

Response of Iron and Boron on Growth, Yield and quality of Safflower Crop (*Carthamus tinctorius* L.) in Kalyan Karnataka

Abstract

The present experiment was carried at Agricultural Research Station, Hagari, Ballari, Karnataka to evaluate the response of iron and boron on growth, yield and quality of safflower during two consecutive years 2020-21. The experiment consisted of seven treatments, includes T₁: Absolute control, T₂: RDF (40:40:12.5 kg NPK +30 kg Sulphur +15 kg ZnSO₄ha⁻¹), T₃: RDF + 15 kg FeSO₄ha⁻¹, T₄: RDF + 1.0 kg Boron ha⁻¹, T₅: RDF + 15 kg FeSO₄ha⁻¹ + 1.0 kg Boron ha⁻¹, T₆: RDF + 20 kg FeSO₄ha⁻¹, T₇: RDF + 1.5 kg Boron ha⁻¹ and T₈: RDF + 20 kg FeSO₄ha⁻¹ +1.5 kg Boron ha⁻¹ which replicated thrice in randomized complete block design. The results of the experiment revealed that the combined application of iron and boron *i.e.* 100% recommended dose of fertilizer (RDF) along with 20 kg iron per ha and 1.5 kg boron per ha (T₈) recorded significantly maximum plant height (117.0 cm), number of leaves per plant (94.3), number of primary branches per plant (14.1), number of secondary branches per plant (21.3), total dry matter production (2878 kg), number of capsules per plant (36.9), seed weight per head (0.94), thousand seed weight (68.5 g), and seed yield (15.96 q). Further, the quality parameters such as protein (15.5 %) and oil content (28.8 %) were significantly enhanced in same treatment.

Keywords: Iron, boron, growth, yield, quality and safflower

Introduction

Safflower (*Carthamus tinctorius* L.) (kusum, kusumbha, kardi) has been under cultivation in India for its brilliantly coloured florets and the orange red dye (*carthamin*) extracted from them and seed [1]. The seed contains 24-36% oil and it is good as sunflower oil having enough amount of linolic acid (78%), which is very useful for reducing blood cholesterol content [2]. The cold pressed oil is golden yellow and is largely used for cooking purposes [3]. The unsaturated fatty acids of safflower lower these rum cholesterols. Oil consumption has been increased due to increasing population and capitation consumption recently [4].

India has the larger coverage but lower yield among the major safflower producing countries. Maharashtra and Karnataka are major safflower growing States, which contribute more than 90% of India's production [5]. In Karnataka, it is cultivated in an area of 1293 thousand ha and production of 805.8 thousand tones, with an average yield of 623 kg ha⁻¹[6],

which was low as compared to state average (758 Kg ha⁻¹), Safflower is one of the important oil seed crops being grown in *rabi* in this region [7]. The micro nutrients such as iron and boron play vital role in enhancing yield and quality of safflower. Among which, iron is necessary for the biosynthesis of chlorophyll and cytochrome, besides the function of iron in the metabolism of chloroplast RNA, leading to increase in the biosynthesis materials and it acts as cofactor for approximately 140 enzymes that catalyse unique biochemical reactions [8]. Whereas boron is considered as one of the necessary elements for the growth of plants, it participates in the physiological process of pollination, fertilization and plant fruit setting [9]. By looking at the importance of iron and boron on growth, yield quality and also the information on Fe and B fertilization on yield, uptake and quality of safflower is meagre with this the present study was undertaken to study effect of application of iron and boron on growth, yield and quality of safflower under rainfed condition in Kalyan Karnataka, India.

Material and methods

The experiment was conducted at Agricultural Research Station, Hagari, Ballari, Karnataka. during two consecutive years (2020-2021). The test crop was safflower grown under *Rabi* conditions with spacing of 60 x 30 cm. The net plot size 2.4 X 3.2m for the experiment. The experiment consists of eight treatments replicated thrice in randomized complete block design. The recommended dose of fertilizers (40:40:12.5 kg NPK +30 kg sulphur +15 kg ZnSO₄ ha⁻¹) were applied to the safflower crop in the treatments except in the absolute control. Nitrogen was applied in the form of urea, phosphorus was supplied in the form of DAP where as potassium was through MAP. The secondary nutrient sulphur was applied in the form of elemental sulphur. Zinc was applied in the form of ZnSO₄, Iron in the form of FeSO₄ and boron in the form of borax; these micronutrients were applied as basal application. FYM @ 5 t ha⁻¹ is applied for all treatments except absolute control one month prior to sowing. The treatments were imposed based on the details as listed in below.

Treatments:

T₁: Absolute control

T₂: RDF (40:40:12.5 kg NPK +30 kg Sulphur +15 kg ZnSO₄ ha⁻¹)

T₃: RDF + 15 kg FeSO₄ ha⁻¹

T₄: RDF + 1.0 kg Boron ha⁻¹

T₅: RDF + 15 kg FeSO₄ ha⁻¹ + 1.0 kg Boron ha⁻¹

T₆: RDF + 20 kg FeSO₄ ha⁻¹

T₇: RDF + 1.5 kg Boron ha⁻¹

T₈: RDF + 20 kg FeSO₄ ha⁻¹ +1.5 kg Boron ha⁻¹

(Note: FYM @ 5 t ha⁻¹ is applied for all treatments except absolute control)

Growth parameters such as plant height (cm), number of leaves /plant, primary branches, secondary branches and dry matter production (kg/ha) were recorded from the 5 labelled different plants. Similarly, yield parameters, such as number of capsules /plant, seed weight/head (g), thousand seed weight (g) and seed yield (q/ha) were recorded. The quality parameters such as protein content (%), protein yield (kg ha⁻¹), oil content (%) and oil yield (kg ha⁻¹) were analyzed by using standard analytical procedures. The oil content in seeds was estimated by Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) Spectrophotometer. The oil content was expressed in percentage [10]. The nitrogen content was estimated by modified kjeldahl's method. The protein content was calculated by multiplying the per cent nitrogen with a factor 6.25 [11]. Before start of the experiment, initial soil sample (0-15 cm) depth was drawn and analyzed for various soil physico-chemical properties. The details of initial value of basic soil properties of experimental site are presented in Table 1. The initial soil was having alkaline soil reaction (8.37) with medium electrical conductivity (0.79 dSm⁻¹) and medium soil organic carbon status (0.53%). The available nutrients such as nitrogen (276 kg ha⁻¹) phosphorus (32 kg ha⁻¹) and potassium (426 kg ha⁻¹) were medium in status. The micro nutrients such as iron (1.96 ppm) and boron (0.50 ppm) were low in fertility status

Table 1: Initial soil properties of experimental site:

Sl. No	Parameters	Values
		2020-21
1	pH	8.37
2	EC (dSm ⁻¹)	0.79
3	Organic carbon (%)	0.53
4	Available Nitrogen (kg/ha)	276
5	Available P ₂ O ₅ (kg/ha)	32.0
6	Available K ₂ O (kg/ha)	426
7	Available Fe (ppm)	1.96
8	Available B (ppm)	0.50

Results

The results pertaining to growth, yield and quality are presented in Table 2, 3 and 4. The results of the two years investigation revealed that levels of iron, boron and their

combination treatments had significant influence on plant height, number of leaves per plant, number of primary branches per plant, number of secondary branches per plant, total dry matter production, number of capsules per plant, seed weight per head, thousand seed weight and seed yield of safflower crop.

At harvest, among the iron and boron levels, application of 20 kg FeSO₄ ha⁻¹ recorded the plant height (102.8 cm), number of leaves per plant (85.4), number of primary branches per plant (11.5), number of secondary branches per plant (17.7), total dry matter production (2550 kg), number of capsules per plant (33.6), seed weight per head (0.85 g), thousand seed weight (59.8 g), seed yield (14.61 q) and quality parameters such as protein content (14.5 %), protein yield (227.0 kg ha⁻¹), oil content (28.4 %) and oil yield (443.7 kg ha⁻¹). and it was significantly superior over recommend dose of fertilizer (RDF) and control. But on par with 15 kg FeSO₄ ha⁻¹, 1.5 kg Boron ha⁻¹ and 1.0 kg Boron ha⁻¹.

Combination (RDF) with levels of iron and boron (Micronutrient) had profound influence on growth and yield parameters. The treatments receiving T₈: RDF + 20 kg iron per ha + 1.5 kg boron per ha recorded the highest plant height (117.0 cm), number of leaves per plant (94.3), number of primary branches per plant (14.1), number of secondary branches per plant (21.3), total dry matter production(2878 kg), number of capsules per plant (36.9), seed weight per head (0.94), thousand seed weight (68.5 g), and seed yield (15.96 q), and it was significantly superior over T₆: RDF + 20 kg FeSO₄ha⁻¹ (14.61 q), T₇: RDF + 1.5 kg Boron ha⁻¹ (14.12 q), T₃: RDF + 15 kg FeSO₄ha⁻¹(14.23 q), T₄: RDF + 1.0 kg Boron ha⁻¹(13.99 q), T₂: RDF (13.93 q) and T₁: control (7.19 q), but it on par with T₅: RDF + 15 kg FeSO₄ ha⁻¹+1.0 kg Boron ha⁻¹(15.65 q). Among the different treatments, the treatment which received recommended dose of fertilizer along with 20 kg iron per ha and 1.5 kg boron per ha recorded significantly higher protein content (15.5 %), protein yield (247.5 kg ha⁻¹), oil content (28.8 %) and oil yield (458.9 kg ha⁻¹).

Discussions

Yield is a function of complex inter-relationships of its components, which was determined from the growth in vegetative phase and its subsequent reflection in reproductive phase of the plant [12]. The results showed that application of combination of iron and boron

Table 2: Response of iron and boron nutrition on growth parameters of safflower crop in Kalyan Karnataka

Treatments details	Plant height (cm)			Number of leaves /plant			Primary Branches/ plant			Secondary Branches/ plant			Dry matter production(kg/ha)		
	2020	2021	Pooled	2020	2021	Pooled	2020	2021	Pooled	2020	2021	Pooled	2020	2021	Pooled
T₁	65.2	66.8	66.0	45.6	46.8	46.2	5.1	5.8	5.5	9.3	9.8	9.6	1856	1895	1876
T₂	82.6	85.7	84.2	72.8	75.4	74.1	8.7	8.9	8.8	13.5	13.9	13.7	2254	2289	2272
T₃	96.2	98.9	97.6	81.5	83.1	82.3	9.6	9.9	9.8	15.6	16.1	15.9	2389	2415	2402
T₄	85.5	87.6	86.6	76.6	77.9	77.3	8.9	9.3	9.1	14.2	14.8	14.5	2298	2331	2315
T₅	106.6	109.1	107.9	89.5	91.3	90.4	12.8	13.1	13.0	19.1	19.9	19.5	2626	2696	2661
T₆	101.2	104.4	102.8	84.2	86.5	85.4	11.1	11.8	11.5	17.5	17.9	17.7	2502	2597	2550
T₇	98.5	99.8	99.2	80.9	82.9	81.9	10.1	10.5	10.3	15.8	16.3	16.1	2426	2487	2457
T₈	115.3	118.7	117.0	93.2	95.3	94.3	13.9	14.2	14.1	20.9	21.6	21.3	2857	2899	2878
Mean	93.89	96.38	95.1	78.04	79.30	78.7	10.03	10.44	10.24	15.74	16.29	16.02	2401	2451	2426
S.E._±	4.58	4.38	4.5	2.77	2.82	2.8	0.42	0.43	0.43	0.67	0.71	0.69	80.24	86.30	83.3
C.D.(P=0.05)	13.89	13.46	13.7	8.41	8.55	8.5	1.27	1.29	1.28	2.04	2.15	2.10	243.4	261.8	253.6

Note: FYM @ 5 t ha⁻¹ is applied for all treatments except absolute control

Table 3: Response of iron and boron nutrition on yield parameters of safflower crop in Kalyan Karnataka

Treatments details	Number of capsules /plant			Seed weight/ head (g)			Thousand Seed weight(g)			Seed yield (q/ha)		
	2020	2021	Pooled	2020	2021	Pooled	2020	2021	Pooled	2020	2021	Pooled
T ₁	19.5	19.8	19.7	0.63	0.66	0.65	44.5	44.7	44.60	7.09	7.29	7.19
T ₂	26.3	26.9	26.6	0.69	0.73	0.71	52.3	52.9	52.60	13.78	14.08	13.93
T ₃	28.9	29.5	29.2	0.78	0.81	0.80	56.9	57.4	57.15	14.05	14.41	14.23
T ₄	27.2	28.1	27.7	0.73	0.77	0.75	53.7	54.3	54.00	13.81	14.17	13.99
T ₅	34.5	35.1	34.8	0.89	0.94	0.92	60.2	61.0	60.60	15.28	16.02	15.65
T ₆	33.3	33.9	33.6	0.83	0.87	0.85	59.3	60.3	59.80	14.53	14.69	14.61
T ₇	31.1	32.1	31.6	0.79	0.81	0.80	55.6	56.3	55.95	14.06	14.18	14.12
T ₈	36.5	37.3	36.9	0.93	0.95	0.94	67.9	69.1	68.50	15.57	16.35	15.96
Mean	29.7	30.3	30.0	0.78	0.82	0.80	56.30	57.0	56.65	13.52	13.90	13.71
S.E.±	0.87	1.01	0.94	0.03	0.05	0.04	2.57	2.66	2.62	0.34	0.54	0.42
C.D.(P=0.05)	2.65	3.06	2.90	0.09	0.14	0.12	7.80	8.06	7.93	1.02	1.63	1.27

Table 4: Response of iron and boron nutrition on quality parameters of safflower crop in Kalyan Karnataka

Treatments	Protein content (%)			Protein yield (kg/ha)			Oil content (%)			Oil yield (kg/ha)		
	2020	2021	Pooled	2020	2021	Pooled	2020	2021	Pooled	2020	2021	Pooled
T₁	11.6	11.9	11.8	82	87	84.5	25.1	25.3	25.2	178.0	184.4	181.2
T₂	12.5	12.8	12.7	172	180	176.0	26.6	26.8	26.7	366.5	377.3	371.9
T₃	13.3	13.8	13.6	187	199	193.0	27.4	27.9	27.7	385.0	402.0	393.5
T₄	13.1	13.5	13.3	181	191	186.0	27.1	27.4	27.3	374.3	388.3	381.3
T₅	14.2	14.8	14.5	217	237	227.0	28.2	28.5	28.4	430.9	456.6	443.7
T₆	13.9	14.1	14.0	202	207	204.5	27.8	28.0	27.9	403.9	411.3	407.6
T₇	13.4	14.0	13.7	188	199	193.5	27.6	27.8	27.7	388.1	394.2	391.1
T₈	15.4	15.6	15.5	240	255	247.5	28.6	28.9	28.8	445.3	472.5	458.9
Mean	13.43	13.83	13.63	183.63	194.38	189.01	27.30	27.58	27.44	371.5	385.8	378.6
S.E._±	0.47	0.45	0.46	8.77	5.64	7.21	0.48	0.55	0.52	10.57	12.14	11.35
C.D.(P=0.05)	1.43	1.36	1.40	26.60	17.10	21.85	1.44	1.67	1.56	32.06	36.82	34.44

significantly influenced growth, yield and quality of safflower might be due to Fe and B. Both play vital role in physiological processes such as chlorophyll content, water and nutrients absorption, nucleic acids, IAA, cell division and cell elongation which in turn effect on plant growth, therefore reflected positive effect on increasing the number of leaves per plant [13& 14]. Fe has a structural role in chlorophyll, energy transfer within the plant and enters in root cells and B is necessary in the formation of plant cells, sugar transportation, IAA, formation and germination [15]. Similarly, some of the authors reported that iron enhance the carbohydrates production on photosynthesis for that reason in the end grain of the material can be stored and **can** be stated that the use of iron may increase the yield [16]. The current data might be due to the role of Fe as cofactor for different defence enzyme e.g: superoxide dismutase and catalase, these enzymes play significant role against various a biotic stress especially high salinity and drought stress [17]. Iron is credited with a definite role in the synthesis of chlorophyll molecule [18] Boron has metabolic role in biochemical reactions and protects plant cell from stressors [19]. Boron regulates metabolism involved in translocation of carbohydrates, cell wall development and RNA synthesis. The increase in growth, yield and quality parameters are mainly due to the combined application of micronutrients such as iron and boron through soil application with their key role of in physiological and metabolic process.

Conclusions

Micronutrients are required by plants in small quantities, but they are very important for plant to **compete** life cycle. The combined application of iron and boron along with recommended dose of fertiliser recorded significantly higher growth, yield and quality parameters compared to absolute control and recommended dose of fertiliser treatment as these nutrients are deficient in the soil. **The treatment which received combination of recommended dose of fertilizer along with 20 kg iron per ha and 1.5 kg boron per ha recorded significantly higher growth, yield and quality of safflower.**

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