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Effect of different biofertilizers and organic manures on yield and quality of strawberry (*Fragaria × ananassa* Duch.) cv. chandler

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Abstract

The experiment was laid out in a Randomized Block Design having 12 treatments and three replications of bio-fertilizers and organic manure at different levels. The result revealed that treatment T₁₂ (Phosphobacter 5kg ha⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + FYM 6 ton ha⁻¹ + Vermicompost 3 ton ha⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 3 ton ha⁻¹) was found to be best in terms of highest fruit yield per plant (75.94 g), fruit yield per plot (683.46gm), fruit yield per hectare (6.83t). Similarly the highest TSS of fruit (8.54 Brix), Lowest Acidity (0.46 %) and Highest pH of fruit (4.40) was observed in treatment T₁₂ (Phosphobacter 5kg ha⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + FYM 6 ton ha⁻¹ + Vermicompost 3 ton ha⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 3 ton ha⁻¹). The Treatment T₁₂ was significant in terms of economical aspects Viz; Maximum gross return (1079250 Rs), net return (696022.95 Rs) and benefit cost ratio (2.77:1) for cultivation of strawberry under Allahabad agro-climatic condition respectively.

Keywords: Azatobacter, acidity, TSS, brix, Phosphobacter

Introduction

Strawberry (*Fragaria x sp.*) is native of temperate regions, but varieties are available which can be cultivated in subtropical climate. In India it is generally cultivated in the hills, its main center of cultivation are Nainital (District) and Dehradun in Uttar Pradesh, Mahabaleshwar (Maharashtra), Kashmir valley (J&K) Bangalore (Karnataka) and Kalimpong (West Bengal). In recent years, strawberry is being also cultivated successfully on plains of Maharashtra around Pune, Nashik and Sangali towns. Strawberry is the most widely adapted of the United States, as well as in Canada and South America. The wide variation in climates within these regions and the wide adaptation of the strawberry plant permit harvesting and marketing, the fruit during greater part of the year. Strawberry is a delicious fruit taken fresh in several ways. It also makes excellent ice cream and Jam on account of its rich aroma, and is also a good source of minerals (Calcium 14mg, Iron 0.38 mg, Magnesium 10mg, Phosphorus 10mg, Potassium 166 mg, Sodium 1mg etc.), Vitamin (Vitamin C, ascorbic acid 56.7 mg, Thiamin 0.02 mg, Riboflavin 0.066 mg, Niacin 0.23 mg, Pantothenic acid 0.34 mg, Vitamin B-6 0.059mg, Vitamin A 27 IU Vitamin E 0.14 mg etc. value per 100 grams of edible portion) amino acids (Isoleucine 0.014 g, Lysine 0.025 g, Methionine 0.001 g etc). It is a soft and a highly perishable fruit, often shipped in frozen condition in Western countries. Strawberry thrives best in temperate climate. It is a short day plant; which requires exposure to about 10 days of less than 8 hours sunshine for initiation of flowering. In winter, the plants do not make any growth and remain dormant Sharma and Sharma 2004 ^[1]. Strawberry fruits are attractive with distinct pleasant aroma and flavor, consumed as dessert and also have a special demand by the fruit processing units for the preparation of jams, ice cream, syrups, etc. Characteristic aroma in strawberries is due to presence of volatile esters. It is one of the important fruit in the world. It has become favorite fruit crop among the Indian growers near towns and cities, because of its remunerative prices and higher profitability, which has resulted a phenomenal increase in its area and production in the recent years Sharma *et al.*, 2006 ^[2].

Strawberry is a profitable fruit crop in the shortest possible time as compared to the other fruits. The fruits are delicious and attractive, having pleasant aroma and a delicate flavor. It is also nutrition and beneficial to anaemic patient. Besides rich in Vitamin C, the strawberry also provides iron and minerals. Strawberry can reduce the risk of developing cancer 50% due to the high levels of vitamin C as well as photochemical compared such as the elegiac acid present in this fruit. Being a rich source of Vitamins and minerals coupled with delicate flavors strawberry has now become an important table fruit of millions of people around the global. Beside Vitamin C, strawberry is also fairly a good source of vitamin A (60 IU/100 g of edible

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portion). Strawberry also has high pectin (0.55%), available in the form of calcium pectate, which serves as excellent ingredient for jelly making Mitra *et al.*, 1991 [3]. Strawberry requires a well-drained medium loam soil, rich in organic matter. The soil should be slightly acidic with pH from 5.7 to 6.5 at higher pH root formation is poor. The presence of excessive calcium in the soil causes yellowing of the leaves. In light soils and in those rich in organic matter, runner formation is better. Strawberry should not be cultivated in the same land for a number of years. It is preferable to plant it in green manure field. Alkaline soils and soils infected with nematodes should be avoided. Propagation is done by means of runners that are formed after the blooming season. The plants may be allowed to set as many runners as possible but not allowed to set any fruits. All the plants with good root system should be utilized to set a new plantation. Given the best attention and care, a single plant usually produces 12 to 18 runners. Farmyard manure occupies an important position among bulky organic manures. The FYM seems to act directly by increasing crop yield either by acceleration of respiratory process by cell permeability or by hormone growth action. It supplies N, P and K in available forms to plants through biological decomposition. Mahadeen *et al.*, 2009 [4] reported higher fruit yield (27.62 t ha⁻¹) of strawberry by application of 40 tonnes of organic fertilizer (FYM) + 60 kg ha⁻¹ NPK fertilizers, while the lowest strawberry yield (21.76 t ha⁻¹) was obtained in untreated plot. Lakpale *et al.*, 2003 [5] observed the maximum number of branches per plant and pod yield of pea with the application of FYM @ 2.5 t ha⁻¹ in comparison to no FYM application. Rosati *et al.*, 2005 [6] reported application of large amount of organic manure may be beneficial in improving soil parameters but in the presence of soil pathogen it is likely to cause them to proliferate. Rana *et al.*, 2007 [7] reported that effect of inorganic fertilizer and FYM on French bean and observed that FYM @ 10 t ha⁻¹ resulted in significant increase in plant height, pods/plant, seeds/pod, seed and haulm yields. A balanced application of fertilizer is very important for successful crop production. Fertilizer is an essential input for increasing strawberry productivity. High productivity can be achieved through optimum fertilizer use. Biofertilizer that can be used in horticultural crops are mycorrhizae fungi, nitrogen fixer and phosphate solubilizer. VAM fungi are beneficial to the plant which they colonize. They make more nutrients available to the plant, especially phosphorus due to exploration by external hyphae of soil beyond root hairs, improve soil texture water holding capacity, improve disease resistance and help in better plant growth. Mycorrhizae fungi are also helpful in the biological control of root pathogens, increase survival rate and development of micro propagated plantlets, increase resistance to biotic and abiotic stress and increase fruit production. They also improve uptake of minor elements, produce plant hormone and increase the activity of nitrogen-fixing organisms in root zone. Fruit crop for VAM inoculation are citrus, apple, almond, peach, olive, grape, blackberry, strawberry, cherry, plum, papaya, pineapple etc. Vesicular arbuscular mycorrhiza (VAM) plays an important role in the establishment, growth and productivity of strawberry plants. VAM fungi can supply phosphorus which affects floral differentiation and growth. Hormonal and nutritional conditions as a result of VAM fungal colonization's are also believed to contribute to a considerable extent for better growth and productivity Chavez and Ferrera 1990 [8].

Azotobacter is heterotrophic aerobic bacterium, the free living bacteria fix nitrogen in the rhizosphere and provides it to the plant. Their inoculation is useful for horticultural crop with an increase in plant yield Ranna and Chandel 2003 [9]. The increase in yield is because in addition to adding nitrogen, these bacteria produce vitamins like biotin, folic acid also produces antifungal antibiotics which results in early development of roots and better starts of crop plant initially. Azotobacter is free living nitrogen fixing bacteria fixing nitrogen equivalent to 25 to 30 kg nitrogen ha⁻¹, thus released nitrogen is quickly absorbed by the plant. Subba Rao *et al.*, 1993 [10] reported that *Azotobacter* cells are not usually present on the rizoplane (root surface) but are abundant in the rhizosphere.

Materials and Methods

The field experiment was conducted during Rabi season of 2015-16 at pomology section, Department of Horticulture, Allahabad School of Agriculture, Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture Technology and Sciences, Allahabad. The experimental site is situated at a latitude of 20° and 15° North and longitude of 60° 3' East and at an altitude of 98 meters above mean sea level (MSL). Minimum temperature ranged from 4° -5° C (during Oct - Feb) and maximum temperature ranged from 45° -48° C (during March - June). The soil was sandy loam in texture having a pH (7.3), EC (0.26), organic carbon (0.40%), available N (250 kg ha⁻¹), P (13.50 kg ha⁻¹), K (313 kg ha⁻¹), S (13.93 ppm), and Zn (0.50 ppm) during the experimental year. One cultivar with uniform sized strawberry runners were planted during November 2015, maintaining a spacing of 30 X 30 cm. The biofertilizer and organic manures were prepared as per the requirement and applied to each treatment and replication at before planting and observations recorded. The recommended package of practices was followed for raising the successful crop, data on plant growth fruit yield and quality of strawberry characters were recorded when the plants were fully grown. Irrigation was scheduled at 10 days interval during vegetative growth & total of 6-8 irrigations were applied at critical stages of the crop. However other normal cultural practices were followed timely as; weeding at 25 DAS was done respectively. One quadrat (1 m²) was harvested in every plot for the determination of results and data was subjected to statistical analysis separately by using analysis of variance technique. The experiment was down in randomized block design (RBD) and following treatment consists. T₁: Control, T₂: Phosphobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Azotobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹, T₃: Phosphobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Azotobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + FYM 25 t ha⁻¹, T₄: Phosphobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Azotobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Poultry manure 12 t ha⁻¹, T₅: Phosphobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Azotobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Vermicompost 12 t ha⁻¹, T₆: Phosphobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Azotobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + FYM 13 t ha⁻¹, T₇: Phosphobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Azotobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 6 t ha⁻¹, T₈: Phosphobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Azotobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Vermicompost 6 t ha⁻¹, T₉: Phosphobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Azotobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + FYM 13 t ha⁻¹ + Poultry manure 6 t ha⁻¹, T₁₀: Phosphobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Azotobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + FYM 13 t ha⁻¹ + Vermicompost 6 t ha⁻¹, T₁₁: Phosphobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Azotobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Vermicompost 6 t ha⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 6 t ha⁻¹, T₁₂: Phosphobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Azotobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + FYM 6 t ha⁻¹ + Vermicompost 3 t ha⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 3 t ha⁻¹. The difference among treatment means was compared by using least significant difference test at 5% probability levels.

Results and Discussion

Yield Attributes

The observations regarding yield attributes of Strawberry Viz., Number of fruit yield per plant (g), Fruit yield per plot (g), Fruit yield (q ha⁻¹) were influenced by every increment dose of organic manures and biofertilizers and this beneficial effect was seen during all the growth period, it is also may be due to synchronized availability of essential plants nutrients to the crop especially NPK for a longer period during its growth & reproductive stages. Treatment T₁₂ Phosphobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + FYM 6 t ha⁻¹ + Vermicompost 3 t ha⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 3 t ha⁻¹ has recorded maximum number of Fruit yield per plant (75.94 g), Fruit yield per plot (683.46 g), Fruit yield per q ha⁻¹ (68.34 q), while minimum number of Fruit yield per plant (39.95 g), Fruit yield per plot (359.55 g), Fruit yield per q ha⁻¹ (35.95 q) were recorded in treatment T₁ Control (RDF). However, treatment T₁₁ and T₁₀ was found to be statistically at par to treatment T₁₂ (Table 1) and (Fig 1). The probable reason may be due to beneficial effect of biofertilizers and organic manures resulting increase Fruit yield per plant (g), Fruit yield per plot (g), Fruit yield (q ha⁻¹) of strawberry. However the essential role of organic manure and biofertilizers has been established as a component of several enzymes concerned with carbohydrate and NPK metabolism, in addition to its involvement directly or indirectly in regulating the various physiological and reproductive processes of plants. The findings have been confirmed by Sahoo *et al.*, 2005 [11] and Umar *et al.*, 2010 [12]. Similar finding are also reported by Prasad *et al.*, 2017 [13].

Quality Attributes

The observations regarding quality of strawberry Viz., T. S. S. (°Brix), Acidity (%) and pH were influenced by every increment dose of organic manures and different biofertilizers and this beneficial effect was seen in fruit quality, it is also

may be due to synchronized availability of essential plants nutrients and optimum weather during maturity and ripening of the fruit especially NPK and vital micronutrients for a longer period during its reproductive stages. The data reveals that there exists a useful and meaningful impact on fruit quality. Treatment T₁₂ (Phosphobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + FYM 6 t ha⁻¹ + Vermicompost 3 t ha⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 3 t ha⁻¹) has recorded the highest total soluble solid (8.54 Brix), Minimum acidity (0.46 %) and highest pH (4.40). While lowest total soluble solid (6.90 Brix), Maximum acidity (0.75%) and lowest pH (3.9) in treatment T₁ Control (RDF). However the essential role of organic manure and biofertilizers has been established as a component of several enzymes concerned with carbohydrate and NPK metabolism, in addition to its involvement directly or indirectly in regulating the various physiological and reproductive processes of plants. Findings are confirmed by Yusuf *et al.*, 2003 [14] and results are also reported by Sahoo *et al.*, 2005 [11]. The higher TSS and total sugar with lower acidity (0.481 per cent) under the application of vermicompost + *Azotobacter* + *Azospirillum* + PSB in strawberry Singh *et al.*, 2012 [15]. Similar findings are also reported by Singh and Singh 2009 [16].

Economics

The highest gross return (1079250 ₹ ha⁻¹), net return (696022.95 ₹ ha⁻¹) and B:C ratio (2.27:1) was observed in Treatment T₁₂ (Phosphobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + FYM 6 t ha⁻¹ + Vermicompost 3 t ha⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 3 t ha⁻¹), where as minimum gross return (538500 ₹ ha⁻¹), net return (156913.2 ₹ ha⁻¹) was observed in treatment T₉ Phosphobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + FYM 13 t ha⁻¹ + Poultry manure 6 t ha⁻¹. Similarly minimum B: C ratio was observed in treatment T₆ Phosphobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + FYM 13 t ha⁻¹.

Table 1: Effect of different biofertilizers and organic manures on yield attributes of strawberry

	Treatments	Fruit yield plant ⁻¹ (gm)	Fruit yield plot ⁻¹ (gm)	Fruit yield (q ha ⁻¹)
T ₁	Control (RDF)	39.95	359.55	35.95
T ₂	Phosphobacter 5kg/ha + Azatobacter 5 Kg ha ⁻¹	46.68	420.09	42.01
T ₃	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 Kg ha ⁻¹ + FYM 25 t ha ⁻¹	44.64	431.76	43.17
T ₄	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 Kg ha ⁻¹ + Poultry manure 12 t ha ⁻¹	48.14	433.29	43.32
T ₅	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + Vermicompost 12 t ha ⁻¹	46.37	417.36	41.73
T ₆	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + FYM 13 t ha ⁻¹	46.31	416.76	41.67
T ₇	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 6 t ha ⁻¹	50.65	455.88	45.58
T ₈	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + Vermicompost 6 t ha ⁻¹	55.86	502.74	50.27
T ₉	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + FYM 13 t ha ⁻¹ + Poultry manure 6 t ha ⁻¹	52.51	472.56	47.25
T ₁₀	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + FYM 13 t ha ⁻¹ + Vermicompost 6 t ha ⁻¹	68.70	618.30	61.83
T ₁₁	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + Vermicompost 6 t ha ⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 6 t ha ⁻¹	60.60	545.37	54.53
T ₁₂	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + FYM 6 t ha ⁻¹ + Vermicompost 3 t ha ⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 3 t ha ⁻¹	75.94	683.46	68.34
	F-test	S	S	S
	SEd(±)	1.63	10.71	1.07
	CD (P=0.05)	3.34	21.95	2.19

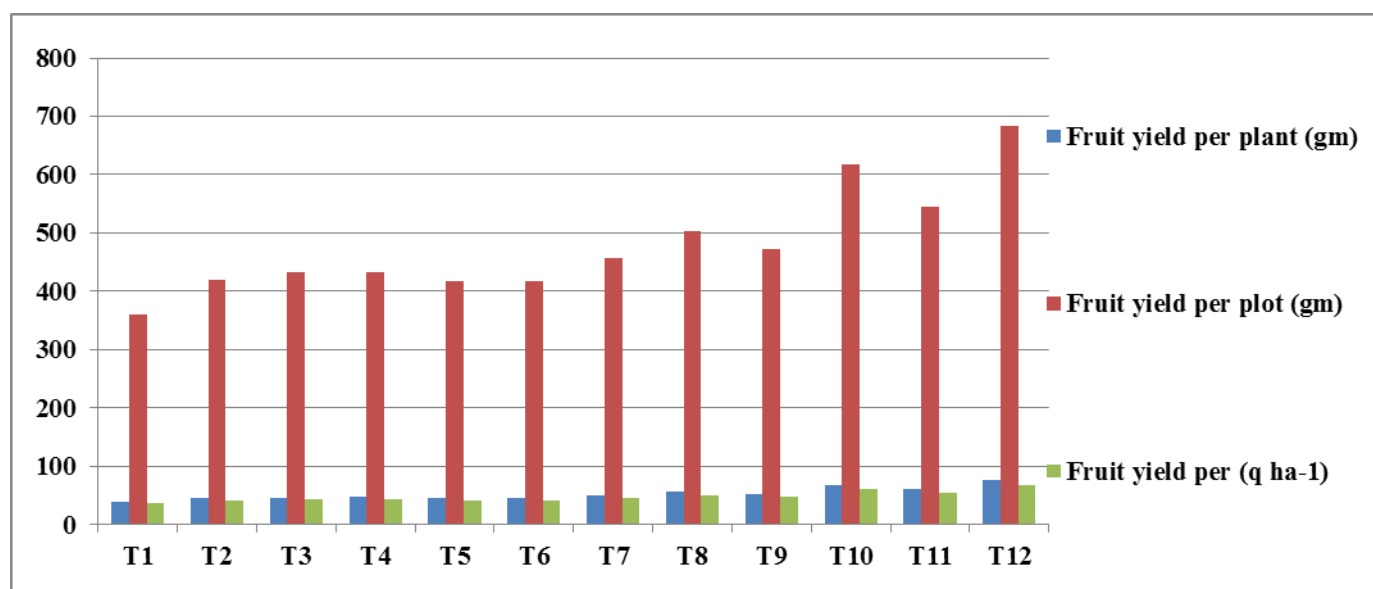
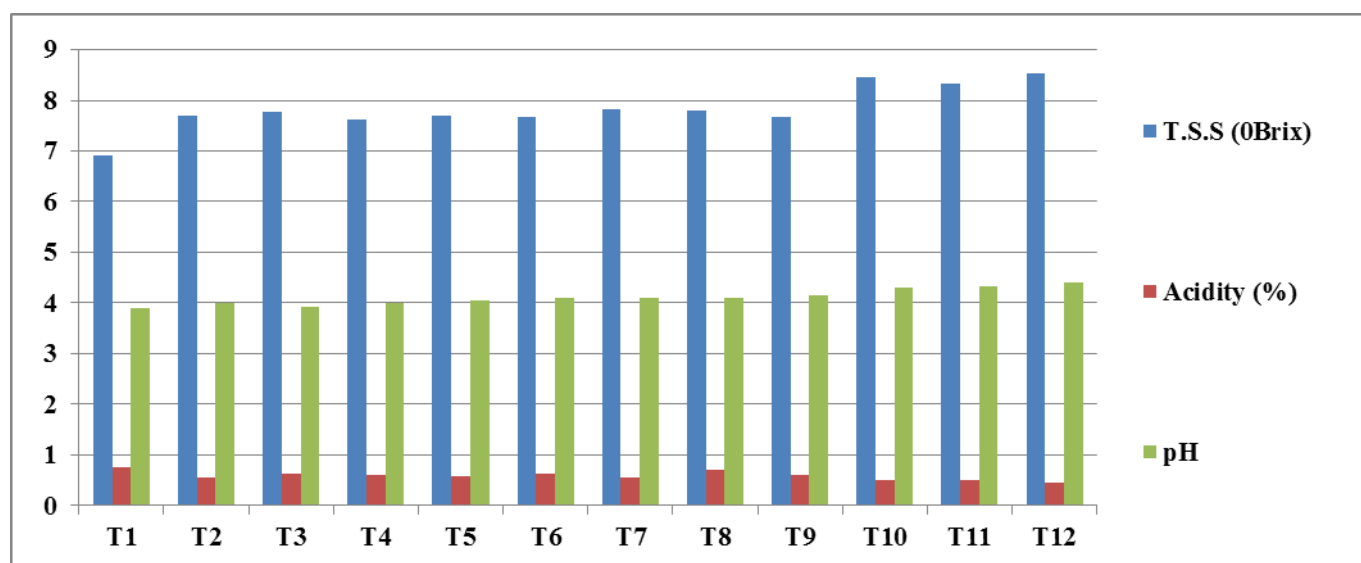
Table 2: Effect of different biofertilizers and organic manures on quality attributes of strawberry

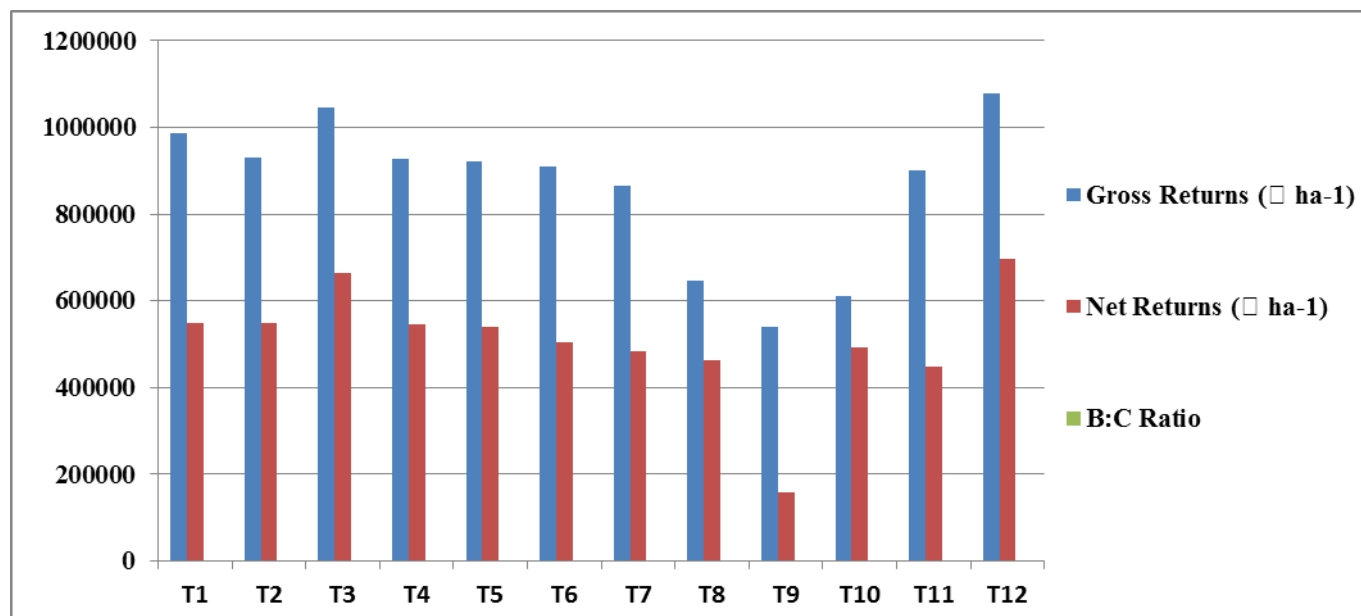
	Treatments	T.S.S (°Brix)	Acidity (%)	pH
T ₁	Control (RDF)	6.90	0.75	3.9
T ₂	Phosphobacter 5kg/ha + Azatobacter 5 Kg ha ⁻¹	7.70	0.56	4.0
T ₃	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 Kg ha ⁻¹ + FYM 25 t ha ⁻¹	7.78	0.62	3.92
T ₄	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 Kg ha ⁻¹ + Poultry manure 12 t ha ⁻¹	7.61	0.61	4.0
T ₅	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + Vermicompost 12 t ha ⁻¹	7.69	0.57	4.05
T ₆	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + FYM 13 t ha ⁻¹	7.68	0.63	4.10
T ₇	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 6 t ha ⁻¹	7.83	0.54	4.10
T ₈	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + Vermicompost 6 t ha ⁻¹	7.80	0.70	4.10

T ₉	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + FYM 13 t ha ⁻¹ + Poultry manure 6 t ha ⁻¹	7.67	0.60	4.15
T ₁₀	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + FYM 13 t ha ⁻¹ + Vermicompost 6 t ha ⁻¹	8.46	0.49	4.30
T ₁₁	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + Vermicompost 6 t ha ⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 6 t ha ⁻¹	8.34	0.51	4.34
T ₁₂	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + FYM 6 t ha ⁻¹ + Vermicompost 3 t ha ⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 3 t ha ⁻¹	8.54	0.46	4.40
F-test		S	S	S
Sed (±)		0.20	0.02	0.14
CD (P=0.05)		0.41	0.03	0.28

Table 3: Effect of different biofertilizers and organic manures on economics of strawberry

	Treatments	Gross Returns (₹ ha ⁻¹)	Net Returns (₹ ha ⁻¹)	B:C Ratio
T ₁	Control (RDF)	985500	548485.95	1.39:1
T ₂	Phosphobacter 5kg/ha + Azatobacter 5 Kg ha ⁻¹	931500	548835.38	1.45:1
T ₃	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 Kg ha ⁻¹ + FYM 25 t ha ⁻¹	1046250	663778.05	1.79:1
T ₄	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 Kg ha ⁻¹ + Poultry manure 12 t ha ⁻¹	927000	544528.05	2.13:1
T ₅	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + Vermicompost 12 t ha ⁻¹	922500	539965.05	2.05:1
T ₆	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + FYM 13 t ha ⁻¹	910740	503235.84	1.10:1
T ₇	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 6 t ha ⁻¹	866250	483585.08	1.69:1
T ₈	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + Vermicompost 6 t ha ⁻¹	646000	463261.88	1.72:1
T ₉	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + FYM 13 t ha ⁻¹ + Poultry manure 6 t ha ⁻¹	538500	156913.2	1.98:1
T ₁₀	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + FYM 13 t ha ⁻¹ + Vermicompost 6 t ha ⁻¹	610740	493235.81	1.49:1
T ₁₁	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + Vermicompost 6 t ha ⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 6 t ha ⁻¹	901502	448835.48	1.67:1
T ₁₂	Phosphobacter 5kg ha ⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha ⁻¹ + FYM 6 t ha ⁻¹ + Vermicompost 3 t ha ⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 3 t ha ⁻¹	1079250	696022.95	2.27:1

**Fig 1:** Effect of different biofertilizers and organic manures on yield and attributes of strawberry



Conclusion

Considering the result presented in experiment investigation. It is concluded that treatment combination of Phosphobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + Azatobacter 5 kg ha⁻¹ + FYM 6 t ha⁻¹ + Vermicompost 3 t ha⁻¹ + Poultry Manure 3 t ha⁻¹ was the best treatment combination for obtaining fruit yield, fruit quality and net income and maximum benefit cost ratio in strawberry crop. Since the findings are based on the research done in one season it may be repeated for conformation.

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