International Journal of Chemical Studies

P-ISSN: 2349–8528
E-ISSN: 2321–4902
IJCS 2018; 6(5): 43-48

Received: 01-07-2018
Accepted: 03-08-2018

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Growth and yield attributes of wheat (*Triticum astivum* L) as affected by fertilizer levels, FYM and PGPR

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Abstract
The present experiment were conducted for two rabi seasons during 2009-10- and 2010-11 to study the effect of application of different proportions of recommended dose of fertilizer, farmyard manure (FYM) and composite plant growth promoting rhizobacteria (PGPR) with without vesicular arbuscular mycorrhiza (VAM) on growth and yield attributes of wheat. The experiment was laid out in a split-plot design with three replications. Treatments were combinations of four levels of fertilizer (0, 50, 75 and 100% RDF) in main plots, organic fertilizer (0 and 10 ton/ha FYM) in sub plots and biofertilizer (No inoculation, PGPR, VAM and PGPR+VAM inoculation) in sub-sub plot. Analysis of variance results showed that effect of fertilizer levels, FYM and composite PGPR and interaction effect of them were significant on growth and yield attributes of wheat.

Keywords: Fertilizer, FYM, PGPR, VAM, growth, wheat

Introduction

Wheat (*Triticum astivum* L) belongs to the family Poaceae. It is an annual, self-pollinated long day winter cereal. Wheat is one of the cereal crops which has its own importance due to high nutritional value and premier food grain crops of the country. In India, during green revolution period, intensive agriculture involving exhaustive high-yielding varieties of rice and wheat has led to heavy withdrawal of nutrients from the soil. Nutrient management has played very significant role in providing the physical condition of soil and supply all the macro and micro nutrients which are required by crop for balanced nutrition [5]. Fertilizer is costly input and a major share of it's used for cereal cultivation. The cost of fertilizers is increasing day by day. Under such a situation, suitable alternative nutrient combinations are to be evaluated. FYM is a good source of nutrients and contributed towards build-up of organic carbon in soil [3, 14].

In the last few years, the number of PGPR strain has seen a great importance, mainly due to role of the rhizosphere as an ecosystem that gained importance in the functioning of the biosphere. Various species of rhizobacteria like *Pseudomonas, Azospirillum, Azotobacter, Klebsiella, Enterobacter, Alcaligenes, Arthrobacter, Burkholderia, Bacillus* and *Serratia* have been reported to enhance the plant growth by providing nutrients and phyto hormones [9].

The use of plant growth promoting rhizobacteria (PGPR) offers an attractive way to replace chemical fertilizer (as biofertilizer), pesticides (as biocontrol), and supplements; most of the PGPR isolates result in a significant increase in plant height, root length, and dry matter production of shoot and root of plants. They also help in the suppression of plant disease in number of ways. It is a component factor in the integrated management systems in which reduced rates of agrochemicals and cultural control practices are used as biocontrol agents [10]. Biofertilizers are low cost and eco-friendly inputs and have tremendous potential for supplying nutrients, which can reduce the chemical fertilizer dose by 25-50% [15, 24]. The increase in eco-friendly production of wheat can be made possible by widespread adoption of improved technologies of which fertilizer management particularly that of nitrogen and phosphorus through biofertilizers and organic manure can play a key role. Hence, present investigation was carried out to study the effect of application of different proportions of recommended dose of fertilizer, farmyard manure (FYM) and composite PGPR with without VAM on growth and yield attributes of wheat.

Materials and Methods

Field experiments were conducted during winter (Rabi) seasons of 2009-10 and 2010-11 on an Inceptisol at Agricultural Research Farm, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi (U.P.). It is located at South-East end of Varanasi city at 25º.18′ N latitude, 83º.30′ E longitude and at an altitude of 128.93 m above mean sea level. The experimental site lies approximately in the centre of North-Gangetic alluvial plain, on the left bank of river Ganges. The soil of experimental field was sandy loam in texture having mechanical separates sand 48.86%, silt 30.68% and clay 20.46%, low soil organic carbon (0.39%), low available N (208 kg ha^{-1}), medium available P (17.9 kg ha^{-1}) and K (227.0 kg ha^{-1}), bulk density (1.41 Mg M^{-3}), particle density (2.62 Mg M^{-3}), water holding capacity (45.7%), cation exchange capacity [18.70 Cmol (P+) kg^{-1} soil] with neutral pH 7.3 (1:2.5 soil: water ratio). The experiment consisted of thirty two treatment combinations of four levels of fertilizer (0, 50, 75 and 100% RDF), two levels of FYM (without FYM and 10 t FYM ha^{-1}) and four levels of biofertilizers [control, *Azotobacter chroococcum* W5 + *Azospirillum brasilense* Cd + *Pseudomonas fluorescens* BHUPSB06 + *Bacillus megaterium* BHUPSB14, VAM (*Glomus fasciculatum*) inoculation and *Azotobacter chroococcum* W5 + *Azospirillum brasilense* Cd + *Pseudomonas fluorescens* BHUPSB06 + *Bacillus megaterium* BHUPSB14 + VAM (*Glomus fasciculatum*) inoculation were replicated thrice in a split plot design having fertilizer levels in main plots, organic manure in sub plot and biofertilizer in sub sub-plots. The levels of fertilizer and FYM were applied as per treatments. Mycorrhiza mixed with soil and pour in open furrow before sowing of the wheat seed as per the treatment. The different combination of fertilizer were applied through urea, diammonium phosphate and muriate of potash, respectively. The half dose of nitrogen and full dose of phosphorus and potash were applied as basal dressing at the time of sowing and remaining half dose of nitrogen was applied in equal portion as top dressed after first and second irrigation. Wheat seeds were inoculated with different biofertilizer culture as per treatments. Inoculated and uninoculated seed of wheat (HUW-234) was shown in the month of December in both the years using 100 kg seed/ha. Appropriate management practices were adopted to raise the crop. Growth and yield attribute were recorded at different growth stages of the crop.

Climate and Weather Condition.

The zone possesses typical subtropical climate and is subjected to extremes of weather conditions i.e. extremely hot summer and cold winter. The average annual rainfall of region is 1080.4 mm, most of which is received during the month of June to September and annual potential evapo-transpiration (PET) is 110 mm. The mean weekly meteorological parameters collected from Agro-Meteorological Observatory situated at Agricultural Research Farm of University during cropping period are presented in Figure 1 and 2. These observations reveal that maximum temperature ranged from 15.1ºC to 43.0ºC during 2009-10 and 14.2ºC to 38.2ºC during 2010-11, respectively and minimum temperatures ranged from 7.1ºC to 26.6ºC and from 4.8ºC to 22.5ºC during 2009-10, 2010-11, respectively.

Seed Inoculation with Inoculums.

The mass culture of *Azotobacter chroococcum* W5, *Azospirillum brasilence* Cd and mycorrhiza (*Glomus fasciculatum*) was obtained from Department of Microbiology, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, new Delhi, India. The pure culture of *Bacillus megaterium* strain BHUPSB14 and *Pseudomonas fluorescens* strain BHUPSB06 were obtained from Department of Soil Science and Agricultural Sciences, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India. Healthy seeds weighed for each plot of 20 m^2 (@ 100 kg ha^{-1}) were separately inoculated as per treatments in plastic bags with 2 ml of each culture of 4 days old broth cultures grown in specific media of respective inoculants (mixed in 1:1:1:1 ratio for combined treatments) along with 10 ml of 1% (w/v) sticker solution of gum acacia to ensure bacterial population in the range of 10^7 to 10^8 cfu per seed. After drying for one hour in shade, uninoculated seeds were sown first followed by inoculated seeds just to avoid contamination. Mycorrhiza mixed with soil and pour in open furrow before sowing of the wheat seed as per the treatment.

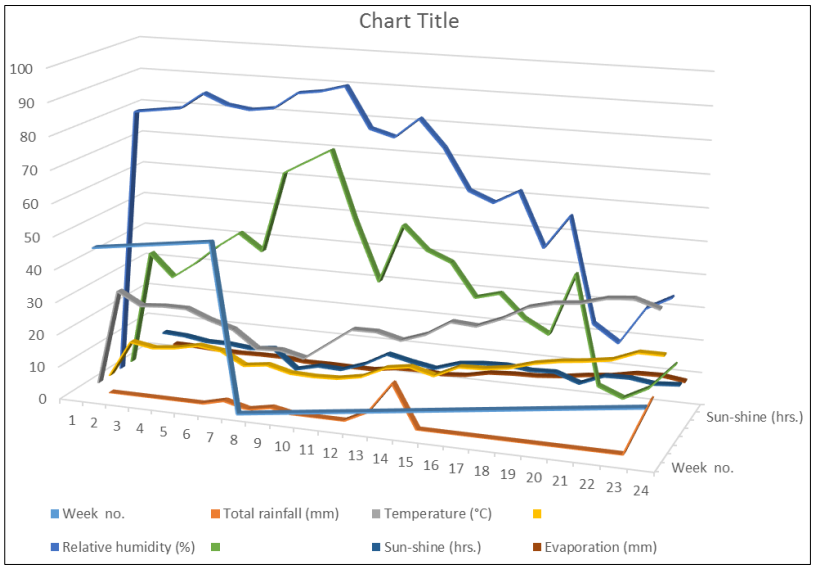

Fig 1: Climatic parameters of the experimental site during 2009-10.

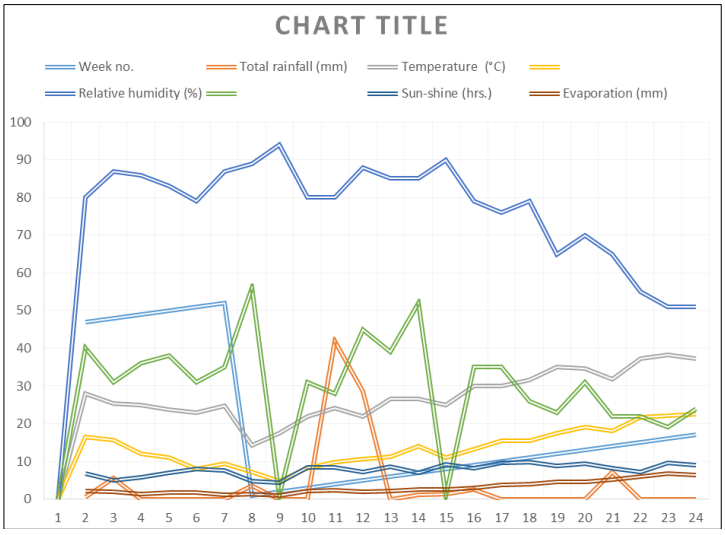

Fig 2: Climatic parameters of the experimental site during 2010-11.

Results and Discussion

The results obtained from the present investigation are summarized below in the following sub heads:

Effect of fertilizer levels on growth characters

Plant height, number of tillers and dry matter accumulation at different growth stages of wheat as influenced by fertilizer levels, FYM and biofertilizer are presented in Table 1-3. Plant height was comparatively highest in second year than the first year of experimentation. Further, data revealed that all the factors, either of fertilizer, FYM or biofertilizer, were able to increase plant height of wheat significantly over control during both the years. Plant height, number of tillers and dry matter accumulation at different growth stages of wheat were significantly increased with increasing application of fertilizer levels over no control (Table 1-3). Application of 100% RDF produced significantly taller plants, more number of tillers and dry matter than all other levels of fertilizer. The increase in plant height due to increase in fertilizer doses was might be due to an increase in nutrient availability and therefore, significant increase in vegetative growth of plants was obtained. Increasing fertilizer level increases the growth and yield attributes [12, 17, 21].

The results pertaining to the effect of fertilizer levels, FYM and biofertilizer on number of tillers m^{-1} row (Table 2) revealed that the increasing doses of fertilizer application increased the total number of tillers at the stages of tillering, ear emergence of wheat crop but at the harvesting stage, the number of tillers decreased. The lowest values of the number of tillers of wheat were 85.25, 85.75 at tillering, 90.13, 91.71 at ear emergence and 74.42, 75.46 at harvesting stage due to no application of fertilizers (control) whereas maximum values were 114.42, 115.83 at tillering, 116.75, 119.96 at ear emergence and 103.29, 105.75 at harvesting stage of the wheat due to application of 100% NPK during 1st and 2nd year of experiments, respectively. The increase in number of tillers was might be due to increased rate of fertilizer, which, led to greater stimulation of vegetative growth. All fertility levels significantly affected vegetative and reproductive growth of the plants depending upon the availability of needed nutrition which leads to proportional increase in tillers. Ineffective tillers died with the time of growth and only effective tillers are remained [19]. Therefore, decrease in number of tillers was observed at harvesting stage.

Examination of data (Table 3) on fertilizer levels revealed that the dry matter production was significantly increased with increasing dose of fertilizer levels as compared to control. With 100% RDF, dry matter production increased from 39.20 to 47.12 g m^{-1} row, 84.73 to 101.78 g m^{-1} row at tillering and ear emergence, respectively on mean basis. The possible reason for increase in dry matter production could be correlated with the increased number of tillers, production and accumulation of more photosynthates under the influence of more nutrients availability which ultimately enhanced the dry matter production. These results are akin to the findings of many researchers on wheat crop [16, 18].

Effect of FYM on growth characters

The growth parameters such as plant height, number of tillers and dry matter production were significantly higher with FYM application. The alone treatment of FYM @ 10 t ha^{-1} gave the values of plant height 38.75 cm and 40.39 cm at tillering stage; 67.93 cm and 69.63 cm at ear emergence and 90.96 cm and 92.31 cm at harvesting stage during 2009-10 and 2010-11, respectively (Table1). These values of plant height were significantly higher over the control treatment of FYM because application of FYM improved crop growth by improving physical, chemical and biological condition of soil [13]. Results of present investigation also corroborate with the findings of many researchers. They reported that application of FYM @ 10 t ha^{-1} supplies nutrients continuously to the crop plants and therefore, plant height could be increased [11, 19].

Application of FYM @ 10 t ha^{-1} significantly increased the total number of tillers per meter row and dry matter production at all growth stages of the wheat during the year of investigation. Application of 10 tonnes FYM/ha produced more number of tillers (108.65, 112.3 and 96.47/m) which were 9.62, 9.91 and 7.25 tillers/m more than that recorded with the control, at tillering, ear emergence and harvesting state of wheat, respectively on mean basis (Table 2). Application of FYM increases the number of tillers [7]. The maximum dry matter production 44.13 and 45.68 g/m row at tillering and 94.29 and 96.19 g/m row at ear emergence due to incorporation of FYM @ 10 t ha^{-1} during 1st and 2nd years, respectively. The higher dry matter production in FYM applied treatment may be imputed to mineralized nutrients present in it and that can be easily utilizable by the plants during early stages of growth [22]. Plant height, number of tillers and dry matter production significantly enhanced with application of FYM [1].

Effect of PGPR on growth characters

Examination of data (Table 1) due to bioinoculants revealed that plant height at tillering stage was in the range of 36.0 to 37.98 cm and 37.35 to 39.46 cm at tillering stage, 63.41 to 66.54 cm and 64.95 to 68.20 cm at ear emergence; and 86.24 to 89.15cm and 87.56 to 90.62 cm at harvesting stage of the wheat during 2009-10 and 2010-2011, respectively. The plant height at tillering stage significantly increased with the inoculation of PGPR, VAM and PGPR +VAM to the extent of 2.83, 4.03 and 5.50% during 2009-10 and 3.19, 4.04 and 5.65% during 2010-11 over uninoculated treatment, respectively. The almost similar trends were also found at ear emergence and harvesting stages with the inoculation treatments of PGPR, VAM and PGPR+VAM during both the years. Application of PGPR+VAM together gave the significantly higher values of plant over the control and individual treatments. Plant height could be enhanced by PGPR due to secretion of phyto hormones and increasing the availability of nutrients in the root sphere [2].

The similar significant trend were also recorded in number of tillers and dry matter production of wheat at different growth stage during both the year of investigation. The significant effects on tillers and dry matter production of wheat was might be attributed due to increase in N and P availability through mineralization of organic N, N_2 fixation and solubilization of insoluble inorganic phosphate, decomposition of phosphate rich organic compounds and production of plant growth promoting substances by the microbial inoculants or due to production of growth promoting substances such as indole acetic and gibberellic acids which positively affected plant growth [4,8].

Interaction effect of fertilizer levels and FYM on plant growth

Significant interaction effect of different levels of fertilizer and FYM (Table 4) on plant height of wheat was observed. Data revealed that highest plant height i.e. 42.81, 74.01 and 104.77cm was recorded with application of 100% RDF along with FYM @ 10 t ha^{-1} at all the stages of the wheat during 2009-10. The same trends were also recorded during 2010-11 at all the stages of the wheat growth. This trend was indicating that the use of fertilizers in addition to FYM improved the nutrients supplying power of soil to the plant and ultimately, improved the plant height of wheat. Combined use of FYM (10 t ha^{-1}) and 75% RDF was significantly higher at harvesting stage of crop growth during 2009-10 and 2010-11, respectively. The results on plant height confirmed the trend observed earlier for the yield-contributing characters and upheld the need of supplementing the 100% RDF with 10 t FYM ha^{-1} [6].

Interaction effect of fertilizer levels and FYM on ear head length and test weight

The interaction effect of fertilizer levels and FYM presented in Table 5 revealed that the highest ear head length (9.01 and 9.41 cm) and test weight (42.9 and 43.41 g) were obtained due to combined use of 100% RDF and FYM @ 10 t ha^{-1} during both the years, respectively. The ear head length and test weight recorded by the combined application of 75% RDF and FYM @ 10 t ha^{-1} was at par with that recorded by the application of 100% RDF alone during both the years. The combined application of 100% RDF + 10 t FYM ha^{-1}, improved the general soil environment, which helped to improve the wheat yield contributing characters [20]. The significant increase in the test weight was mainly owing to the improvement in growth as well as yield-attributing characters, as the application of FYM and fertilizer improves the fertility status which results in the better utilization of nutrients by the wheat crop. Adequate and gradual supply of nutrient might have increased the photosynthetic activity and uptake resulting thereby increase in test weight [23].

Conclusion

In conclusion, these results show that increasing levels of fertilizer, FYM and biofertilizers could stimulate growth and yield attributes of wheat. Fertilizer application with organic manure had the effect of improving the soil probably due to increasing its organic matter, mineralization and mineral absorption. Thus, integrated use of inorganic fertilizer and FYM (75% RDF + 10 t FYM/ha) was more effective in enhancing the growth and yield attributes.

Acknowledgements

Authors are gratefully acknowledge for the financial support to the UGC, Govt. of India for financial assistance for completing this research work

Table 1: Effect of recommended dose of fertilizer, FYM and biofertilizers on plant height at various growth stages of wheat

Treatments	Plant height (cm)								
	Tillering stage			Ear emergence stage			Harvesting stage		
	2009-10	2010-11	Mean	2009-10	2010-11	Mean	2009-10	2010-11	Mean
Recommended dose of fertilizer									
Control	29.23	30.29	29.76	51.95	52.37	52.16	73.20	74.30	73.75
50% RDF	36.80	38.35	37.58	64.75	66.54	65.65	79.76	81.37	80.57
75% RDF	40.50	41.96	41.23	70.44	72.16	71.30	96.64	98.27	97.46
100% RDF	41.90	43.62	42.76	73.10	74.87	73.99	101.65	102.42	102.04
SE m±	0.300	0.347		0.288	0.296		0.400	0.419	
CD 5%	1.034	1.119		0.996	1.021		1.381	1.445	
FYM levels (t ha^{-1})									
No FYM	35.47	36.72	36.10	62.18	63.34	62.76	84.67	85.87	85.27
FYM 10 t ha^{-1}	38.75	40.39	39.57	67.93	69.63	68.78	90.96	92.31	91.64
SE m±	0.253	0.251		0.174	0.271		0.231	0.267	
CD 5%	0.825	0.819		0.566	0.884		0.753	0.869	
Biofertilizers									
No inoculation	36.00	37.35	36.68	63.41	64.95	64.18	86.24	87.56	86.90
PGPR	37.02	38.54	37.78	64.79	66.03	65.41	87.64	88.94	88.29
VAM	37.45	38.86	38.16	65.45	66.67	66.06	88.23	89.24	88.74
PGPR+VAM	37.98	39.46	38.72	66.58	68.20	67.39	89.15	90.62	89.89
SE m±	0.213	0.211		0.366	0.345		0.393	0.371	
CD 5%	0.606	0.600		1.041	0.980		1.119	1.054	

Table 2: Effect of recommended dose of fertilizer, FYM and biofertilizers on number of tillers/m row at various growth stages of wheat

Treatments	Number of tillers/m row								
	Tillering stage			Ear emergence stage			Harvesting stage		
	2009-10	2010-11	Mean	2009-10	2010-11	Mean	2009-10	2010-11	Mean
Recommended dose of fertilizer									
Control	85.25	85.75	85.50	90.13	91.71	90.92	74.42	75.46	74.94
50% RDF	101.58	103.58	102.58	104.17	106.54	105.36	89.71	91.67	90.69
75% RDF	111.75	112.54	112.15	113.75	115.75	114.75	100.29	102.17	101.23
100% RDF	114.42	115.83	115.13	116.75	119.96	118.36	103.29	105.75	104.52
SE m±	0.887	0.909		0.729	0.786		0.673	0.683	
CD 5%	3.060	3.136		2.515	2.712		2.322	2.356	
FYM levels (t ha^{-1})									
No FYM	98.73	99.33	99.03	101.29	103.48	102.39	88.60	89.83	89.22
FYM 10 t ha^{-1}	107.77	109.52	108.65	111.10	113.50	112.30	95.25	97.69	96.47
SE m±	0.618	0.670		0.359	0.424		0.393	0.400	
CD 5%	2.012	2.182		1.169	1.381		1.279	1.304	
Biofertilizers									
No inoculation	100.21	101.33	100.77	102.29	104.46	103.38	86.92	88.50	87.71
PGPR	103.33	104.83	104.08	106.92	108.54	107.73	93.38	95.38	94.38
VAM	103.75	103.79	103.77	104.92	108.00	106.46	91.46	93.25	92.36
PGPR+VAM	105.71	107.75	106.73	110.67	112.96	111.82	95.96	97.92	96.94
SE m±	0.743	0.542		0.558	0.586		0.499	0.457	
CD 5%	2.114	1.542		1.587	1.668		1.419	1.300	

Table 3: Effect of recommended dose of fertilizer, FYM and biofertilizers on dry matter production at various growth stages of wheat

Treatments	Dry matter production (g m^{-1} row)					
	Tillering stage			Ear emergence stage		
	2009-10	2010-11	Mean	2009-10	2010-11	Mean
Recommended dose of fertilizer						
Control	38.78	39.61	39.20	84.03	85.43	84.73
50% RDF	41.86	43.03	42.45	89.26	92.00	90.63
75% RDF	44.02	45.37	44.70	95.16	98.13	96.65
100% RDF	46.57	47.66	47.12	101.33	102.22	101.78
SE m±	0.386	0.411		0.608	0.686	
CD 5%	1.331	1.418		2.097	2.366	
FYM levels (t ha^{-1})						
No FYM	41.49	42.16	41.83	90.60	92.70	91.65
FYM 10 t ha^{-1}	44.13	45.68	44.91	94.29	96.19	95.24
SE m±	0.312	0.332		0.510	0.518	
CD 5%	1.018	1.081		1.662	1.687	
Biofertilizers						
No inoculation	40.65	41.67	41.16	87.57	91.07	89.32
PGPR	42.83	43.54	43.19	92.46	94.44	93.45
VAM	42.80	44.33	43.57	91.84	94.08	92.96
PGPR+VAM	44.95	46.13	45.54	97.92	98.20	98.06
SE m±	0.363	0.402		0.828	0.848	
CD 5%	1.033	1.144		2.355	2.413	

Table 4: Interaction effect of recommended dose of fertilizer and FYM on plant height (cm) at various growth stages of wheat

2009-10												
Treatments	**Tillering stage**				**Ear emergence stage**				**Harvesting stage**			
	Control	**50% RDF**	**75% RDF**	**100% RDF**	**Control**	**50% RDF**	**75% RDF**	**100% RDF**	**Control**	**50% RDF**	**75% RDF**	**100% RDF**
No FYM	26.62	34.75	39.50	41.00	46.64	62.31	67.59	72.19	71.42	76.84	91.88	98.53
FYM 10 t ha^{-1}	31.85	38.85	41.50	42.81	57.26	67.18	73.29	74.01	74.99	82.68	101.41	104.77
	SEm± = 0.507, CD (5%) = 1.650				SEm± = 0.348, CD (5%) = 1.133				SEm± = 0.462, CD (5%) = 1.506			
2010-11												
No FYM	27.23	36.27	40.81	42.55	47.21	63.79	69.19	73.18	72.56	78.07	93.01	99.82
FYM 10 t ha^{-1}	33.35	40.42	43.10	44.69	57.53	69.29	75.13	76.57	76.03	84.67	103.52	105.02
	SEm± = 0.503, CD (5%) = 1.638				SEm± = 0.543, CD (5%) = 1.768				SEm± = 0.534, CD (5%) = 1.738			

Table 5: Interaction effect of recommended dose of fertilizer and FYM on ear head length and test weight of wheat

Treatments	Ear head length (cm)							
	2009-10				2010-11			
	Control	50% RDF	75% RDF	100% RDF	Control	50% RDF	75% RDF	100% RDF
No FYM	6.36	7.58	8.15	8.35	6.47	7.78	8.36	8.45
FYM 10 t ha^{-1}	7.36	7.98	8.23	9.01	7.37	8.07	8.47	9.41
	SEm± = 0.062, CD (5%) = 0.203				SEm± = 0.065, CD (5%) = 0.212			
	Test weight (g)							
No FYM	34.45	38.22	41.11	41.38	34.46	39.44	41.40	41.61
FYM 10 t ha^{-1}	35.95	39.79	41.64	42.91	36.16	40.90	42.20	43.41
	SEm± = 0.152, CD (5%) = 0.496				SEm± = 0.157, CD (5%) = 0.511			

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