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Cucumber Response to Drip Irrigation and Bio-Mineral Fertilizers Management under Protected Cultivation Conditions

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ABSTRACT

Greenhouse experiments were carried out in the Gammisa district of Dakahlyia Governorate over two seasons (2016/2017 and 2017/2018), to investigate the impact of three drip irrigation levels, (100 , 80 and 65% of soil field capacity (FC), denoted as I₁, I₂ and I₃, respectively and partial replacement of biofertilizers to mineral fertilizers, F₁ (100% RNPK), F₂ (75% RNPK +50% of mixture of biofertale + rhizobacterien) and F₃ (55% RNPK + 100% of mixture of biofertale + rhizobacterien), on cucumber yield and its components. The economic return was considered as well. The results revealed that both irrigation and fertilization treatments had a highly significant impact on cucumber plant yield and attributes. In both seasons, the I₂ and F₃ treatments produced the highest cucumber fruit yield and the majority of its components. In the first and second seasons, respectively, fruit yield increased by (21.87 and 22.29%) in the I₂-treatment compared to I₁, and by the comparable values (10.78 and 13.18%) in the F₃-treatment compared to F₁. In both seasons, the combination of I₂ and F₂ or F₃ produced the highest values of net revenue, net revenue per water unit, and economic efficiency numbers, moreover, the I₃ treatment surpassed the I₁ treatment in terms of irrigation water productivity and water savings. In conclusion: Under greenhouse conditions using sandy soil, I₂ paired with F₂ or F₃ is the most effective treatment for obtaining an economical cucumber fruit production, economic return, and saving water and mineral fertilizers.

Keywords: Bio-chemical fertilizers, cucumber, drip irrigation, economic return, sandy soil, productivity of irrigation water.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most common vegetables grown in greenhouses and open fields is the cucumber (*Cucumis Sativas L.*) worldwide. Cucumbers are a large and important vegetable family in the cucurbitaceous family. Cucumber has enormous economic and nutritional value, (Maqsood *et al.*, 2004). Additionally, cucumbers rank among Egypt's most significant commercial veggies and are a preferred item for both local consumption and export. In 2012, Egypt's entire cucumber cultivation area was roughly 26.071 hectare (FAO, 2012).

Recent years have seen a global decline in the amount of water available for agriculture as a result of fast population expansion, climate change, and various human activities (World Bank, 2006, Alam, 2015 and Attia *et al.*,2021). Increasing agricultural output for the Egyptian population requires effective irrigation water use. Agriculture will soon face significant challenges due to a lack of water for irrigation. To increase the output and water consumption efficiency, careful utilization of the limited water resources through more effective water application techniques, such as drip irrigation under greenhouse conditions, is required (Dunage *et al.*, 2009). According to Tuzel and Leonardi (2009), greenhouse cultivation has grown rapidly in many parts of the world. Greenhouse vegetable cultivation is the most effective way to increase vegetable productivity and quality, particularly cucurbits. Additionally, greenhouse farming makes efficient use of sparsely populated terrain and labour shortages.

Numerous studies on cucumber cultivation in greenhouses have been published. (Xiaobo *et al.*, 2002; Shao

et al., 2010; Abdul Hakim and Jisha Chand, 2014 and Cakir *et al.*, 2017). They investigated the connection between cucumber yield, irrigation water use, and quantity. According to their findings, the maximum water use efficiency (WUE) and irrigation water use efficiency (IWUE) values were reached. Today's tremendous increase in water resource competition necessitates improved water use efficiency, which is feasible under greenhouse cultivation. Additionally, high irrigation water consumption results in environmental contamination and overuse of groundwater resources (Du *et al.*, 2014). In order to reduce irrigation water demand, increase water use effectiveness (WUE), and maximize crop yield and quality, an efficient strategy, such as deficient irrigation control (RDI), is used in greenhouses (Ismail, 2010; Shao *et al.*, 2010; Cosic *et al.* 2015 ; Hui *et al.*, 2017; Hu *et al.*, 2021 and wang *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, the drip irrigation system has significant potential for uniform distribution and lowering soil evaporation (Karlberg *et al.*, 2007).

According to various researchers, integrated nutrient management, which combines chemical and biofertilizers, may be a valuable strategy to increase water utilization and decrease water resource pollution. (Morsy *et al.*, 2008; Wu *et al.*,2005; Ayoola *et al.*,2007; Mishra *et al.*,2010 and Manocherhr *et al.*,2013). Additionally, it has been demonstrated that biological fertilizers are particularly important as a suitable alternative to mineral fertilizers by enhancing soil fertility, meeting plant nutrition needs and increasing crop yield. (Poraas EL-Din *et al.*, 2008, Khalifa *et al.*, 2013, Saeed *et al.*, 2015 and Khalifa, 2020). Under

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limitation of water resources, high prices of mineral fertilizers and fatal environmental pollution a big problem faces the Egyptian Agriculture. This problem can be solved by using biofertilizers instead of mineral ones, which is both economically profitable and effective in reducing soil pollution (Abbas *et al.*, 2006; Shahdi Komalah, 2010 and Kamil *et al.*, 2015). Poultry manure (PM), an organic substance, is recognised as an appropriate organic fertiliser. Most crops have been reported to benefit from using poultry manure for soil fertility maintenance, growth, and yield (Adekiya and Agbede, 2017; Kolawole, 2014 and Ozores-Hampton, 2012)

In light of the foregoing information, the goal of the current study is to identify and assess the ideal irrigation needs as well as potential biofertilizers as partial substitutes for chemical fertilizers for cucumber fruit production cultivated in greenhouse experiments utilizing sandy soil.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was carried out in a plastic greenhouse of 280 m² area (40 m length and 7 m width). The orientation of each plastic greenhouse is a North- South direction. The research area is between 31^o 07' N latitude and 30^o 57' E longitude in Gamsa region, Dakahlyia Governorate, Egypt. According to the techniques and procedures outlined and described by Klute (1986) and Page *et al.*, (1982), some soil physical and chemical properties of the experimental site, as well as chemical analysis of the used irrigation water and poultry manure, were carried out. The results are tabulated in Tables (1-3). Depth of groundwater table is 87cm in both seasons. Soil characteristics of the greenhouse are included in Tables (1a and 1b). The tables indicated that the soil texture is sandy; EC (1.94 dS/m), pH ranged from 7.91 to 8.06 and the dominant cation is Na⁺, while Cl⁻ is dominant anion.

Each plastic greenhouse consists of 4 rows. Soil preparation included turn plowing to a depth of about 0.3m

and bedding rows 1.25 m apart, prior to the installation of the drip irrigation lines for each row. Additionally, the fertilization is prepared as following: a mixture of 0.5 m³ poultry manure, which uniformly incorporated with 2 kg mineral sulphur, 6 kg urea (46% N) and 40 kg calcium superphosphate (15.5% P₂O₅). The mixture was divided to 4 equal parts; each part was applied into a soil depth of 30 cm for each row two weeks as basic fertilizers. The soil was lightly irrigated to establish a good microbial activity for decomposing the poultry manure in suitable time, before the cucumber transplanting.

Seeds of cucumber (*cultivar Mohanad F1*) were divided into three parts. The 1st part was sown one seed in 84 cells, foam tray in each small pod filled with peatmoss. While both of the 2nd and 3rd parts of seeds, inoculated with 50% of mixture of biofertale (BioI) + rhizobactrien (Bio II) and 100% of mixture of BioI+ Bio II, respectively, were also sown one seed in each small pod filled with peatmoss. The used inoculating bacteria, biofertale (*Bacillus megatherium var. phosphaticum*) as a phosphate dissolving bacteria presses the ability to bring a soluble phosphate in soluble form excreting organic acids which lower the pH and bring about the dissolution of bonds forms of phosphate and render then available for growing plants, and rhizobactrien (*Azotobacter Chroocum and Azospirillum braensesil*) registered to Biofertilizer unit, Ministry of Agric. Egypt, from which it was obtained. Each bio-fertilizer was applied at rate of 400 g fed⁻¹. Date of sowing in the nursery was on Nov. 22th 2016 and 25th, Nov., 2017. On December 16th, 2016, and December 20th, 2017, cucumber plants from the nursery unit that were at the 3–4 leaf stage were transplanted into the experimental plots (plastic greenhouses) with 1.25 m between the rows and 0.5 m between the plants in each row. Harvesting started from 9th Feb., till 21th may 2017 (102 days) in the 1st season and from 12th Feb. till 26th May 2018 (103 days) in the 2nd season.

Table 1. Some soil physical and chemical characteristics of experimental site before cultivation (mean of the two seasons)

1a- Soil physical properties

Soil depth, cm	Particle size distribution %			Textural class	Bulk density, Mg m ⁻³	Total porosity %	*Soil moisture constants, %		
	Sand	Silt	Clay				FC	PWP	Aw
0-20	91.36	3.72	4.92	Sandy	1.662	37.28	10.88	5.22	5.66
20-40	93.72	2.27	4.01	Sandy	1.691	36.19	10.55	5.06	5.49
40-60	93.17	3.01	3.82	Sandy	1.683	36.49	10.72	5.14	5.58
Mean	92.75	3.0	4.25	sandy	1.679	36.65	10.72	5.14	5.58

FC: Field Capacity, PWP= permanent wilting point, AW= available water, *It was determined as gravimetric method

1b- Soil chemical properties

Soil depth, cm	*pH (1:2.5)	EC** dS m ⁻¹	SAR	Soluble cations (meq/l)				Soluble anions (meq/l)			
				Na ⁺¹	K ⁺¹	Ca ⁺²	Mg ⁺²	CO ₃ ⁻²	HCO ₃ ⁻¹	Cl ⁻¹	SO ₄ ⁻²
0-20	7.91	1.80	3.7	7.74	0.52	4.23	4.51	-	6.05	8.63	2.32
20-40	8.01	2.06	3.81	8.93	0.71	4.26	6.70	-	6.11	9.92	4.57
40-60	8.06	1.97	4.63	9.18	0.64	4.10	5.76	-	6.06	9.84	3.78
Mean		1.94	4.05	8.62	0.62	4.20	5.66	-	6.07	9.46	3.56

*it was determined in soil water suspension, ** it was determined in soil paste extract .

Table 2. Chemical analysis of the used irrigation water

pH	EC dS m ⁻¹	SAR	Soluble cations (meq/l)				Soluble anions (meq/l)			
			Na ⁺¹	K ⁺¹	Ca ⁺²	Mg ⁺²	CO ₃ ⁻²	HCO ₃ ⁻¹	Cl ⁻¹	SO ₄ ⁻²
7.66	1.75	3.93	10.17	0.42	6.09	7.31	--	5.01	11.52	7.47

Table 3. Chemical characteristics of the used poultry manure

pH	EC, ds m ⁻¹	O.M.	N P K C				C:N	Moisture, %	Density, Mg m ⁻³
			g kg ⁻¹						
6.94	0.96	322	15	4.8	5.9	188	12.53:1	14.2	0.45

Three replicates were used in a split-plot design for the study's experimental design. Using a drip irrigation method, three levels of irrigation water application (IWA) were set as a percentage of the soil field capacity (FC) (main plots) as follows:

I₁= Irrigation water applied at the level of 100% of soil field capacity (100% of FC) through drip irrigation system, as control

I₂= Irrigation water applied at the level of 80% of soil field capacity (80% of FC) through drip irrigation system

I₃= Irrigation water applied at the level of 65% of soil field capacity (65% of FC) through drip irrigation system,

A drip irrigation system comprised of laterals (16mm) connected to a manifold was used to apply irrigation water (63mm). The laterals are 1.25 m apart and equipped with 4L h⁻¹ discharge in-line emitters (GR).

Three fertilization treatments were allocated in the subplots of the experiment as follows:

F₁= Applying the recommended dose of NPK (100%RNPK, control)

F₂= Applying 75% RNPK+50% of mixture of biofertilizer + rhizobacterien

F₃= Applying 55% RNPK+ 100% of mixture of biofertilizer + rhizobacterien

In both seasons, the recommended dose of mineral fertilizers applied to cucumber plants was 60 kg N fed⁻¹, 19.67 kg P fed⁻¹, and 41.5 kg K fed⁻¹ for N, P, and K, respectively. During the growing period, nitrogen fertilizer in the form of ammonium nitrate (33.5%N), phosphorus fertilizer in the form of phosphoric acid (85% P), and potassium fertilizer in the form of potassium sulphate (50% K₂O) were applied via drip irrigation using the fertigation technique..

From planting to the end of the crop, cucumber plants were fertigated once every two days with chemical fertilizers at the levels specified in the fertilization treatments. Also, calcium nitrate (26% Ca-oxide&20.6%N) as source of calcium element and Magnisium sulphate (16% Mg) were added to cucumber plants through a drip emitter once weekly and foliar spraying with micro-chelated mineral once in 10 days for all fertilization treatments. The micro-chelated minerals were multi elements (Fe, 11.1%, Mn, 11.5% , Zn, 10.8% , Cu, 10.8% and B, 10.3%)

Each irrigation treatment consists of 3- plastic greenhouse, each greenhouse represents fertilization treatment of the aforementioned fertilization treatments (4 rows in each greenhouse ×80 plant).

Irrigation treatments began one week after complete germination. Cultural, disease, and pest management practices were identical to those used in local commercial crop production. The amount of IWA applied to each greenhouse during the irrigation regime was calculated using the equation below.

$$IWA = \frac{A \times (\Theta_{FC} - \Theta) \times Di \times \rho a \times Kr}{Ea \times 100}$$

Where,

A= irrigated area for treatment, m²

Θ_{FC}= 100% of FC, 80% of FC and 65% of FC for I₁, I₂ and I₃, respectively

Θ= soil moisture before irrigation, % (gravimetric)

ρa= soil bulk density, Mg m³

Kr= is the covering factor, and the Decroix and Ctgraf method was used to calculate (kr) (Vermeire and Jobling, 1980), Kr= (0.1+Gc)> 1, where Gc is the ground cover, which ranged from 0.33 to 0.66.

IWA= the irrigation water applied (m³)

Ea= the application efficiency, % (Ea=85)

D= the irrigated soil depth (0.6 m)

Ismail (2002) provided the following equation for calculating irrigation time: T= IWA A/q, where T is irrigation time (hr), A is the wetted area by an emitter (m²), q is the emitter discharge (4 L hr⁻¹), and IWA is the irrigation water applied as a depth in the irrigation event (m).

Commercial growers removed deformed fruits from the plant during pruning operations, and marketable immature fruits were harvested in 2-3 days and weighted. The number of fruits per plant, fruit weight per plant (g), and fruit yield kg fed⁻¹ were also counted and recorded. Irrigation water productivity (PIW) was calculated using the following equation:

$$PIW = Y/IWA,$$

where Y = weight of marketable crop produce (kg fed⁻¹) and IWA = irrigation water applied (m³fed⁻¹.)

According to Gomez and Gomez, the obtained data were statistically analysed, and treatment means were compared using the Duncan's multiple range test at 0.05 and 0.01 probability levels (1984). SAS computer software was used for all statistical analysis.

Economic evaluation

From field preparation through harvest, costs were calculated and expressed in Egyptian Pounds (L.E fed⁻¹). The yield of cucumber fruit was calculated per fed., and the total revenue was calculated using the market rate of 5.2 and 5.3 L.E kg⁻¹ of cucumber fruit as an average for the first and second seasons, respectively. The cost of cultivation was subtracted from the gross return to determine the net return. Based on current market pricing, the cost of a plastic greenhouse and drip irrigation system for one feddan was calculated.

Using Palaniappan's (1985) formula, an economic evaluation was calculated, such as:

$$\text{Economic efficiency} = \frac{\text{net return (L.E fed}^{-1}\text{)} / \text{total cost of cultivation (L.E fed}^{-1}\text{)}}{\text{Net return from water unit (L.E m}^{-3}\text{)}} = \frac{\text{net return (L.E fed}^{-1}\text{)}}{\text{water applied (m}^3\text{ fed}^{-1}\text{)}}$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fruit yield and components of the cucumber

Data of Table (4) and Figures (1-4) show that cucumber yield and its attributes were affected significantly by both irrigation regimes, and Bio-chemical fertilizers application and their interaction in both growing seasons. The findings showed that irrigation levels in both seasons had a substantial impact on fruit yield, fruit weight, and fruit number. Irrigation level of I₂ produced the highest values of fruit yield (40386.5 and 40684.4 kg fed⁻¹), fruit weight (10.52 and 10.64 kg plant⁻¹) and fruit number. plant⁻¹ (130.2 and 133.42) in both growing seasons, respectively. On the other hand, the lowest values of the aforementioned parameters were achieved by irrigation level of (I₁) in both seasons. The reported results in the present study for the highest cucumber fruit yields are close to those reported by (Grewal *et al*, 2011 ; Al-Omran *et al*, 2013, Sahin *et al*,2015 and wang *et al*, 2019).

The irrigation level of I₂ led to an increase of fruit number plant⁻¹ by 4.83 and 7.45%, in comparison with I₁ for the 1st and 2nd seasons, respectively. The corresponding fruit weights plant⁻¹ were 21.90 and 22.29% and fruit yield fed⁻¹ were 21.87 and 22.29%. These results were in agreement with those obtained by (Mao *et al*,2003; Shao *et al*, 2010; Abdul

Hakem and Jisha Chand, 2014 and Cakir *et al.*, 2017). They reported that deficit irrigation for cucumber under greenhouse condition increased fruit yield and productivity of irrigation water. Increasing cucumber fruit yield under I₂ treatment may be due to improving the rate of aeration which increase decomposition of soil organic matter and hence increasing availability of nutrients, therefore, forming healthy plants with good vegetative growth (Moursi *et al.*, 2009, Khalifa *et al.*, 2013 and Khalifa, 2020)

In regards to Bio-chemical fertilization, the results shown in Table (4) indicated that fruit number, fruit weight and fruit yield were highly significant affected by Bio-chemical fertilizers application in both growing seasons. The highest mean values of fruit number plant⁻¹ were 128.7 and 131.17; fruit weight were 9.73 and 9.98 kg plant⁻¹ and fruit yield were 37348.36 and 38317.16 kg fed⁻¹ for application fertilizer level (F₃) in both growing seasons, respectively. Meanwhile, the lowest values of the aforementioned parameters were detected with F₁, in both seasons. According to the highest cucumber yield and its components, the most efficient treatment was F₃ which led to saving about 45% of mineral fertilizers in both seasons. It might due to the combination of bio-fertilizers with suitable rate of mineral fertilizers could help plant growth and has been able to supply the plant with nitrogen, one of the most important nutrients for plant growth (Khan *et al.*, 2009, Yaghi *et al.*, 2013 and Soltan *et al.*, 2018). Also, the most significant plant growth-promoting rhizobacteria include the bacterial species Azotobacter, Azospirillum, and Pesudomonas, which have an impact on crop growth, development, and yield. (Zahir *et al.*,

2004 and Banerjee *et al.*, 2006), By increasing the supply or availability of primary nutrients to the host plant through natural processes of nitrogen fixation, solubilizing phosphorus, and stimulating plant growth through the synthesis of growth-promoting substances (auxins, cytokinins, or gibberellins), promotes plant growth when applied to seed or soil and increases plant yield (Awad *et al.*, 2005; Gholami *et al.*, 2009; Marulanda *et al.*,2010, Shahdi Komalah, 2010 and Soltan *et al.*, 2018).

In comparison with yield and its components of F₁-Treatment, F₃-treatment gave an increase of fruit number by 3.93 and 6.06%, fruit weight by 10.82 and 13.15% and fruit yield fed⁻¹ by 10.78 and 13.18% in the 1st and 2nd seasons, respectively.

Also, data showed that the interaction between irrigation regimes and fertilization had significant differences in both growing seasons, but the fruit number plant⁻¹ did not differ significantly. The combination between I₂-Treatment (80% FC) and F₂(1st season) or F₃ (2nd season) gave the highest yield and growth traits of cucumber. These results are in a harmony with those obtained by Mahfouz and Sharaf-Eldin, (2007); Omran *et al.*, 2009 and Kamil *et al.*, (2015), they reported that biological fertilizers have a special importance as appropriate replacement for mineral fertilizer through improving of soil fertility providing nutrition requirement of plant and increasing crop yield. Also, they stated that a combination of biofertilizer and 50% of chemical fertilizers application had significant effect and increased the yield and growth traits of cucumber.

Table 4. Cucumber fruit yields and its components as affected by irrigation regimes and Bio-chemical fertilizers in the two growing seasons

Treatments	1st season			2nd season		
	Fruit number plant ⁻¹	Fruit weight kg plant ⁻¹	Fruit yield kg fed ⁻¹	Fruit number plant ⁻¹	Fruit weight kg plant ⁻¹	Fruit yield kg fed ⁻¹
Irrigation regime (I)						
I ₁	124.2 ^C	8.63 ^b	33139.12 ^c	124.17 ^c	8.70 ^b	33415.44 ^c
I ₂	130.2 ^a	10.52 ^a	40386.56 ^a	133.42 ^a	10.64 ^a	40864.40 ^a
I ₃	125.2 ^b	9.00 ^b	34558 ^b	126.25 ^b	9.01 ^b	34603.92 ^b
F-Test	*	*	**	*	**	**
Fertilizers applications(F)						
F ₁	123.83 ^c	8.78 ^b	33713.84 ^c	123.67 ^c	8.82 ^b	33856.76 ^c
F ₂	127.06 ^b	9.64 ^a	37021.48 ^b	128.92 ^b	9.56 ^a	36709.84 ^b
F ₃	128.7 ^a	9.73 ^a	37348.36 ^a	131.17 ^a	9.98 ^a	38317.16 ^a
F-Test	*	**	**	*	**	*
Interaction (I×F)						
I ₁ ×F ₁	124.0	8.54 ^{ab}	32783.28 ^g	123.50 ^d	8.65 ^{abc}	33204.60 ^g
I ₁ ×F ₂	122.5	8.30 ^{ab}	31858.68 ^h	121.50 ^e	8.51 ^{abc}	33686.92 ^h
I ₁ ×F ₃	126.1	9.06 ^{ab}	34775.40 ^f	127.25 ^c	8.95 ^{abc}	34354.8 ^f
I ₂ ×F ₁	127.75	9.65 ^{ab}	37046.4 ^c	126.25 ^c	9.57 ^{abc}	36736.68 ^d
I ₂ ×F ₂	132.25	11.43 ^a	43900.8 ^a	138.00 ^a	11.19 ^{ab}	42956.28 ^a
I ₂ ×F ₃	130.50	10.47 ^{ab}	40212.48 ^b	136.00 ^a	11.17 ^a	42900.18 ^a
I ₃ ×F ₁	119.75	8.15 ^b	31311.84 ^j	121.25 ^e	8.24 ^c	31629.00 ^d
I ₃ ×F ₂	126.25	9.19 ^{ab}	35304.96 ^e	127.25 ^c	8.98 ^{bc}	34486.32 ^e
I ₃ ×F ₃	129.50	9.65 ^{ab}	37057.20 ^d	130.25 ^b	9.82 ^{abc}	37696.44 ^c
F-Test	Ns	*	*	*	*	*

I₁= 100%FC, I₂= 80%FC, I₃= 65% FC, F₁=100%RNPK, F₂=75%RNPK+50% mixture of biofertale+ rhizobacterien, F₃= 55% RNPK+ 100% biofertale + rhizobacterien

NS, insignificant *, **, significant at 0.05 and 0.01 level of probability, respectively. Mean values designed by the same letter in each column are not significant according to Duncan's Multiple Range Test.

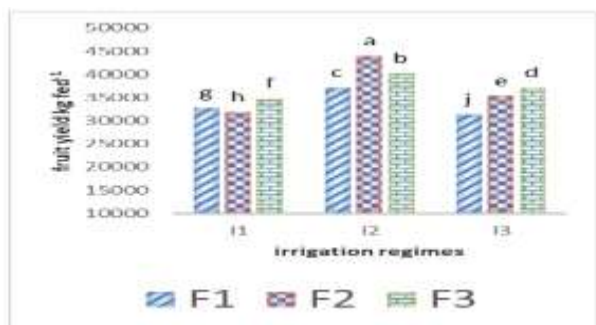


Fig. 1. Fruit yield of cucumber as influenced by the interaction between irrigation regimes and Biochemical fertilizers in the 1st season

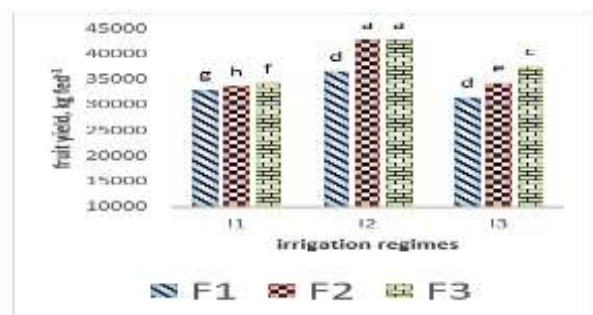


Fig. 2. Fruit yield of cucumber as influenced by the interaction between irrigation regimes and Biochemical fertilizers in the 2nd season

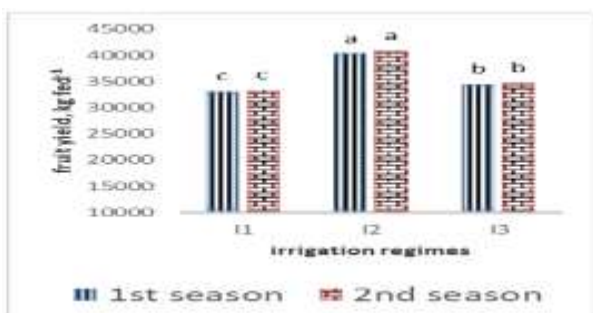


Fig. 3. Mean of fruit yield of cucumber as influenced by irrigation regimes in the two growing seasons

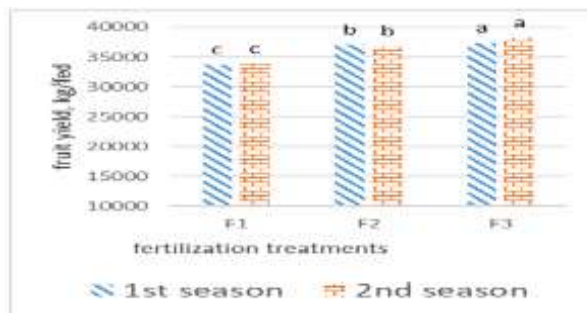


Fig. 4. Mean fruit yield of cucumber as affected by biochemical fertilizers application in the two growing seasons

Means that share a single letter do not differ significantly ($P \leq 0.05$)
 $I_1= 100\%FC$, $I_2= 80\%FC$, $I_3= 65\% FC$, $F_1=100\%RNPK$,
 $F_2=75\%RNPK+50\%$ mixture of biofertale+ rhizobacterien, $F_3= 55\%$
 $RNPK+ 100\%$ biofertale + rhizobacterien

Amount of water applied and water saving, %.

Table (5) shows the amount of irrigation water applied to cucumber plants at various growth stages during the two growing seasons and under different irrigation treatments. After the first growth stage, during which all experimental plots received an equal amount of irrigation water to guarantee excellent plant establishment, the irrigation treatments were given. Following this, the amounts of irrigation water applied for I_2 and I_3 were 80% and 65% of I_1 . As shown in Table (5), the amount of water applied increased with the development stage to reach the peak at mid-season stage and then decreased at late season stage. Data of the same table indicate the average values of applied water to cucumber plants through drip irrigation. These averages were $1008 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{fed}^{-1}$ (24 cm), $834 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{fed}^{-1}$ (19.8 cm) and $703.5 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{fed}^{-1}$ (16.75 cm) for the irrigation level of I_1 , I_2 and I_3 , respectively, in the 1st season. The corresponding average values for the 2nd season were $1011.35 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{fed}^{-1}$ (24.1 cm), $836.78 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{fed}^{-1}$ (19.92 cm) and $705.85 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{fed}^{-1}$ (16.81 cm). These results are in agreement with those obtained by (Wang *et al.*, 2009 and Zhang *et al.*, 2011). In addition, data show that in comparison the amount of applied water for I_1 treatment, average water saving were 17.27 and 30.21% for the irrigation amount of water used for I_2 and I_3 in both seasons, respectively. So, irrigation of water at 80% FC could be enough to give high cucumber yield with low amount of irrigation water. The obtained results in this study fall in line with findings of Kamil *et al.*, (2015) ; Cakir *et al.*, (2017) and Wang *et al.*, (2022).

Table 5. Seasonal amount of applied water to cucumber crop under plastic greenhouse according to its growth stages in the two growing seasons

Cucumber growth stages	Period days	1 st season			2 nd season		
		applied water, $\text{m}^3 \text{ fed}^{-1}$			applied water, $\text{m}^3 \text{ fed}^{-1}$		
		I_1	I_2	I_3	I_1	I_2	I_3
Initial stage	20	138	138	138	138.5	138.5	138.5
Development	25	240	192	156	241.65	193.32	157.07
Midseason	60	504	403.2	327.6	504.75	403.8	328.09
Late season	15	126	100.8	81.9	126.45	101.16	82.19
Seasonal applied water ($\text{m}^3/\text{fed}.$)		1008	834	703.5	1011.35	836.78	705.85
Water saving, % over I_1		-	17.26	30.21	-	17.26	30.21

$I_1=100\%FC$, $I_2=80\%FC$, $I_3=65\%FC$

Productivity of irrigation water (PIW)

Productivity of irrigation water (PIW) is an indicator to the yield of applied water unit. PIW values determined for irrigation and fertilization treatments during the two seasons of the study are illustrated in figures (5 and 6). In general, PIW values increased in both seasons as seasonal water use decreased and cucumber yields increased. When the treatments were compared, the highest average values of PIW were 49.13 and 51.39 kg fruit m^{-3} for the (I_3) level in both

seasons, indicating a comparatively more efficient use of irrigation water. Meanwhile, the lowest average values of PIW (32.88 and 33.37 kg fruit m^{-3}) were recorded under (I_1) level in both seasons, respectively. The reported results in the present study for the highest PIW for cucumber plants are close to those reported by Rahil and Qanadillo (2015); Cakir *et al* (2017) and Wang *et al.*, (2019). These findings may be attributed to the differences among fruit cucumber yield, as well as, differences between applied water values. Therefore,

the irrigation using the I₃, saved of 30.21% over I₁. These results agreed with those obtained by Shao *et al.*, (2010), Abdul Hakim and Jisha Chand (2014), Buttaro *et al.*, (2015), Rahil and Qanadillo (2015) and Wu *et al.*, (2021). They stated that the quantity of water applied to cucumber under deficit irrigation conditions through drip irrigation system gave higher values of irrigation water use efficiency.

Concerning the fertilization treatments, data in Fig. (6) show that F₃-treatment produced the highest values of PIW (45.10 and 46.22 kg fruit m⁻³) in both seasons, respectively, followed by F₂-Treatment. This trend may be attributed to increasing the cucumber fruit yield in both seasons. On the other hand, the lowest values of PIW (40.45 and 42.87 kg m⁻³) were recorded with F₁ in both seasons.

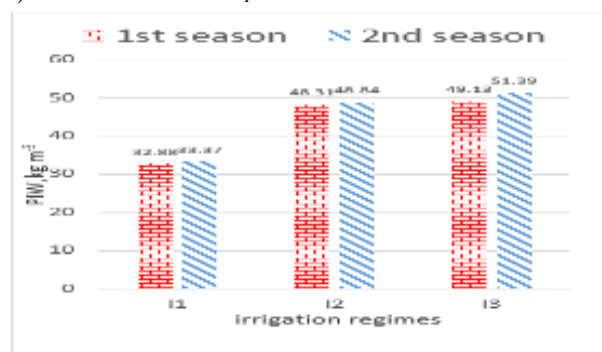


Fig. 5. Productivity of irrigation water (PIW) as influenced by irrigation regimes in the two growing seasons

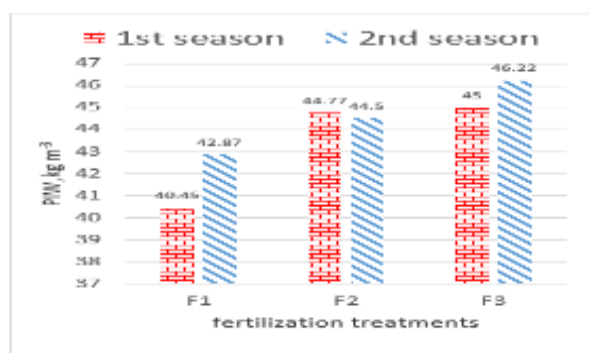


Fig. 6. Productivity of irrigation water (PIW) as influenced by fertilization treatments in the two growing seasons

I₁= 100%FC, I₂= 80%FC, I₃= 65% FC, F₁=100%RNPK, F₂=75%RNPK+50% mixture of biofertale+ rhizobacterien, F₃= 55% RNPK+ 100% biofertale + rhizobacterien

Economic evaluation

Economic assessment requires some items through which the evaluation process can be conducted. Table (6) show the production cost values for the various involved components in the evaluation process according to Egyptian local market price (L.E). The total return, net return, net return from water unit and economic efficiency for irrigation and fertilization treatments for cucumber yield under drip irrigation system inside greenhouse of both seasons are tabulated in Table (7).

Table 6. Values of production cost components for cucumber per feddan for different treatments (L.E fed⁻¹) under plastic greenhouse during the two growing seasons

Cost items	Cost values for various agronomic operations L.E fed ⁻¹								
	I ₁			I ₂			I ₃		
	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃
1-Drip irrig. Net	5300	5300	5300	5300	5300	5300	5300	5300	5300
2- White plastic	6000	6000	6000	6000	6000	6000	6000	6000	6000
3- Iron wires for greenhouse	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
4-Mulch (Black plastic)	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000
5- seedlings	6000	6000	6000	6000	6000	6000	6000	6000	6000
6-superphosphate 15.5%P ₂ O ₅	900	900	900	900	900	900	900	900	900
7-Poultry manure (6 m ³ fed ⁻¹)	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200
8-Urea (46%)	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800	1800
9-Sulphur mineral	240	240	240	240	240	240	240	240	240
10-N-ammonium Nitrate (33.5% N)	1800	1350	990	1800	1350	990	1800	1350	990
11-K- as potassium sulphate (48%K)	4800	3600	2640	4800	3600	2640	4800	3600	2640
12-P-as phosphoric acid (85%P)	2400	1800	1320	2400	1800	1320	2400	1800	1320
13- Magnesium sulphate	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300
14- Calcium Nitrate(24kg)	1344	1344	1344	1344	1344	1344	1344	1344	1344
15-Biofertilizer	-	15	30	-	15	30	-	15	30
16-Land rent	5000	5000	5000	5000	5000	5000	5000	5000	5000
17- Fungi, pesticides and trace element	3112	3112	3112	3112	3112	3112	3112	3112	3112
	Machinery cost, L.E								
Plowing	230	230	230	230	230	230	230	230	230
Corrugations for fertilizers	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700
Irrigation	600	600	600	550	550	550	500	500	500
	Wages, L.E								
Transplanting	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700	700
Fertilizer broadcast	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650
Irrigation	360	360	360	360	360	360	360	360	360
Harvesting	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800
Transporting	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600
Spraying fungi, pesticides and trace elem.	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800
Total cost (1 st season)	50636	48401	46616	50586	48351	46566	50536	48301	46516
Total cost (2 nd season)	49212	47240	45522	49162	47190	45472	49112	47140	45422

I₁= 100% of FC, I₂= 80% of FC, I₃= 65% of FC, F₁=100% RNPK, F₂=75%RNPK+50% of mixture of biofertale+ rhizobacterien, F₃= 55% RNPK+ 100% of mixture of biofertale + rhizobacterien

*items 6, 7, 8 and 9 were mixed and added to the soil depth of 30cm before installation drip irrigation net above the rows

*items 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 were added through drip irrigation Net system.

It seen from the results of both seasons, that the combination of I₂ and F₂ treatments (1st season) achieved the highest values of net return (179933.2 L.E fed⁻¹), net return from water unit (215.23 L.E m⁻³) and economic efficiency (3.72). Meanwhile, in the 2nd season, the corresponding values were 181899.59 L.E fed⁻¹, 217.40 L.E m⁻³ and 4.0 were resulted from the combination of I₂ and F₃ treatments,

respectively. It is also seen in the first and second seasons from Table (7) that the lowest values of net return, net return from water unit and economic efficiency were obtained under the combination of I₁ and F₁ treatments in both seasons. The obtained results are consistent with the findings of Kamil *et al.*, (2015) and Cakir *et al.*, (2017)

Table 7. Economics of cucumber as affected by irrigation and fertilization treatments in the two growing seasons

Treatments		Total return	*Total cost	Net return	Water applied	Net income from	Economic
Irrigation regime (I)	fertilization (F)	L.E fed ⁻¹	L.E fed ⁻¹	L.E fed ⁻¹	m ³ fed ⁻¹	water unit L.E m ⁻³	efficiency
1 st season							
I ₁	F ₁	170473.0	50636	119837	1008	110.14	2.37
	F ₂	165665.1	48401	117264	1008	116.33	2.42
	F ₃	180832.1	46616	134216	1008	133.15	2.88
I ₂	F ₁	192641.3	50586	142055.3	836	169.92	2.81
	F ₂	228284.2	48351	179933.2	836	215.23	3.72
	F ₃	209104.9	46566	162538.9	836	194.42	3.50
I ₃	F ₁	162281.6	50536	111745.6	703.5	158.84	2.21
	F ₂	183585.8	48301	135284.8	703.5	192.30	2.80
	F ₃	192697.4	46516	146181.4	703.5	207.80	3.14
2 nd season							
I ₁	F ₁	175984.4	49212	126772.4	1011.35	125.35	2.57
	F ₂	178540.6	47240	131300.6	1011.35	129.82	2.78
	F ₃	182080.4	45522	136558.4	1011.35	135.03	2.99
I ₂	F ₁	194704.4	49162	145542.4	836.74	173.94	2.96
	F ₂	227668.2	47190	180478.2	836.74	215.69	3.82
	F ₃	227371	45472	181899	836.74	217.40	4.00
I ₃	F ₁	167633.2	49112	118521.2	705.82	167.92	2.41
	F ₂	182777.5	47140	135637.5	705.82	192.17	2.88
	F ₃	196158.8	45422	150736.8	705.82	213.56	3.31

I₁= 100% of FC, I₂= 80% of FC, I₃= 65% of FC, F₁=100% RNPk, F₂=75%RNPk+50% of mixture of biofertale+ rhizobacterien, F₃= 55% RNPk+ 100% of mixture of biofertale + rhizobacterien

*Includes the costs of all agricultural operations (fixed and variables) as follows: installation greenhouse, drip irrigation system, organo-mineral fertilizers added to soil, bio-mineral fertilizers application, labor wages for (irrigation, harvesting, fungi and bestsides control and transplanting) and land rent.

Net income from water unit= Net income L.E fed.⁻¹/ water applied m³ fed⁻¹, economic efficiency= net income L.E fed.⁻¹/ total coast (L-E/fed)

CONCLUSION

According to the results of this study, using biofertilizers as partial replacement of mineral fertilizers had significantly increased fruit yield and yield constituents of cucumber. Also, irrigating cucumber plants at 80% of FC using the drip irrigation system gave the highest fruit yield and its components. Besides that, the combination of I₂ and F₂ or F₃ gave the highest values of net return, net return from water unit and economic efficiency. So, the combination of F₃-treatment (applying 55% RNPk+ 100% of mixture of biofertale+ rhizobacterien) and I₂-treatment (irrigating cucumber plants with 80% of FC) are the most efficient treatment for cucumber grown on sandy soil under plastic greenhouse for maximizing cucumber fruit yield while conserving both water and mineral fertilizers.

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استجابة الخيار لإدارة الري بالتنقيط و الأسمدة الحيوية المعدنية في ظل ظروف الزراعة المحمية

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قسم الاراضي والمياه كلية الزراعة جامعة دمياط

المخلص

أجريت تجربة حقلية داخل الصوب البلاستيكية في منطقة جمصة محافظة الدقهلية خلال موسمين 2016/2017 و 2017/2018 لدراسة تأثير 3 معاملات لري نبات الخيار كالتالي I₁ (الري عند 100% من السعة الحقلية)، I₂ (الري عند 80% من السعة الحقلية)، I₃ (الري عند 65% من السعة الحقلية كمعاملات رئيسية)، 3 معاملات للتسميد الحيوي و المعدني كمعاملات تحت رئيسية وهي F₁ (التسميد ب100% من الجرعة الموصى بها من NPK)، F₂ (التسميد ب75% من الجرعة الموصى بها من NPK + 50% من خليط من سماد بيوفيرتال+ ريزوبكتيرين)، F₃ (التسميد ب55% من الجرعة الموصى بها من NPK + 100% من خليط من البيوفيرتال + ريزوبكتيرين على الإنتاج ومكوناته لنبات الخيار ، كذلك بعض العلاقات المائية والعائد الاقتصادي. أوضحت النتائج المتحصل عليها أن كلا من معاملات الري والتسميد ذات تأثير عالي المعنوية على الإنتاج ومكوناته لنبات الخيار في كلا الموسمين، حيث تحصل على أعلى القيم لإنتاج ثمار الخيار/الفدان، عدد الثمار/نبات، وزن الثمار/نبات تحت كلا من I₂ و F₃ في كلا الموسمين. معاملة الري I₂ أدت الي زيادة إنتاج ثمار الخيار بنسبة 21.87%، 22.29% مقارنة بمعاملة الري I₁ والقيم المقابلة كانت 10.78% و 13.18% في معاملة التسميد F₃ مقارنة ب F₁ في الموسم الأول والثاني على الترتيب. أوضحت النتائج ان التفاعل بين معاملة الري I₂ ومعاملة التسميد F₂ أو F₃ أعطت أعلى عند صافي للفدان، العائد الصافي لوحدة المياه، الكفاءة الاقتصادية في كلا الموسمين. أعطت المعاملة I₃ أعلى القيم للإنتاجية المائية لمياه الري وتوفير المياه. من نتائج الدراسة الحالية فانه يمكن التوصية بالري عند 80% من السعة الحقلية خلال نظام الري بالتنقيط مع اضافة 55% من السماد المعدني + 100% من خليط سماد البيوفيرتال+ ريزوبكتيرين لإنتاج الخيار داخل الصوب البلاستيكية للحصول على أعلى إنتاج اقتصادي من الخيار وتوفير مياه الري والسماد المعدني.