

Nitrogen Management with Sugar Beet Varieties as Influenced by Rhizomania

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Justification of Research:

The influence of nitrogen and rhizomania on sugar beet production throughout the sugar industry has been well documented. However, the interaction between nitrogen and rhizomania needs to be investigated. Varieties resistant to rhizomania tend to give low quality and high tonnage. The management of these varieties for increased quality giving greater sugar production per acre is essential to the survival of the sugar beet industry. To manage for maximum sugar production in the presence of rhizomania one needs to correctly apply the appropriate quantity of nitrogen, and understand the influence of the rhizomania complex and resistant cultivars on nitrogen uptake, and assimilation.

The lack of knowledge in reference to the adverse effect of the rhizomania disease complex on nitrogen management in sugar beets emphasizes the need for evaluation. Current nitrogen recommendations on sugar beet were made in the absence of both Rhizomania and rhizomania cultivars. Nitrogen studies conducted with cultivars of varying resistance and in the presence of the rhizomania complex could significantly add to the knowledge needed to manage nitrogen.

Nitrogen management with rhizomania resistant varieties in the presence of rhizomania has primarily occurred in light textured soils which characteristically give high quality sugar beet production. Recent, detection of the rhizomania disease has been in areas of soils with higher soil quality (higher organic matter and moisture) which adds some difficulty to nitrogen management. Producing sugar beets of high quality in the presence of rhizomania will be much more difficult in these areas. Therefore, to manage nitrogen in the presence of rhizomania, rhizomania resistant varieties, high organic matter, and high moisture, one needs to possess a greater understanding of the nitrogen/rhizomania complex interaction.

Objectives:

1. Determine correct nitrogen fertilizer management practices in the presences and absence of Rhizomania.
2. Determine nitrogen fertilizer management as influenced by varieties with varying degrees of Rhizomania resistance.
3. Determine nitrogen fertilizer management in relation to the degree of Rhizomania disease pressure.
4. Determine information necessary for diagnostic delineation between Rhizomania and nitrogen deficiencies via crop canopy reflectance.

Materials and Methods:

To meet above mentioned objectives, small plot studies were conducted in the Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative growing area during the 2003 and 2004 growing seasons. The treatments included a factorial arrangement of three to six nitrogen fertility levels and three sugar beet varieties. The nitrogen levels were based on the soil test nitrate-N in the surface four feet plus fertilizer N applied. The residual soil nitrate-N level was 56 pounds per acre all three 2003 sites. The N levels at the three locations in 2003 were 56, 70, 90, 110, and 130 pounds N per acre. In 2004 the residual nitrate-N levels were different at each of the three sites. The residuals in 2004 were 90, 110, and 70 at the Maynard, Cosmos, and Raymond

site, respectively. The N levels were 90, 110, 130, and 150 at Maynard, 110, 130, and 150 at Cosmos, and 70, 90, 110, 130, and 150 at Raymond. The nitrogen fertilizer source was urea (45-0-0). The varieties represented different resistance levels to rhizomania and relative quality. We used non-resistant-high quality, resistant-high quality, and resistant-low quality varieties. The treatments were applied in a split plot design with the N levels as the whole plots and varieties as the split plot with five replications. At harvest, sugar beet top samples were taken from each plot to determine the top yield and N uptake of the tops to evaluate the effect of N levels and varieties on plant nitrogen dynamics. The plots were harvested to determine root yield, sucrose concentration, and purity. To assess the N assimilation differences caused by rhizomania varieties, soil samples were taken to a depth of 4 feet and analyzed for nitrate-N after harvest.

Results and Discussion:

Root yield, sucrose, purity, extractable sucrose, and top yields for the 2003 sites are reported in [Tables 1, 2, and 3](#). Root yield and extractable sucrose per acre were affected by both N level and variety at the Prinsburg site, [Table 1](#). The optimum N level for root yield and extractable sucrose per acre was 110 pounds residual nitrate-N to four feet plus fertilizer. The non-resistant high quality variety had the greatest root yield and extractable sucrose. The resistant varieties have similar root yields and extractable sucrose. Sucrose concentration and extractable sucrose per ton were the least for the resistant-low quality variety while the other two varieties were similar. Root purity top yield were not affected by the treatments.

Table 1. Root yield, sucrose, purity, extractable sucrose, and top yield for the Prinsburg site in 2003.

Variety	Soil nitrate-N plus fert. N	Root yield	Root sucrose	Root purity	Extractable sucrose		Top yield
	Lb/A	Tons/A	%		lb/ton	lb/A	lb/A
Nonresistant	56	20.6	17.4	92.5	303	6233	2489
	70	23.6	17.6	93.2	309	7280	2590
	90	24.3	17.4	92.0	304	7426	2704
	110	27.4	17.9	92.8	313	8571	2767
	130	27.1	17.6	92.5	306	8313	3212
Resistant-high quality	56	20.6	17.4	92.3	301	6210	2073
	70	20.9	17.5	92.3	303	6291	2493
	90	21.9	17.5	92.8	306	6715	2619
	110	26.3	17.8	93.4	313	8260	2791
	130	26.2	17.8	92.5	309	8111	2918
Resistant- low quality	56	21.0	17.1	92.9	298	6270	2353
	70	21.7	17.2	92.8	299	6510	2348
	90	22.5	17.6	92.6	306	6885	2322
	110	26.3	17.5	92.8	305	8033	2369
	130	26.0	17.5	91.9	301	7829	2850
	56	20.7	17.3	92.5	301	6238	2305
	70	22.1	17.4	92.8	304	6694	2477
	90	22.9	17.5	92.8	305	7009	2548
	110	26.7	17.7	93.0	311	8288	2642
	130	26.4	17.6	92.3	305	8084	2993
Nonresistant		24.6	17.6	92.8	307	7565	2752
Resistant-high quality		23.2	17.6	92.7	307	7117	2579
Resistant- low quality		23.5	17.4	92.6	302	7105	2448
N rate		0.002	0.26	0.27	0.30	0.002	0.11
Variety		0.09	0.03	0.52	0.04	0.04	0.20
NXVar		0.94	0.61	0.13	0.77	0.82	0.97
C.V. (%)		9.6	2.0	0.6	2.6	9.4	22.4
Mean		23.8	17.5	92.7	305	7363	2593

Nitrogen level affected sucrose and extractable sucrose per ton at Hector site in 2003, [Table 2](#). Both parameters increased by N level between the 70 and 90 lb per acre levels. No increase occurred beyond the 90 lb per acre level. Root yield, top yield, and extractable sucrose per acre were increased for the non-resistant-high quality and resistant-low quality varieties. The optimum N level was 130 pounds N per acre for the two responding varieties. The resistant-high quality variety did not respond to N.

Table 2. Root yield, sucrose, purity, extractable sucrose, and top yield for the Hector site in 2003.

	Soil nitrate-N plus fert. N	Root yield	Root sucrose	Root purity	Extractable sucrose		Top yield
Variety	Lb/A	Tons/A	%		lb/ton	lb/A	lb/A
Nonresistant	56	21.4	17.3	91.3	296	6333	2329
	70	19.7	17.4	92.4	302	5950	2385
	90	21.0	17.8	92.6	309	6504	2283
	110	23.0	17.9	93.1	314	7233	2482
	130	24.1	17.8	92.0	306	7381	2161
Resistant-high quality	56	20.3	17.3	92.1	300	6069	2098
	70	19.0	17.4	92.8	303	5776	1958
	90	19.9	17.9	92.3	311	6207	2816
	110	20.3	17.8	92.5	310	6296	2320
	130	20.8	17.6	92.3	305	6369	2864
Resistant- low quality	56	20.0	17.6	91.9	304	6096	2075
	70	19.9	17.4	92.3	302	6003	1992
	90	20.7	17.8	92.5	309	6392	2268
	110	23.8	17.7	92.6	307	7322	2366
	130	23.8	17.8	92.4	309	7385	3005
	56	20.6	17.4	91.8	300	6166	2167
	70	19.6	17.4	92.5	302	5909	2122
	90	20.5	17.8	92.5	310	6368	2456
	110	22.4	17.8	92.7	310	6950	2389
	130	22.9	17.7	92.3	307	7045	2677
Nonresistant		21.8	17.6	92.3	306	6680	2328
Resistant-high quality		20.1	17.6	92.4	306	6143	2417
Resistant- low quality		21.7	17.7	92.3	306	6640	2341
N rate		0.0004	0.0005	0.18	0.008	0.0002	0.04
Variety		0.0001	0.96	0.86	0.98	0.0005	0.76
NXVar		0.05	0.96	0.63	0.96	0.21	0.05
C.V. (%)		6.1	2.9	1.0	3.8	7.6	19.2
Mean		21.2	17.6	92.3	306	6488	2362

Nitrogen level increased top yield up to the 130 lb per acre level at Raymond in 2003, [Table 3](#). Variety affected sucrose and root purity. The non-resistant-high quality variety has the least sucrose concentration while the other two varieties were similar. Purity was the greatest in the non-resistant-high quality variety followed by the resistant-low quality variety and the resistant-high quality had the least purity. Nitrogen and variety affected root yield and extractable sucrose per acre. The optimum N level was 110 pounds N per acre. The non-resistant-high quality variety had least root yield and extractable sucrose per acre while the other two varieties had similar root yields and extractable sucrose. Extractable sucrose per ton was affected by any treatment.

Table 3. Root yield, sucrose, purity, extractable sucrose, and top yield for the Raymond site in 2003.

	Soil nitrate-N plus fert. N	Root yield	Root sucrose	Root purity	Extractable sucrose		Top yield
Variety	Lb/A	Tons/A	%		lb/ton	lb/A	lb/A
Nonresistant	56	18.1	17.1	90.7	276	5000	2286
	70	18.4	17.0	90.5	273	5033	1829
	90	18.8	17.5	90.6	282	5307	2494
	110	20.8	17.5	90.8	283	5856	2056
	130	21.8	17.5	91.6	286	6231	3083
Resistant-high quality	56	19.6	17.4	89.8	275	5372	1697
	70	21.1	17.8	90.2	284	5983	2022
	90	24.1	17.6	90.2	281	6802	1889
	110	25.3	17.8	90.4	285	7201	1627
	130	24.7	17.7	90.1	281	6943	3420
Resistant- low quality	56	20.1	17.4	90.5	279	5604	1988
	70	21.0	17.3	90.0	275	5794	1807
	90	22.6	18.0	91.0	293	6607	2112
	110	24.4	17.7	90.4	285	6984	1983
	130	24.3	17.6	90.4	281	6863	2959
	56	19.3	17.3	90.3	277	5325	1990
	70	20.2	17.4	90.2	277	5603	1886
	90	21.8	17.7	90.6	285	6239	2165
	110	23.5	17.7	90.5	284	6680	1889
	130	23.6	17.6	90.7	283	6679	3154
Nonresistant		19.6	17.3	90.8	280	5485	2350
Resistant-high quality		23.0	17.7	90.1	281	6460	2131
Resistant- low quality		22.5	17.6	90.5	283	6370	2170
N rate		0.0006	0.41	0.76	0.51	0.003	0.01
Variety		0.0001	0.02	0.003	0.59	0.0001	0.52
NXVar		0.82	0.62	0.22	0.30	0.77	0.80
C.V. (%)		10.9	2.4	0.76	3.2	11.2	32.3
Mean		21.7	17.5	90.5	281	6105	2217

The results for the sites in 2004 are reported in [Tables 4, 5, and 6](#). Nitrogen level did not affect any parameter at the Maynard site in 2004, [Table 4](#). Variety affected root yield, sucrose, purity, extractable sucrose per ton, and extractable sucrose per acre. Root yield was greatest for the resistant-high quality variety, least with the resistant-low quality variety, with the non-resistant-high quality intermediate. The resistant-low quality variety had the least, followed by the resistant-high quality variety, and the non-resistant-high quality variety with the greatest values for sucrose, recoverable sucrose per ton, and recoverable sucrose per acre. Purity was the greatest for the non-resistant-high quality variety while the other two varieties had similar lower values. Top yield was not affect by any treatment.

The Cosmos site had a limited number of nitrogen rate treatments because of a greater residual nitrate ([Table 5](#)). The resistant-high quality variety had the best root yield while the non-resistant-high quality had the best sucrose, purity, sucrose per ton, and sucrose per acre. The reduced root yield of the non-resistant variety was compensated by the better root quality. Top yield was not affected by the N or variety treatments.

In 2004, there was a large response to nitrogen fertilizer for root yield and extractable sucrose per acre between the 70 and 90 pound N per acre levels at the Raymond site, [Table 6](#). This response was 7 tons per acre and close to 2000 pounds of extractable sucrose per acre. The resistant varieties had better root yields, extractable sucrose per acre, and somewhat less sucrose than the non-resistant-high quality variety. Top yield increased with increasing amounts of nitrogen fertilizer.

Table 4. Root yield, sucrose, purity, extractable sucrose, and top yield for the Maynard site in 2004.

Variety	Soil nitrate-N plus fert. N	Root yield	Root sucrose	Root purity	Extractable sucrose		Top yield
	lb/A	Tons/A	%		lb/ton	Lb/A	lb/A
Nonresistant	90	25.6	16.1	91.4	275	4447	2034
	110	27.7	16.2	91.8	278	4520	2176
	130	25.8	15.9	91.5	271	4328	1834
	150	26.2	15.9	91.6	272	4325	2048
Resistant-high quality	90	28.6	15.7	91.0	265	4155	1987
	110	27.1	15.5	90.4	260	4030	2050
	130	28.3	15.7	90.4	263	4119	2126
	150	27.9	15.5	90.5	260	4046	2292
Resistant-low quality	90	23.2	15.2	90.9	256	3877	2353
	110	25.0	14.9	90.9	250	3726	2061
	130	25.6	15.0	90.8	252	3804	2273
	150	26.6	14.8	90.1	247	3668	2411
	90	25.8	15.7	91.1	265	4159	2125
	110	26.6	15.5	91.0	263	4092	2096
	130	26.6	15.5	90.9	262	4084	2078
	150	26.9	15.4	90.7	260	4013	2250
Nonresistant		26.3	16.1	91.6	274	4405	2023
Resistant-high quality		28.0	15.6	90.6	262	4087	2114
Resistant-low quality		25.1	15.0	90.7	251	3769	2274
N rate		0.62	0.29	0.56	0.26	0.28	0.86
Variety		0.02	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0.23
NXVar		0.57	0.63	0.43	0.67	0.65	0.80
C.V. (%)		11.0	2.0	0.7	2.7	4.6	21.5
Mean		26.5	15.5	91.0	262	4087	2137

At the time of this report, the nitrogen information for tops was available only for the 2003 sites. Nitrogen concentration and N uptake was not affected by N level or variety at the Prinsburg site in 2003, [Table 7](#). Nitrogen concentration of the sugar beet top was decreased with increasing nitrogen fertilizer amounts at Hector and Raymond. The amount of N Uptake was increase by N level at both sites with the largest amount of N uptake at occurring at Hector with the 110 pound N per acre and at Raymond with the 130 pound N per acre. Variety affected the N concentration at Raymond. The non-resistant variety had the least N concentration when compared the resistant varieties.

Each fall, soil nitrate-N was determined from soil samples taken to a depth of 4 feet, [Table 8](#). Soil nitrate-N values following sugar beet are small. In 2003 the average value was 45 pounds N per acre while in 2004 the average value was less at 19 pounds N per acre. This difference could be attributed to the climate difference between the two years. The August – September moisture conditions in 2003 were dry reducing crop growth and nitrate-N utilization by the plant while in 2004 the conditions moist to wet, with at large amount of plant growth and thus utilization of soil nitrate-N. Only the Prinsburg site had a soil nitrate-N difference caused by a treatment. In this case, the resistant-high quality variety plots had a greater residual nitrate-N than the plots where the other two varieties were grown. The difference occurred in the surface one foot of soil. This difference was not reflected in N uptake at the Prinsburg site.

Table 5. Root yield, sucrose, purity, extractable sucrose, and top yield for the Cosmos site in 2004.

Variety	Soil nitrate-N plus fert. N	Root yield	Root sucrose	Root purity	Extractable sucrose		Top yield
	lb/A	Tons/A	%	lb/ton	lb/A	lb/A	
Nonresistant	110	21.7	15.8	92.0	272	4306	4819
	130	24.0	15.6	92.1	268	4203	6192
	150	23.4	15.3	91.8	261	4003	5275
Resistant-high quality	110	26.0	14.9	90.8	250	3720	5304
	130	24.7	15.2	91.6	258	3912	5373
	150	25.9	15.0	90.7	253	3804	5749
Resistant-low quality	110	21.6	14.9	91.6	253	3761	5197
	130	22.9	15.0	91.6	256	3849	5321
	150	23.4	14.8	90.9	249	3679	5623
	110	23.1	15.2	91.5	258	3929	5107
	130	23.9	15.3	91.8	260	3988	5629
	150	24.3	15.0	91.1	254	3828	5549
Nonresistant		23.1	15.6	92.0	267	4171	5428
Resistant-high quality		25.5	15.0	91.0	253	3812	5475
Resistant-low quality		22.6	14.9	91.4	252	3763	5380
N rate		0.50	0.37	0.07	0.17	0.25	0.59
Variety		0.005	0.0001	0.006	0.0001	0.0001	0.93
NXVar		0.53	0.30	0.67	0.41	0.32	0.15
C.V. (%)		9.8	2.4	0.80	3.0	5.2	12.7
Mean		23.8	15.2	91.5	258	3915	5428

Summary:

The preliminary results indicate that nitrogen recommendations do not need to be modified for rhizomania resistant varieties. The varieties do not consistently use nitrogen differently. The residual nitrate-N, top N concentrations, and top N uptake do not reflect differences in N use. If disease is severe enough, the use of a resistant variety is highly recommended. In those conditions, the nonresistant variety does not produce adequate extractable sucrose compared to the resistant variety.

Table 6. Root yield, sucrose, purity, extractable sucrose, and top yield for the Raymond site in 2004.

Variety	Soil nitrate- N plus fert. N	Root yield	Root sucrose	Root purity	Extractable sucrose		Top yield
	lb/A	Tons/A	%	lb/ton	lb/A	lb/A	
Nonresistant	70	18.5	13.8	90.0	228	4012	2050
	90	26.5	14.4	91.0	242	6433	4017
	110	24.6	14.1	92.4	241	5961	3580
	130	27.3	14.0	91.1	236	6435	3988
	150	22.4	14.1	91.0	238	5317	4294
Resistant- high quality	70	19.0	13.6	90.6	227	4334	2243
	90	28.0	13.9	91.2	234	6560	3669
	110	26.2	14.0	90.5	233	6080	3893
	130	27.8	14.0	91.1	235	6535	3999
	150	27.2	14.0	92.7	241	6552	4289
Resistant- low quality	70	22.0	13.2	91.4	222	4916	2399
	90	25.9	14.2	91.5	241	6216	3090
	110	26.8	13.9	91.4	234	6270	4108
	130	28.6	13.7	91.6	232	6628	3683
	150	25.9	13.7	91.8	232	6019	3934
	70	19.8	13.5	91.7	226	4421	2231
	90	26.8	14.2	91.2	239	6403	3561
	110	25.9	14.0	91.4	236	6104	3860
	130	27.9	13.9	91.3	234	6533	3890
	150	25.2	14.0	91.8	237	5963	4172
Nonresistant		23.9	14.1	91.1	237	5632	3568
Resistant- high quality		25.6	13.9	91.2	234	6012	3619
Resistant- low quality		25.8	13.8	91.5	232	6010	3443
N rate		0.0001	0.24	0.21	0.20	0.0001	0.0001
Variety		0.004	0.02	0.26	0.12	0.02	0.63
NXVar		0.09	0.68	0.02	0.63	0.06	0.60
C.V. (%)		8.5	2.8	1.0	3.5	8.4	18.1
Mean		25.1	13.9	91.3	234	5885	3543

Table 7. Top N concentrations and N uptakes for 2003.

	Soil nitrate-N plus fert. N	Prinsburg		Hector		Raymond	
		N concentration	N uptake	N concentration	N uptake	N concentration	N uptake
Variety	lb/A	%	lb N/A	%	lb N/A	%	lb N/A
Nonresistant	56	1.42	35	1.62	38	1.39	32
	70	1.45	37	1.44	35	1.48	26
	90	1.52	40	1.79	41	1.41	35
	110	1.39	39	1.53	38	1.23	254
	130	1.31	41	1.51	33	1.28	40
Resistant-high quality	56	1.91	39	1.71	36	1.84	30
	70	3.40	73	1.43	29	1.71	34
	90	1.61	40	1.77	50	1.37	25
	110	1.35	37	1.58	35	1.70	27
	130	1.32	37	1.30	37	1.17	38
Resistant- low quality	56	1.76	41	1.90	39	1.86	36
	70	1.76	42	1.49	29	1.73	30
	90	1.70	38	1.74	39	1.70	35
	110	1.52	36	1.48	35	1.62	31
	130	1.71	49	1.59	49	1.61	48
	56	1.70	38	1.74	38	1.70	33
	70	2.20	51	1.45	31	1.64	30
	90	1.61	40	1.77	44	1.49	32
	110	1.42	37	1.53	36	1.52	28
	130	1.45	42	1.47	39	1.35	42
Nonresistant		1.42	38	1.58	37	1.36	32
Resistant-high quality		1.92	45	1.56	37	1.56	31
Resistant- low quality		1.69	41	1.64	38	1.70	36
N rate		0.49	0.59	0.009	0.05	0.08	0.06
Variety		0.32	0.53	0.63	0.90	0.0002	0.16
NXVar		0.55	0.45	0.86	0.19	0.18	0.72
C.V. (%)		68.6	51.2	19.4	26.5	17.4	32.0
Mean		1.68	42	1.59	37	1.54	33

Table 8. Soil nitrate-N in the surface 4 feet, 2003 and 2004.

	Soil nitrate-N plus fert. N	Prinsburg 2003	Hector 2003	Raymond 2003	Maynard 2004	Cosmos 2004	Raymond 2004
Variety	lb/A	Soil nitrate-N in surface 4 feet (lb/A)					
Nonresistant	56	62	47	46			
	70	43	46	55			18
	90	43	47	47	19		18
	110	36	44	50	18	17	19
	130	46	38	38	18	20	18
	150				16	29	18
Resistant-high quality	56	43	49	39			
	70	39	50	42			21
	90	38	38	46	19		18
	110	35	43	59	22	21	18
	130	43	32	49	19	18	16
	150				17	20	17
Resistant- low quality	56	58	38	52			
	70	46	47	47			17
	90	38	46	48	18		18
	110	47	45	55	19	18	17
	130	45	37	46	21	21	18
	150				19	20	22
	56	54	45	45			
	70	43	48	48			19
	90	40	44	47	19		18
	110	39	44	55	20	19	18
	130	45	36	44	20	20	17
	150				17	23	19
Nonresistant		46	44	47	18	20	18
Resistant-high quality		39	42	47	19	20	18
Resistant- low quality		47	43	50	19	20	18
N rate		0.11	0.43	0.66	0.31	0.34	0.76
Variety		0.02	0.68	0.75	0.49	0.56	0.89
NXVar		0.31	0.27	0.45	0.66	0.15	0.19
C.V. (%)		21.2	18.7	26.2	21.5	29.2	18.0
Mean		44	43	48	19	20	18