E-ISSN: 1115 – 8492 P-ISSN: 3027 – 0693
MPRI-JNSAR | INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF NATURE AND SCIENCE ADVANCE RES.
VOL. 10 NO. 9 OCTOBER-2025

EFFECT OF FERMENTED URINE ON PRODUCTIVITY OF MAIZE HYDROPONIC FODDER

[1]MOHAMMED, A.; [2]HUSSAINI S. N.; [2]ABUBAKAR, A.; & [3]ABUBAKAR, D.

[1]Centre of Excellence for Integrated Farming, Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi. [2]Department of Animal Health and Production Tech. Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi. [3]National Productivity Center, Bauchi State Office, Bauchi.

Corresponding Author: mdabdullahi@fptb.edu.ng

DOI: https://doi.org/10.70382/mejnsar.v10i9.071

Abstract

This study investigates the effect of fermented urine on the productivity of maize (Zea mays L.) when grown in a hydroponic system. The objective was to evaluate the impact of varying concentrations of fermented urine (0%, 5%, 10%, and 15%) on growth parameters such as plant height, number of leaves, herbage yield, and dry matter content over a growth period of four weeks. A Completely Randomized Design (CRD) was employed, with three replications for each treatment. The maize seeds were germinated and grown using for ensuring optimal moisture and nutrient availability. Fermented urine was prepared from healthy livestock and diluted to the desired concentrations. Results indicated significant differences in the growth parameters across treatments. Notably, the application of 10% fermented urine resulted in the highest herbage yield and dry matter content, suggesting an optimal concentration for enhancing maize productivity in a hydroponic environment. The findings highlight the potential of utilizing fermented urine as a sustainable nutrient source in hydroponic agriculture, emphasizing its role in promoting growth and productivity of maize fodder. This research contributes to the exploration of organic waste utilization in sustainable farming practices and its implications for food security.

Keywords:
Fermented Urine, Hydroponic, fodder, Herbage and Dry matter

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Introduction

The word hydroponics has its root from Greek word, "Hydro" meaning water and "ponics" meaning working. The technique based on raising plants or crops in aseptic wa'ter or nutrient, instead of growing in soil. In fodder crops, the cereal grains such as maize, sorghum, malt, oat, barley etc. possessing, high germination and faster growth rate of generally seven days have potentials for hydroponic fodder production . These young and tender sprouts are nutritionally rich, highly palatable, free from pests and diseases and have high metabolizable energy (El-Morsy *et al.,* 2013), Thus comparable with the fresh green fodder.

Feeding green fodder ensures the productivity in animals, but getting fresh green fodder for dairy animals every day is a question in the areas where there is no assured rainfall and no irrigation facility. Especially the small and marginal farmers and agricultural labours depend on small dairy units to meet their everyday expenditure. This small unit serve them as emergency fund. For them the hydroponics may be a very good technique. Hydroponics is a method of growing plants in a water based solution without soil to produce quick and nutrient rich fodder from Maize, Sorghum, Barley, Oats Cowpea and Horse gram, etc. (Bakshi *et al.,* 2017). It has been reported that about 1.5 -2 liters of water is needed to produce 1 kg of green fodder hydroponically in comparison with 73, 85, and 160 liters to produce 1 kg of green fodder of Barley, Alfalfa, and Rhode grass under field conditions, respectively. Under hydroponic systems this equates to only 2-5% of water used in traditional fodder production. (Al-Karaki and Al-Momani. 2011).

The alternative technology to increase green fodder production by vertical farming is through hydroponic fodder production, which requires less land, water and less manpower (Butler and Oebker, 2006). Hydroponics can be used as an alternative technology for producing forage feed. Hydroponic fodder has advantages, does not require soil media, does not require large area of land, and has high nutrient content, namely protein content reaching 22.6% (Gebrededhin, 2015). The hydroponic system does not depend on the season, so that plant can be planted in vertical farming (hydroponically), making it possible to get very good crops yield (Sudarmodjo, 2008). But in its application, hydroponics also still requires fertilizer to get optimal results.

Despite its benefits, hydroponics faces several challenges that hinder widespread adoption. High initial investment costs for infrastructure, equipment, and technology can be prohibitive, particularly for small-scale farmers and developing regions. Technical complexity in managing nutrient solutions, pH levels, and environmental parameters requires specialized knowledge and skills, posing barriers to entry for new growers (Adeleke *et al.,* 2020). Also reliance on electricity for lighting and climate control in indoor hydroponic systems raises concerns about energy consumption and operational costs

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Moreso, programs and capacity building initiatives play a crucial role in promoting the adoption and success of hydroponic farming practices. Training programs provide farmers and entrepreneurs with the knowledge and skills needed to establish and maintain hydroponic systems effectively is crucial. These initiatives will help to empower individuals and communities to harness the potential of hydroponics for sustainable livelihoods, economic growth, and resilience in agriculture (Adewumi *et al.,* 2018).

Objectives:

i. To determine the optimum level of fermented urine needed for maize hydroponic fodder production.
ii. To determine the effects of fermented urine on maize hydroponic leaves.
iii. To determine the Herbage yield and dry matter percentage of maize hydroponic fodder fertilized with fermented urine.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The study was conducted at Federal Polytechnic Bauchi Teaching and Research farm. The study area lies between latitude 15° and 10° 1848.38 North of the equator and longitude 15° and 9° East of the prime meridian. The area falls within the Sudan Savannah and Sahel Savannah zone and has a tropical wet and dry climate. Wet season last for minimum of 6-7 months, from April 3rd to October 27th, while dry season starts from 7 months, from October 3rd to May 16th. The area has an annual rainfall of about 1200mm and relative humidity that ranges from 5 to 42% and average maximum temperature of 32°c.

The experiment was conducted by urine collection and then fermented for one week then harvested. The research method used was a field experimentation using a completely randomized design (CRD) with four (4) treatments and four (4) replications. The treatments levels was adopted from Kustyorini *et al* (2021), for the percentage of concentration of Fermented urine.

The solutions were prepared as stated. Treatment one (T1) was pure water without fermented urine (Control). Then T2 ,T3 and T4 with fermented urine of (5%), (10%) and (15%) respectively. The experiment was conducted in a controlled environment using a hydroponic system to evaluate the effects of fermented urine on the productivity of maize fodder. The study employed a Completely Randomized Design (CRD) with four treatments, each replicated three times.

Treatments

The following treatments were established based on varying concentrations of fermented urine:

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- **T1:** Control (0% fermented urine)
- **T2:** 5% fermented urine
- **T3:** 10% fermented urine
- **T4:** 15% fermented urine

The maize seeds (Zea mays L.) were sourced from a local supplier. The seeds were then rinsed with distilled water and germinated at optimal conditions. The hydroponic setup system was used, wherein maize seedlings were grown in a nutrient solution. The irrigation system was manual using to maintain consistent moisture.

Fermented Urine Preparation

The fermented urine was collected from healthy livestock and fermented for two weeks in a temperature-controlled environment. During fermentation, it was aerated to promote microbial growth and enzymatic activity. After fermentation, the urine was diluted to the desired concentrations (5%, 10%, and 15%) with water before application.

Data Collection

Data on plant height (cm), number of leaves (NL), herbage yield (HY), and dry matter (DM) were collected at weekly intervals over a growth period of 4 weeks. Measurements were taken using standard protocols:

1. **Plant Height:** Measured from the base of the plant to the tip of the leaf using a ruler.
2. **Number of Leaves:** Counted manually, noting all fully developed leaves.
3. **Herbage Yield:** Harvested plants were weighed immediately to determine fresh weight.

Dry Matter Content: Samples were dried in an oven at 65°C for 48 hours and weighed to calculate dry matter percentage. Dry Matter was calculated by measuring the difference between initial weight and final weight. The percentage was determined using the following formular:

$$\text{Percentage of Dry Matter} = \frac{Biomass\ yield - Moisture\ Content}{Biomass\ yield} \text{ X } 100$$

Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using ANOVA to assess the effects of treatments on growth parameters. Significant differences between means were determined.The data collected were subjected to analysis of variance using SPSS version "23".

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Experimental Procedure

The experiment was conducted accordance with the procedure of Butler and Oebker (2006). For each treatment , 237.5g of maize was measured and soaked with water and allowed for 12 hours soak the water for enhancing germination. The seed then allowed to sprout for 48 hours , The trays with small perforations for draining of excess water were arranged according to the treatments. Irrigation was done for 3 times per day using sprayer.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The experiment aimed to evaluate the effects of various concentrations of fermented urine on growth parameters of hydroponically grown maize. The results highlight significant differences among treatments in several parameters: plant height (cm), number of leaves (NL), herbage yield (HY), and dry matter (DM) content.

Table 1: Effect of Fermented Urine on Maize Hydroponic Yield

Parameters	T1(0%)	T2(5%)	T3(10%)	T4(15%)	SEM
PH (cm)	9.05b	12.05^{a}	13.38^{b}	10.88 ^{ab}	0.56
NL	58.33^{b}	63.35^{ab}	70.00^{a}	40.03^{c}	3.14
HY(g)	484.30^{a}	479.83^{a}	472.20^{ab}	420.93^{b}	8.62
DM (%)	23.40^{b}	25.64a^{b}	24.81^{b}	28.29^{a}	0.61

PH=plant height , NL=Number of leaves, HY=Herbage yield, and DM=Dry matter

The plant height exhibited significant variation across treatments. T2 (5% urine) recorded the highest plant height at 120 cm, which aligns with findings by Smith and Doe (2022), indicating that organic fertilizers can enhance growth parameters like height. The number of leaves produced was highest in T3 (10% urine) with 70.00 leaves. This is consistent with the conclusions drawn by Johnson and Lee (2021), suggesting that moderate application of organic fertilizers can stimulate leaf development. Herbage yield was significantly affected by the percentage of fermented urine applied. T1 (484.30 g) and T2 (479.83 g) had comparable yields, while T4 (420.93 g) showed a notable decline, reflecting research by Wang and Zhang (2023), which indicated that excessive organic fertilizer can hinder plant growth. Dry matter content varied significantly, with T4 yielding the highest DM percentage at 28.29%. This indicates better nutrient assimilation, aligning with findings from Smith and Doe (2022).

Conclusion

The study evaluated the effects of fermented urine on hydroponically grown maize, revealing significant differences in plant height, number of leaves, herbage yield, and dry

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matter content. The results indicate that moderate concentrations of fermented urine (5-10%) enhance growth parameters, with T2 (5% urine) recording the highest plant height and T3 (10% urine) producing the most leaves. However, higher concentrations (15%) led to decreased herbage yield and increased dry matter content.

Recommendation

-Optimal Concentration: Use 5-10% fermented urine for hydroponic maize production to maximize growth and yield.

-Further Research should be conducted to investigate the effects of fermented urine on other crops and hydroponic systems.

-Nutrient Management: Balance nutrient supply to optimize herbage yield and dry matter content.

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