

Original Research Article

Biochar-based slow-release nitrogen fertilizer performance on growth and development of wheat in Indo-Gangetic Plains

ABSTRACT

Aims: This study aimed to evaluate the impact of biochar-coated nitrogen (BCN) fertilizers on the growth, development, and productivity of wheat in the Indo-Gangetic Plains. The focus was on assessing the crop growth and development of wheat compared to neem-coated urea (NCU).

Study design: Experiment was designed under randomized complete block (RCBD) with 3 replications

Place and Duration of Study: The experiment was conducted during the winter season of 2021-22 at NEB-Crop Research Centre, G. B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, Pantnagar, India.

Methodology: The fertilizers dosages were applied as follows: 100% recommended dose of nitrogen (N) through neem-coated urea (NCU), 125% N-NCU, 100% N-Biochar-coated urea (BCU), 100% N-BCU, 75% N-BCU and 50% N-BCU with 2 sprays of 4% Nano-Urea (NU) and a control with no nitrogen. Both the fertilizers were applied at different nitrogen dosages, with above and below 25% and 50% of the 100% recommended dosage.

Results: The study found that split application of 125% N-BCN resulted in 5.81% to 16.6% increase in plant height at the harvest stage compared to other BCN treatments and a 3.46% to 8.15% increase over nitrogen applied through NCU. For tiller production, 125% N-BCN application led to 3.94% to 12.4% more tillers compared to NCU and 6.61% to 23.7% more than other BCN treatments. Crop biomass accumulation was also higher with 125% N-BCN, showing a 1.44% increase over 125% N-NCU and up to 16.7% more than other BCN doses.

Conclusion: The BCN fertilizers proved to be more effective than conventional fertilizers, promoting better nutrient uptake and improved growth rates during critical stages. The study concludes that BCN fertilizers are a promising alternative for sustainable wheat cultivation in the Indo-Gangetic Plains, offering better wheat growth, development and reduced environmental impact, making them suitable for broader agricultural applications.

Keywords: Biochar; Biochar-coated nitrogen; Crop growth rate; Relative growth rate; Absolute growth rate

1. INTRODUCTION

The agricultural sector in India, particularly in the Indo-Gangetic Plains (IGP), plays a pivotal role in the nation's food security, supporting a substantial proportion of the population. Wheat is a staple crop in this region, contributing significantly to the country's grain production. However, sustaining high yields in the IGP has become increasingly challenging due to the intensification of agriculture and the reliance on conventional fertilizers, particularly nitrogen (N) fertilizers. The excessive and indiscriminate use of conventional N fertilizers has led to several agronomic and environmental issues post green revolution,

Commented [UdW1]: I think that at this point it would be more interesting to write the dependent variables of the study instead of "growth, development and productivity".

Commented [UdW2]: How many treatments??

Commented [UdW3]: In a greenhouse or in the field?

Commented [UdW4]: Are these treatments the same?

Commented [UdW5]: I think it is best to describe all the treatments.

Commented [UdW6]: These keywords are repeating the title..

Commented [UdW7]:

Introduction:

1st - Many sentences without citations. More citations provide more validation to your work. I think you should include citations in all the sentences in this section.

2nd - In the first paragraph, you should inform the area occupied by wheat in India, its total production, among other data that you consider crucial. Is it a staple food for the population?

3rd - Which are the most common nitrogen fertilizers used in India? Are they used in mineral, organic, synthetic sources? Reference this.

4th - You should describe in detail the difference between using Neem-coated urea (NCU) and Biochar-coated urea (BCU), why the choice of Neem in comparison to biochar? You could write a paragraph showing the better results of using biochar and slow-release fertilizers in relation to traditional fertilizers.

5th - The last paragraph should describe the hypotheses of the work.

including nutrient leaching, soil acidification, and the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) [1], all of which have long-term implications for soil health and agricultural sustainability. One of the primary concerns associated with conventional nitrogen fertilizers, such as urea, is their rapid release and subsequent leaching losses, which not only reduce the efficiency of nitrogen use but also lead to significant environmental pollution [2]. In the IGPs, where intensive wheat cultivation is prevalent, these challenges are exacerbated by the region's specific climatic and soil conditions, characterized by frequent irrigation, high temperatures, and variable rainfall patterns. These factors contribute to the rapid transformation and loss of nitrogen from the soil-plant system, necessitating frequent and high-rate fertilizer applications to maintain crop productivity. Consequently, there is an urgent need for innovative fertilizer management practices that can enhance nitrogen use efficiency (NUE) while mitigating environmental impacts.

Wheat cultivation is a cornerstone of Indian agriculture, occupying an area of 31.4 million hectares (Mha) with a production of 110.1 million tonnes (Mt) with a productivity of 3.52 t/ha, contributing to the food security of increasing population [3]. Traditionally, wheat production in India relies heavily on the use of conventional nitrogen fertilizers like urea to boost yields. While these fertilizers have driven productivity gains, they also pose several challenges, including nutrient leaching, volatilization, and soil degradation. The overuse and inefficient application of conventional fertilizers have led to declining soil health, reduced nitrogen use efficiency (NUE), and increased environmental pollution through greenhouse gas emissions and water contamination [1,4]. These issues underscore the urgent need for more sustainable practices such as, biochar-based fertilizers, which offer a promising solution by improving nutrient retention and release, enhancing NUE, and restoring soil fertility. Incorporating biochar with slow-release fertilizers can help mitigate the negative impacts of conventional fertilization, promoting sustainable wheat cultivation in India.

Biochar, a carbon-rich product obtained from the pyrolysis of organic biomass, has emerged as a promising soil amendment due to its ability to improve soil properties and enhance nutrient retention [5]. When used as a carrier for slow-release fertilizers, biochar can potentially mitigate the issues associated with conventional fertilizers by controlling the release of nutrients and improving their availability to plants over an extended period. The porous structure, high surface area, and cation exchange capacity of biochar make it an ideal medium for nutrient retention, reducing leaching losses and increasing the efficiency of fertilizer use. Moreover, the integration of biochar with slow-release nitrogen fertilizers could provide a dual benefit of enhancing crop growth while contributing to soil carbon sequestration, thus aligning with the goals of sustainable agriculture.

The concept of slow-release nitrogen fertilizers (SRNFs) involves the gradual release of nitrogen to match the nutrient uptake patterns of crops, thereby minimizing losses through leaching and volatilization [6,7]. SRNFs have been widely studied and applied in various cropping systems, but their effectiveness is often limited by the environmental conditions and management practices specific to different regions. In the IGPs, the performance of SRNFs could be significantly influenced by the region's unique agro-climatic conditions, necessitating region-specific research to optimize their use [8]. The combination of biochar and SRNFs presents a novel approach to enhancing nitrogen use efficiency in wheat cultivation, with the potential to improve crop yields, reduce environmental impacts, and promote sustainable agricultural practices in the IGP.

Several studies have demonstrated the benefits of biochar in improving soil fertility, water retention, and microbial activity, all of which contribute to enhanced crop growth. However, the application of biochar as a component of SRNFs in the context of wheat cultivation in the Indo-Gangetic Plains remains underexplored. Understanding the interaction

between biochar based slow-release nitrogen fertilizers, and the specific soil and climatic conditions of the IGP is crucial for developing effective fertilizer management strategies. This research aims to address this gap by evaluating the performance of biochar-based slow-release nitrogen fertilizers on the growth and development of wheat in the Indo-Gangetic Plains. The objectives of this study are (i) to evaluate the effects of biochar-based SRNFs on wheat growth viz., field emergence, plant height, crop biomass, crop growth rate (CGR), relative growth rate (RGR), net assimilation rate (NAR) and absolute growth rate (AGR). By addressing these objectives, the study seeks to provide insights into the potential of biochar-based SRNFs as a sustainable fertilizer management practice for wheat cultivation in the IGPs.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1. Experimental Site

The present experiment to evaluate the effect of biochar-based slow-release fertilizers on growth and development of wheat was conducted at NEB-Crop Research Centre, G. B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology during the winter season of 2021-22. The experiment was laid out in randomized complete block design with 7 treatments replicated thrice, as follows: 100% recommended dose of nitrogen (RDN) through neem-coated urea (NCU), 125% RDN-NCU, 100% RDN-Biochar-coated urea (BCU), 100% RDN-BCU, 75% RDN-BCU and 50% RDN-BCU with 2 sprays of 4% Nano-Urea (NU) and a control with no nitrogen. Both the fertilizers were applied at different nitrogen dosages, where the actual recommended dosage of wheat crop was 120:60:40 kg of N:P₂O₅:K₂O/ha. The wheat variety HD-2967 was used for sowing with a seed rate of 80 kg/ha through manual line sowing at a spacing of 20cm after ploughing twice and one harrowing.

The biochar-coated urea was compared with neem-coated urea in terms of wheat growth and development. The synthesis of biochar-coated urea was based on the work conducted by Singh et al. [7]. The performance of these different treatments on the wheat growth and development was studied during the experimental season. The experimental soil was categorized as sandy-clay loam, with medium organic carbon content (7.3 mg/kg), low in nitrogen 184 kg/ha, with a pH of 6.9 before start of the experiment. During the experimental period the maximum and minimum temperatures were 41.3 °C and 2.4 °C, respectively with an annual rainfall of 1338 mm.

2.2. Growth Parameters

The wheat plant samples were collected from a meter row length at 30-day interval till harvest from sowing in lines at 20 cm row spacing, and were subjected to oven-drying at 60 ± 5 °C for 48 hours until the moisture was removed. The samples were weighed and the output was converted to per hectare basis. On the other hand, the plant height was also measured at 30 days interval, alongside with tillers per hectare. The growth analysis of wheat was measured using the following formulae:

$$\text{Crop growth rate (CGR, g/m}^2\text{/day)} = \frac{w - w_1}{t_2 - t_1} \times \frac{1}{\text{land area}}$$

$$\text{Relative growth rate (RGR, g/m}^2\text{/day)} = \frac{\log_e w_2 - \log_e w_1}{t_2 - t_1}$$

$$\text{Absolute growth rate (AGR, g/m}^2\text{/day)} = \frac{h_2 - h_1}{t_2 - t_1}$$

Commented [UdW8]: Are all of these dependent variables discussed in the results section? If not, leave only those presented in the paper here.

Commented [UdW9]:

1° - O estudo foi desenvolvido em condições de campo ou de casa de vegetação?

2° - Qual manual ou artigo vocês usaram para designar a dose recomendada?

3° - Quais as condições de fertilidade do solo? Se possível inserir em uma tabela a quantidade NPK, capacidade de troca de cátions entre outros parâmetros.

4° - Vocês deveriam descrever detalhadamente como foi feita a aplicação dos fertilizantes no solo? Simularam a aplicação tradicionalmente utilizada em campo?

5° - Apenas o nitrogênio foi alterado nos tratamentos? Houve aplicação de micronutrientes? Vocês precisam descrever detalhadamente a condição experimental.

5° - Porque alguns tratamentos tiveram a aplicação de Nano-Ureas e outros não? Porque o uso de Nano-Urea?

6° - Porque os tratamentos NCU não teve as porcentagens 75 e 50%? Porque não teve um tratamento com utilizando um fertilizante tradicional de liberação rápida?

7° -Quais métodos estatísticos foram usados para comparar os tratamentos?

8 - Na introdução têm variáveis citadas que não estão descritas nesta seção.

here, w_1 and w_2 are whole plant dry weight at t_1 and t_2 are time interval (30 days). h_2 and h_1 are plant height at t_1 and t_2 are time interval (30 days).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Plant Height

The plant height of wheat was influenced by various doses of nitrogen fertilizers at all the stages of crop growth where data were recorded. Significant increase in plant height was observed from 30 DAS, where split-application of 125% N-BCN resulted in taller plants compared to 50% N-BCN+NS, but was similar to rest of the fertilizer doses (Table 1). On the other hand, at 60 and 90 DAS the taller plants were recorded under all fertilizer doses of NCU and BCU except 75% and 50% N-BCU+NS and control without nitrogen. Similarly, the taller plants at harvest stage were found with 125% N-BCU, which was 5.81% to 16.6% increase over other BCN treatments, and 3.46%–8.15% more over nitrogen applied through NCU. The increase in plant height of wheat is due to better nutrient supplementation at the critical crop stages through delayed and continuous release, which is an inherent property of a slow-release fertilizer [9]. On the other hand, although the plant height increased with increased dose of nitrogen through NCU, the nutrient translocation throughout the plant either during early or later stages was comparatively poor over biochar-coated slow-release fertilizers [10,11].

Table 1. Effect of BSRNFs on plant height of wheat at various stages of crop growth

Treatment	30 DAS	60 DAS	90 DAS	At Harvest
100% N-NCU	18.7	39.9	90.1	99.4
125% N-NCU	19.9	41.7	92.9	103.9
125% N-BCN	20.7	42.9	95.1	107.5
100% N-BCN	19.1	40.8	91.4	101.6
75% N-BCN	18.2	39.9	89.0	97.7
50% N-BCN+NS	16.9	37.5	84.9	92.2
N control	12.2	26.4	38.6	59.6
SEm±	0.8	1.7	3.4	3.9
CD (p=0.05)	2.3	5.1	10.1	11.5

N-Nitrogen, NCU-Neem-Coated Urea, BCN-Biochar-Coated Nitrogen, NS-Nano-urea Sprays

3.2. Plant Tillers

The tillers of wheat were significantly influenced by various doses of nitrogen fertilizers, indicating the effect of fertilizer sources from the early stages of the crop growth and development. More number of tillers were recorded with split application of 125% N-BCN over any other dosage of nitrogen application at all the stages of crop growth (Table 2). At 30 DAS, the 125% N-BCN recorded significantly higher tiller count compared to 100% N-NCU, 75% N-BCN, and 50% N-BCN+NS application, but was at par with 125% N-NCU and 100% N-BCN. Similarly at 60 and 90 DAS, split application of 125%, 100% N-BCN and 100% 100% N-NCU reported almost similar number of tillers, but were statistically at par with each other. The increase in tiller count under 125% N-BCN was 3.94–12.4% and 6.61–23.7% more with nitrogen application through NCU and BCU, respectively. The tiller count

Commented [UdW10]:

1st - Was the study developed in field or greenhouse conditions?

2nd - Which manual or article did you use to determine the recommended dose?

3rd - What are the soil fertility conditions? If possible, include the NPK quantity, cation exchange capacity, and other parameters in a table.

4th - Should you describe in detail how the fertilizers were applied to the soil? Did you simulate the application traditionally used in the field?

5th - Was only nitrogen changed in the treatments? Were micronutrients applied? You need to describe the experimental conditions in detail.

5th - Why did some treatments have Nano-Urea applied and others not? Why was Nano-Urea used?

6th - Why did the NCU treatments not have the percentages of 75 and 50%? Why was there no treatment using a fertilizer traditionally used?

7th - What statistical methods were used to compare the treatments?

8 - The introduction mentions variables that are not described in this section.

towards harvest was also found superior with 125% N-BCN application to wheat, but only 12.1% and 38.2% more tillers were reported over 100% N-NCU, and 50% N-BCN+NS application. This is evident that application of BCN fertilizers for wheat can significantly influence the nutrient release dynamics, through slow and efficient nutrient-release according to the crop needs [12, 13]. On the other hand, supplementing foliar nitrogen through nano-urea did not influence the tillers of wheat. Application of slow-release fertilizers can improve the biomass production since early stages and positively affect the source-sink relationship by establishing better soil-plant-nutrient relationship [14].

Table 2. Effect of BSRNFs on tillers (no./m²) of wheat at various stages of crop growth

Treatment	30 DAS	60 DAS	90 DAS	At Harvest
100% N-NCU	263.6	461.5	443.1	351.8
125% N-NCU	289.4	493.2	479.3	386.4
125% N-BCN	298.3	532.7	498.2	397.4
100% N-BCN	274.9	487.6	467.3	377.2
75% N-BCN	231.6	449.2	431.7	344.1
50% N-BCN+NS	217.2	402.7	386.8	287.6
N control	168.7	298.3	263.4	214.5
SEm±	11.4	19.5	18.2	14.4
CD (p=0.05)	33.6	57.4	53.6	42.6

N-Nitrogen, NCU-Neem-Coated Urea, BCN-Biochar-Coated Nitrogen, NS-Nano-urea Sprays

3.3. Crop Biomass

Application of various doses of nitrogen fertilizers, significantly influenced the crop biomass accumulation at different stages of crop growth. The increase in biomass was higher with 125% N-BCN indicating the effect of fertilizer sources from the early stages of the crop growth and development (Table 3). During 30 DAS, the biomass production under 125% N-BCN and NCU was almost similar, but were significantly higher than 50% N-BCN+NS and nitrogen control treatments. Also, at 60 and 90 DAS the crop biomass production was higher with 125% N-BCN and 125% N-NCU treatments. Application of 100% N-BCN resulted in -5.36% less biomass production compared to 125% N-BCN, but was 4.76 and 11.5% more than 75% N-BCN and 50% N-BCN+NS, respectively at 60 DAS. Similarly, the crop biomass at 90 DAS with 100% N-BCN was significantly higher than 50% N-BCN+NS and N control, but 6.24% and 11.5% higher than 75% N-BCN and 50% N-BCN+NS, respectively. Also, a 4.94% more biomass was accumulated with application of 100% N-BCN compared to 100% N-NCU. On the other hand, 125% N-BCN reported only 1.44% increase over 125% N-NCU, which is lower with increased fertilizer dose application. Even with 25% increased nitrogen dose to wheat over 100% N-BCN, the crop biomass accumulated was statistically similar with actual recommended dose. The difference in crop biomass with 100% N-BCN application was 6.72% and 10.5% more over 75% and 50% N-BCN+NS application. But the increased nitrogen dose 125% N-BCN reported 11.3% more crop biomass over 100% N-BCN, also 5.18% and 16.7% more compared to 125% N-NCU and 100% N-NCU, respectively. A considerable increase in the crop biomass with the application of BCN fertilizers is resultant of slow nutrient release and better nutrient uptake and helped in growth and development of wheat [15,16]. The crop nutrient demand for biomass accumulation

during tillering and active vegetative stages was effectively met by the biochar coated nitrogen fertilizers, with extended nutrient release and very less nutrient losses [17]. But the nitrogen applied through neem-coated urea can restrict the nutrient losses to some extent compared to BCN fertilizers, there by resulting in lesser crop biomass accumulation.

Table 3. Effect of BSRNFs on crop biomass (g/m²) of wheat at various stages of crop growth

Treatment	30 DAS	60 DAS	90 DAS	At Harvest
100% N-NCU	18.8	216.9	950.7	1036.6
125% N-NCU	20.2	226.8	983.5	1149.8
125% N-BCN	21.3	235.0	997.7	1209.4
100% N-BCN	19.7	222.4	972.2	1085.9
75% N-BCN	18.5	212.3	939.1	1017.5
50% N-BCN+NS	18.0	199.4	894.6	982.6
N control	7.8	133.6	423.4	477.7
SEm±	0.8	9.0	27.2	42.6
CD (p=0.05)	2.4	26.6	80.6	126.8

N-Nitrogen, NCU-Neem-Coated Urea, BCN-Biochar-Coated Nitrogen, NS-Nano-urea Sprays

3.4. Wheat Growth Analysis

The crop growth rate, relative growth rate, and absolute growth rate of wheat were derived based on the crop biomass accumulation and plant height, respectively, at 30 days interval. The rate of increase in crop biomass was significantly higher with application of 125 and 100% N-BCN, and 125 and 100% N-NCU application from 61-90 DAS and 91-harvest of wheat. The variations in the crop growth rate were depicted in the Figure 1. Where the considerable variations the CGR were better visible from 61 DAS to harvest of the crop, indicating the role of slow nutrient release from the BCU fertilizer as compared to quick-release neem coated urea. On the other hand, the relative growth rate of wheat was also significantly influenced by the fertilizer source and the dosage applied. The biomass production over existing crop biomass was comparatively higher with 125% N-BCN and 100% N-BCN application followed by 125 and 100% N-NCU application to the wheat. The positive correlation of the wheat crop biomass, CGR and RGR at 90 DAS was depicted in the Figure 3. The CGR and RGR showed strong positive correlation with crop biomass accumulation at 90 DAS with different dosages of NCU an BCN application to the wheat. With a unit increase in crop biomass (g/m²) the CGR positively increased by 0.019 g/m²/day, and RGR increased by 0.028 mg/g/day, indicating a better biomass-growth relations with the fertilizer dosages applied. On the other hand, the absolute growth presented in Figure 2, highlighting the wheat absolute growth at different stages, where the AGR at the initial crop growth stages remained almost similar across the treatments, but was found to be influenced at lateral stages. The visible variations in the wheat AGR were found from 61-90 DAS and 91 DAS-harvest of the crop. The AGR indirectly addressed the increase in plant height for every passing day from sowing to harvest of the wheat, indicated that variations from different doses of BCN and NCU fertilizers is evident due to their significant properties including slow and sustained nutrient release [18,19].

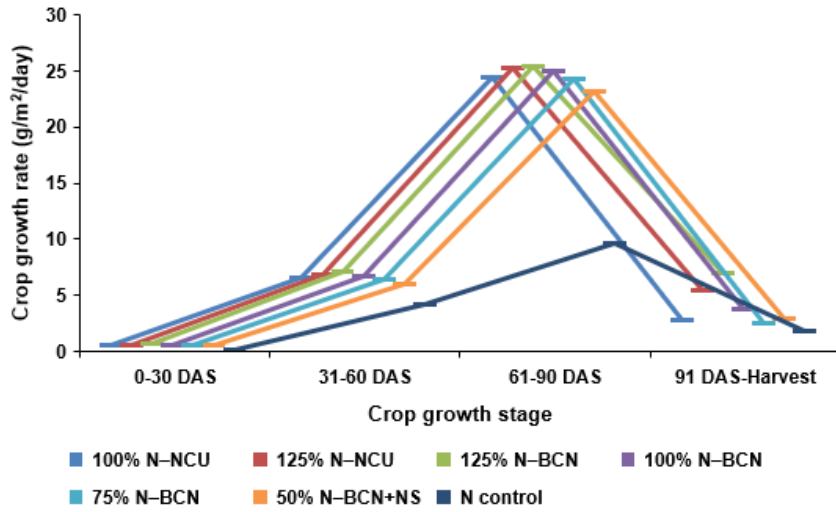


Figure 1. Effect of BSRNFs on crop growth rate (g/m²/day) of wheat at various stages of crop growth

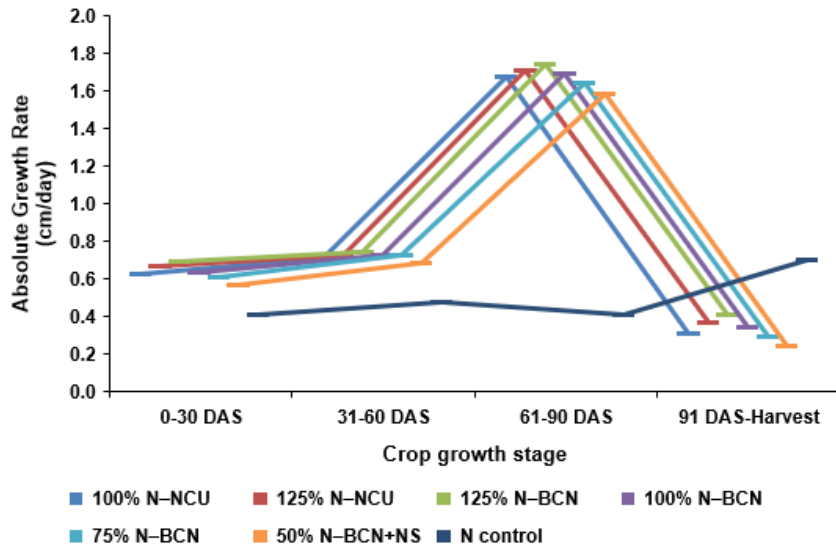


Figure 2. Effect of BSRNFs on absolute growth rate (cm/day) of wheat at various stages of crop growth

Commented [UdW11]: Organize treatments in ascending or descending order.

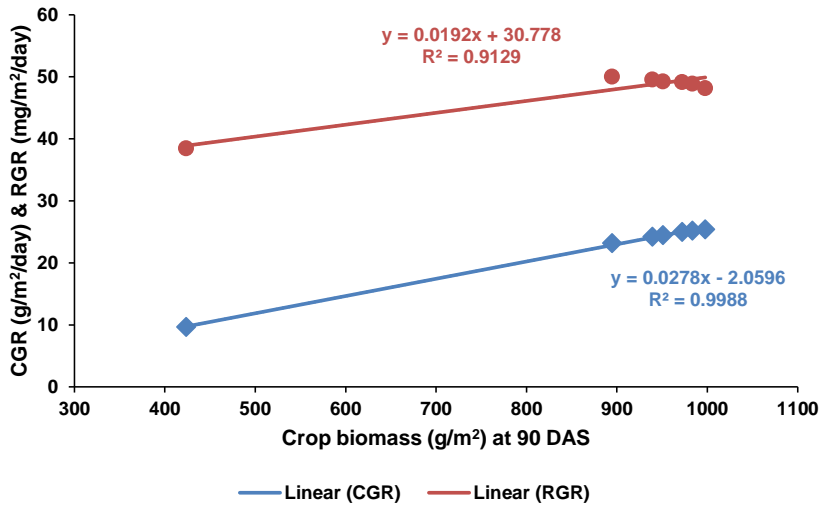


Figure 3. Relationship between crop biomass, crop growth rate and relative growth rate of wheat at 90 DAS

4. CONCLUSION

The outcome of the experiment provides valuable insights into the impact of different nitrogen fertilizer treatments, particularly biochar-coated nitrogen (BCN), on the growth and development of wheat. The results indicate that split-application of 100 and 125%N through BCN consistently led to taller plants, more crop biomass accumulation and better growth rate at various stages of growth, outperforming lower doses and conventional neem-coated urea (NCU). The slow and continuous nutrient release from BCN fertilizers resulted in superior plant height, tiller count, and biomass accumulation, demonstrating their effectiveness in enhancing wheat growth. The findings highlight the potential of BCN fertilizers to optimize nutrient use efficiency, improve crop growth, and sustain higher yields by minimizing nutrient losses. The study also showed that while higher nitrogen doses through NCU improved growth metrics, they were still outperformed by BCN due to the latter's ability to sustain nutrient availability over time. These results underscore the benefits of BCN in promoting more sustainable and efficient wheat production systems, with cutting on fertilizer usage and reducing the nutrient losses in the Indo-Gangetic Plains. Further research is needed to explore the long-term effects and economic viability of BCN fertilizers under varying agricultural conditions.

Commented [UdW12]: Why was linear regression used to discuss this variable? Are the coefficients significant?

Commented [UdW13]: Without presenting statistical studies that prove the greater efficiency of treatments with BCN, it is not possible to conclude the proposed conclusion.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Authors hereby declare that no generative AI technologies such as large language models (ChatGPT, Co-pilot etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of manuscript.

REFERENCES

1. Shukla, AK, Behera SK, Chaudhari SK, Singh G. Fertilizer use in Indian agriculture and its impact on human health and environment. *Indian J Fertil*. 2022;18(3): 218-37.
2. Dimkpa CO, Fugice J, Singh U, Lewis TD. Development of fertilizers for enhanced nitrogen use efficiency—Trends and perspectives. *Sci Tot Environ*. 2020;731:139113.
3. Anonymous. Selected State-wise Area, Production and Productivity of Wheat in India (2022-2023). *IndiaStatAgri*. 2023.. Accessed 12 March 2024. Available: <https://www.indiastatagri.com/table/agriculture/selected-state-wise-area-production-productivity-w/372101>.
4. Anas M, Liao F, Verma KK, Sarwar MA, Mahmood A, Chen ZL, Li Q, Zeng XP, Liu Y, Li YR. Fate of nitrogen in agriculture and environment: agronomic, eco-physiological and molecular approaches to improve nitrogen use efficiency. *Bio Res*. 2020;53:1-20.
5. Yadav SP, Bhandari S, Bhatta D, Poudel A, Bhattarai S, Yadav P, Ghimire N, Paudel P, Paudel P, Shrestha J, Oli B. Biochar application: A sustainable approach to improve soil health. *J of Agri and Food Res*. 2023;11:100498.
6. Santos CF, Nunes AP, da Silva Aragao OO, Guelfi D, de Souza AA, de Abreu LB, Lima AD. Dual functional coatings for urea to reduce ammonia volatilization and improve nutrients use efficiency in a Brazilian corn crop system. *J of Soil Sci and Plant Nutri*. 2021;21(2):1591-609.
7. Singh SV, Chaturvedi S, Dhyani VC, Kasivelu G. Pyrolysis temperature influences the characteristics of rice straw and husk biochar and sorption/desorption behaviour of their biourea composite. *Biores Tech*. 2020; 314: 123674.
8. Singh S, Chaturvedi S, Nayak P, Dhyani VC, Nandipamu TM, Singh DK, Gudapaty P, Mathyam P, Srinivasrao K, Govindaraju K. Carbon offset potential of biochar based straw management under rice-wheat system along Indo-Gangetic Plains of India. *Sci Tot Environ*. 2023;897:165176.
9. Ghafoor I, Habib-ur-Rahman M, Ali M, Afzal M, Ahmed W, Gaiser T, Ghaffar A. Slow-release nitrogen fertilizers enhance growth, yield, NUE in wheat crop and reduce nitrogen losses under an arid environment. *Environ Sci and Poll Res*. 2021;28(32):43528-43.
10. Yan P, Dong X, Lu L, Fang M, Ma Z, Du J, Dong Z. Wheat yield and nitrogen use efficiency enhancement through poly (aspartic acid)-coated urea in clay loam soil based on a 5-year field trial. *Frontiers in Plant Science*. 2022;13:953728.
11. Chattha MU, Fatima F, Khan I, Daji L, Chattha MB, Rasheed A, Elnour RO, Asseri TA, Hashem M, Alhaithloul HA, Hassan MU. Nutrient-coated urea mitigates deleterious impacts of salinity and supports wheat performance by enhancing antioxidant activities, photosynthetic performance and nitrogen use efficiency. *Italian J of Agron*. 2024. (Early Access).

12. Shi W, Bian R, Li L, Lian W, Liu X, Zheng J, Cheng K, Zhang X, Drosos M, Joseph S, Pan G. Assessing the impacts of biochar-blended urea on nitrogen use efficiency and soil retention in wheat production. *GCB Bioenergy*. 2022;14(1):65-83.
13. Bi H, Xu J, Li K, Li K, Cao H, Zhao C. Effects of Biochar-Coated Nitrogen Fertilizer on the Yield and Quality of Bok Choy and on Soil Nutrients. *Sustainability*. 2024;16(4):1659.
14. Wang Y, Peng Y, Lin J, Wang L, Jia Z, Zhang R. Optimal nitrogen management to achieve high wheat grain yield, grain protein content, and water productivity: A meta-analysis. *Agricultural Water Management*. 2023;290:108587.
15. Ramesh K, Raghavan V. Agricultural Waste-Derived Biochar-Based Nitrogenous Fertilizer for Slow-Release Applications. *ACS omega*. 2024;9(4):4377-85.
16. Gutiérrez CA, Ledezma-Delgado A, Juárez-Luna G, Neri-Torres EE, Ibanez JG, Quevedo IR. Production, mechanisms, and performance of controlled-release fertilizers encapsulated with biodegradable-based coatings. *ACS Agri Sci & Tech*. 2022;2(6):1101-25.
17. Shoukat MR, Bohoussou YN, Ahmad N, Saleh IA, Okla MK, Elshikh MS, Ahmad A, Haider FU, Khan KS, Adnan M, Hussain Q. Growth, yield, and agronomic use efficiency of delayed sown wheat under slow-release nitrogen fertilizer and seeding rate. *Agronomy*. 2023;13(7):1830.
18. Khan MA, Basir A, Fahad S, Adnan M, Saleem MH, Iqbal A, Amanullah, Al-Huqail AA, Alosaimi AA, Saud S, Liu K. Biochar optimizes wheat quality, yield, and nitrogen acquisition in low fertile calcareous soil treated with organic and mineral nitrogen fertilizers. *Frontiers in Plant Science*. 2022;13:879788.
19. Roy A, Chaturvedi S, Singh SV, Kasivelu G, Dhyani VC, Pyne S. Preparation and evaluation of two enriched biochar-based fertilizers for nutrient release kinetics and agronomic effectiveness in direct-seeded rice. *Biomass Conversion and Biorefinery*. 2024;14(2):2007-18.