000	378 000	444 000	66 000 (US\$ 98.61)
Sotubaka	$F_0$	218 000	10 000	0	20 000	248 000	522 000	274 000 (US\$ 409.37)
	$F_1$	238 000	10 000	75 000	20 000	343 000	754 000	411 000 (US\$ 614.05)
	$F_2$	228 000	10 000	120 000	20 000	378 000	858 000	480 000 (US\$ 717.14)
	$F_3$	228 000	10 000	120 000	20 000	378 000	714 000	336 000 (US\$ 502.00)
Sammaz 52	$F_0$	218 000	10 000	0	20 000	248 000	498 000	250 000 (US\$ 373.51)
	$F_1$	238 000	10 000	75 000	20 000	343 000	758 000	415 000 (US\$ 620.03)
	$F_2$	228 000	10 000	120 000	20 000	378 000	790 000	412 000 (US\$ 615.55)
	$F_3$	228 000	10 000	120 000	20 000	378 000	674 000	296 000 (US\$ 442.24)

1 US\$= 669.325 of West Africa franc CFA on [https://fr.coinmill.com/USD\\_XOF.html](https://fr.coinmill.com/USD_XOF.html), 29/09/2022 at 20h 02

$F_0 = 0 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$ ;  $F_1 = 200 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  of NPK: 15-15-15 +  $100 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  of urea 46% N;  $F_2 = 6\,000 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  of chicken dungs and  $F_3 = 6\,000 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  of small ruminant dungs

It is necessary to discuss these results, with emphasis on the causes of the matter. Therefore I recommend citing the scientific manuscripts.

It is interesting to note that sorghum and African millet (Kharif) are crops that require less water than maize, so it has potential as forage plant that can be grown in this region, since its nutritional value is equal to or slightly higher than to corn, and with a superior productive response [39, 40]. Despite the above, and particularly under conditions in the study area, the species by itself cannot guarantee high yields, so it is necessary to accompany its sowing with adequate fertilization practices, which have implicit techniques that, in addition to improve plant nutrition [41,42,43], followed by practices that help conserve the soil, with consequent benefits [44,45,46]. The edaphic factors studied in this research may have a direct effect on corn yield [47,48,49], as reported by studies focused on the influence of soil conditions on productivity in environments such as the one in our study [ 50,51, 52].

#### 4. Conclusion

At the end of this study conducted for two years on ferralsol left fallow for three (03) years with the aim to improve sustainably maize productivity and producer incomes, it showed that the application of  $200 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  of NPK:15-15-15 +  $100 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  of urea 46% N ( $F_1$ ) gave the highest maize grain yields and profit under the Tzee and Ikenné varieties, whereas the highest maize grain yields and profit under the Sotubaka and Sammaz 52 varieties were obtained with the application of  $6\,000 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  of chicken dungs ( $F_2$ ). For successful maize cultivation, it was recommended to use  $F_1$  for Ikenne and Tzee varieties and  $F_2$  for Sotubaka and Sammaz 52 varieties on soil left fallow for three (03) years. However, the effectiveness of chicken dungs is conditioned by its availability, hence the need to promote chicken/poultry farming in order to ensure its availability.

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I SUGGEST ADDING RECENT REFERENCES WHICH ADDRESS THE ISSUE IN QUESTION IN LATIN AMERICAN TERRITORIES. SUGGESTED CITATIONS ARE FOR GENUINE SCIENTIFIC REASONS THAT EMPHASIZE THE CURRENT TOPIC OF STUDY IN CONTEXT:

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