

1 **Evaluation of Proportionate Combinations of Indigenous**
2 **Rice Bran and Mineral Fertilizer for Improved**
3 **Performance of Tomato (*Lycopersicon lycopersicum*)**
4 **Under Low Fertile Soil conditions**

5 **ABSTRACT**

6 Under tropical soil conditions, where soils are mostly marginal and deliberate
7 fallowing of farmlands is very uncommon, integration of two or more different fertilizer
8 materials, at pre-determined proportions, may be beneficial to soil quality improvement and
9 enhanced crop productivity. Field experiment was carried out in the year 2015, at the
10 Teaching and Research Farms, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho,
11 Nigeria to determine the effect of organic and inorganic N-fertilizer materials on performance
12 of tomato, under low fertile soil conditions. Six treatments introduced were: T0 (No fertilizer
13 application), T1 (100% N.P.K), T2 (75% N.P.K + 25% Rice bran), T3 (50% N.P.K +50%
14 Rice bran), T4 (25% N.P.K+ 75% Rice bran) and T5 (100% Rice bran) arranged in
15 randomized complete block design (RCBD), replicated three times. Data collected were
16 collected on growth and yield parameters, and analysed using Analysis of variance
17 (ANOVA). Means were separated using Duncan multiple range test (DMRT) at 5% level of
18 probability. All fertilizer materials applied significantly enhanced tomato growth, yields and
19 nutrient uptakes, compared to the control. Sole application of 100% NPK and Rice bran
20 significantly improved fruit yield by 831.5% and 597.1% respectively, while their
21 combinations significantly enhanced tomato fruit yield ranging from 819% to 1127%. These
22 indicate that combined application of organic and inorganic fertilizers is better than sole
23 application. Also, significantly prolonged leaf production was observed (which equally
24 promoted prolonged flowering and fruiting), in tomato plants which received Rice bran
25 applications at 50% level and above. Therefore, since there is an increasing awareness
26 nowadays, on the environment friendly benefits of applying organic materials to farmlands,
27 application of either 75% or 100% NPK fertilizer should be totally discouraged. Hence, 75%
28 Rice Bran + 25% NPK could be recommended or alternatively 50% Rice Bran + 50% NPK,
29 for tomato production in the study area. This will improve soil organic matter content, reduce
30 soil chemical fertilizer loads or inputs and alleviate the residual effects of synthetic fertilizers,
31 for improved soil quality and tomato production, in the study area.

32 **Keywords:** Tomato, Proportionate Combinations, Indigenous Rice Bran, Mineral Fertilizer,
33 Soil Fertility and Crop Performance.

34 **1.0. INTRODUCTION**

35 Tomato (*Lycopersicon lycopersicum* L. Mill) is an arable fruit vegetable. It belongs
36 to the family solanaceae. Tomato ranks first amongst the common fruit vegetable crops in
37 Nigeria and dominates the largest of the estimated vegetable crops production areas
38 (Rawshan, 1996). Tomatoes are normally propagated either by seeds, sown directly on the

39 field or by transplanting of seedlings obtained from the nursery. Although tomato is grown
40 throughout the year, the best period for tomato production in Nigerian Savanna is the dry
41 season, when the weather is cooler and the incidence of pests and diseases is minimal
42 (Anonymous, 2000). Many varieties are now widely grown, sometimes in greenhouses in
43 cooler climates. The plants typically grow up to 1-3 meters in height and have a weak stem
44 that often sprawls over the ground and vines over other plants. More so, the dietary
45 significance as well as the considerable versatility of tomato cannot be over-emphasized. The
46 fruit is a berry type, and ripe one could be eaten fresh or raw (e.g. salad), when cooked or
47 processed, as in soup, stew, ketchup, paste, juice, powdered or canned tomatoes etc.
48 (Adebooye *et al.*, 2006; Babajide and Salami, 2012). Tomatoes have been reported to be
49 important sources of nutrient anti-oxidants such as lycopene and vitamin C in human diet
50 (Clinton, 1998). Lycopene, the most important anti-oxidant has been linked with reduced risk
51 of prostate and other forms of cancer as well as heart diseases (Barber and Barber, 2002). The
52 fruits are highly perishable and are commonly sliced and dried (due to poor storage facilities),
53 to await future uses or sales (Babajide *et al.*, 2008).

54 Rice bran is obtained from rice processing (i.e. de-hulling). Rice bran is also referred
55 to rice husk or rice hull. It is thereby regarded as a waste material. Although it is used for
56 economic feeding of livestock hence, many tonnes of this material are found wastefully
57 deposited in many rice processing villages in Nigeria. However, if properly managed, rice
58 bran is a potential fertilizer material, which is relatively high in Nitrogen, and could be used
59 as a sole soil amendment or for organic fortification of chemical fertilizer materials, suitable
60 for arable crop production. Nitrogen is an essential nutrient element required in
61 photosynthesis and was also reported to support luxuriant and vigorous plant growth
62 (Anonymous, 2000; Akanbi, 2002; Babajide *et al.*, 2012). Inappropriate use of fertilizers
63 greatly reduces fertilizer efficiency and imposes negative effects on soil productivity (Tejada

64 *et al.*, 2005; Babajide, 2010). Both organic and inorganic fertilizers should be applied to
65 match nutrient needs of crops (Indu and Savithri, 2003; Babajide, 2010). Hence, in cases of
66 desiring a combined application of organic and inorganic fertilizer materials, it is important to
67 pre-determine the accurate proportions (in percentage) of either of the fertilizers to be
68 applied. Therefore, this research was conducted to evaluate the performance of tomato under
69 varying proportionate combinations of organic and chemical N-fertilizers, so as to reasonably
70 recommend the most suitable for optimum performance of tomato in the study area.

71 **2.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS**

72 The experiment was conducted in the year 2015, at the Teaching and Research Farms,
73 Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Oyo state, Nigeria to evaluate the
74 response of tomato to sole and combined applications of different organic and inorganic
75 fertilizer materials. The land was manually cleared of all existing vegetation. Soil sample was
76 collected from 0-15 cm depth and sieve through 2mm gauge to remove stones and other large
77 particles, for determination of soil physico-chemical properties. The seeds of Roma VF
78 variety were sown in the raised nursery bed made up of bamboo trees and shaded with palm-
79 fronds. The seedlings were nurtured for four (4) weeks before transplanting to the field. The
80 Six (6) treatments introduced were: T₀= the control or zero fertilizer application, T₁=
81 application of 100% NPK 15-15-15 fertilizer, T₂= combined application of 75% NPK + 25%
82 Rice bran, T₃= combined application of 50% NPK + 50% Rice bran, T₄ = combined
83 application of 25% NPK + 75% Rice bran, T₅= application of 100% Rice bran. All treatments
84 were applied at recommended rate of 60kgNha⁻¹ (Babajide *et al.*, 2012). Each plot size was
85 2.1m × 2.7m = 5.67 m², at a spacing of 90cm × 30cm (0.9m x 0.30 m). The treatments were
86 laid out in a Randomised Complete Block Design (RCBD), replicated three times. Data
87 collection commenced after four (4) weeks of transplanting (4WAT). A water tank of 300
88 Litre capacities (connected to the Faculty of Agriculture bore hole), was placed at the centre
89 of the experimental plot to ensure regular watering, using watering cans. Manual weeding
90 was carried out with aid of hoes on every fortnight basis. The growth parameters determined
91 at the early boom of flowering were; plant height (by using measuring tape), stem
92 circumference (by using venier callipers which first gave the value of the diameter, converted
93 later to circumference, using a fomular: πD (i.e. 3.142 multiplied by the original diameter (D)

94 value measured with calipers), number of leaves, number of branches (determined by direct
95 counting of all well-developed branches per plant) and leaf area [by graph method as
96 described by Akanni and Ojeniyi, (2007)]. After each harvesting, number of ripe fruits per
97 plant was determined (by direct counting) and weighed; using Mp 600H Electronic Weighing
98 balance. Fruit diameter was also determined (using callipers). Moreso, from multiple
99 harvestings spanning up to eight (8) weeks, the cumulative fruit weight values per plant per
100 treatment were determined, which were later converted to fruit yield (in tons ha⁻¹). Also, all
101 plants per treatment were carefully packed into giant-brown envelopes (65cm by 30cm), for
102 oven-drying at 80°C for 72 hours to a constant weight, to assess N, P and K concentrations
103 (as described by IITA, 1982: Babajide *et al.*, 2012), and uptakes [using a formula: Nutrient
104 uptake = Dry matter yield multiply by Nutrient content (%)]. All data collected were
105 analyzed following the procedures of analysis of variance (ANOVA). Duncan's Multiple
106 Range Test (DMRT), was used to compare differences between the treatment means at 5%
107 level of probability, using Statistical Analysis System (SAS, 2015).

108 **3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

109 **3.1.1 Soil physico-chemical properties**

110 The soil's pre-cropping physico-chemical analysis results showed that the soil was
111 slightly acidic with pH of 6.1 (Table1), and that it was very low in essential nutrient
112 concentrations particularly N = 0.19 gkg⁻¹, P = 3.57 mgkg⁻¹ and K = 0.21cmolk⁻¹. These
113 results corroborated the earlier research findings of Babajide *et al.*, (2008) and Babajide *et*
114 *al.*, (2012) which indicated that the soils in the study area were grossly low in essential
115 nutrients and mildly acidic in nature.

116 **3.1.2 Nutrient compositions of fertilizer materials used**

117 As indicated in Table 2, the values of nutrient concentrations in the chemical
118 fertilizer materials used were already indicated on the bag containing the fertilizer as 15%
119 each for N, P and K i.e. NPK 15-15-15 fertilizer grade, while those of the rice bran were
120 analysed in the laboratory (IITA, 1982), and the results were 1.0%, 1.2% and 1.7% for N, P
121 and K respectively. These values were relatively higher than N, P and K concentrations in
122 some common weeds and wasteful plant residues (Babajide, 2010).

123 **3.1.3 Growth Parameters of Tomato (*Lycopersicon lycopersicum* L. Mill) Under** 124 **Combined Fertilizer Applications**

125 Application of different fertilizers and their combinations significantly enhanced
126 growth of tomato (Table 3). Application of 50% NPK + 50% Rice bran had significantly
127 higher plant height (98.2cm), but the value was not significantly different from those
128 obtained from applications of 100% NPK and other fertilizer treatments tested (except 100%
129 Rice bran), but significantly higher than the control. Also, application of 75% Rice bran +
130 25% NPK produced the plant with significantly wider stem circumference value. Although
131 the value was statistically similar to those produced by other fertilizer treatments, it was
132 significantly higher than the control (Table 3). The highest values of both the leaf area and
133 number of branches of tomato were observed in the application of 50% NPK + 50% Rice
134 bran. Those values were not significantly different from other fertilizer treatments
135 investigated, but significantly higher than the control (Table 3). Application of 75% Rice
136 bran + 25% NPK produced the highest number of leaves, which was not significantly
137 different from 50% NPK + 50% Rice bran and 100% Rice bran, but significantly higher than
138 those produced from applications of both 100% NPK fertilizer and 75% NPK + 25% Rice
139 bran, while the control had the least (Table 3). Hence, it could be deduced that the higher the
140 level of NPK integration, the higher the possibility of leaf shedding. Also, as the level of
141 organic fertilizer application or integration increased, delayed leaf shedding increased, and
142 this may possibly promote indeterminate growth of tomato (Table 3). All these are in support
143 of the research reports of Babajide (2010), who related improved sesame growth (and even
144 prolonged leaf formation), to improved and continuous flow of soil nutrients from applied
145 fertilizers. Also, the results were in line with research findings of Akanbi (2002), who
146 reported improved growth of okra and maize, as induced by improved applications of both
147 organic and inorganic fertilizers.

148 **3.1.4 Fruit Yield and Fruit Yield Parameters of tomato (*Lycopersicon lycopersicum* L.** 149 **Mill) Under Combined Fertilizer Applications**

150 Sole application of fertilizers and their different integrations significantly influenced
151 fruit yield and fruit yield parameters of tomato (Table 4). Applications 50% NPK + 50% Rice
152 bran and 75% Rice bran + 25% NPK produced significantly higher and statistically similar
153 values of fruit diameter (5.4cm and 5.3cm respectively). Application of other fertilizer
154 treatments (75% NPK + 25% Rice bran, 100% NPK and 100% Rice bran) produced
155 significantly lesser fruit diameters than those of 50% NPK + 50% Rice bran and 75% Rice
156 bran + 25% NPK, but higher than the control (Table 4). Significantly earlier days to 50%
157 flowering were observed in plants which received application of 50% NPK + 50% Rice bran,
158 but the value was statistically similar to all other fertilizer treatments tested, but significantly
159 higher than the control. Hence, it could be deduced that fertilizer application irrespective of
160 the sources may possibly promote early flowering and fruiting, compared to the control. This
161 is in line with the research reports of Akanbi, (2002) and Babajide *et al.*, (2008). Application
162 of 75% Rice bran + 25% NPK produced the highest number of fruits (47.0), which was not
163 significantly different from other fertilizer treatments but significantly higher than 100% Rice
164 bran, while the control had the least value. Fruit weight value was significantly higher in 50%
165 NPK + 50% Rice bran, which was equally statistically similar to other fertilizers tested, while
166 the control had the least. Integration of 50% NPK with 50% Rice bran produced the highest
167 fruit yield (82.3 tons ha⁻¹), which was not significantly different from other fertilizers (except
168 100% Rice bran), while the control produced the least (Table 4). All these results
169 corroborated the research findings of Indu and Savithri, (2003), Chukwuaka and Omotayo
170 (2009), and Babajide and Salami, (2012) who reported enhanced crop yield as influenced by
171 improved soil nutrition.

172 **3.1.5 Biomass Production of Tomato (*Lycopersicon lycopersicum* L. Mill) as Influenced**
173 **by Combined Fertilizer Applications**

174 Fertilizer applications significantly improved biomass production (Table 5). The
175 fresh below ground biomass of tomato was significantly enhanced by application of 100%
176 NPK fertilizer. This value was not significantly different from those obtained from 75% NPK
177 + 25% Rice bran and 50% NPK + 50% Rice bran, but significantly higher than other fertilizer
178 treatments and the control. The dry below ground biomass production was significantly
179 higher with application of 100% NPK, which was statistically similar to those obtained from
180 50% NPK + 50% Rice bran and 25% NPK + 75% Rice bran applications, but significantly
181 higher than other fertilizer materials assayed, and the control (Table 5). Similarly, 100% NPK
182 fertilizer application produced the highest values of fresh and dry above ground biomass. The
183 value of fresh above ground biomass was not significantly different from 50% NPK + 50%
184 Rice bran and 25% NPK + 75% Rice bran, but higher than other fertilizer treatments and the
185 control. The value of dry tomato biomass obtained from NPK fertilizer application was not
186 significantly different from those obtained from 75% NPK + 25% Rice bran and 50% NPK +
187 50% Rice bran, but significantly higher than other fertilizers tested, while the control
188 produced the least (Table 5). These research results are in agreement with Akanbi *et al.*,
189 (2005), Akanni and Ojeniyi (2007) and Babajide, (2010), who reported enhanced crop yield
190 and biomass production, under tropical climate as influenced by application of different
191 fertilizer materials.

192 **3.1.6 Effects of Combined Fertilizer Applications on N, P and P uptakes of Tomato**
193 **(*Lycopersicon lycopersicum* L. Mill)**

194 Application of different fertilizers and their combinations significantly influenced
195 nutrient uptakes of tomato, compared to the control (Table 6). For the N, P and K uptakes
196 application of 25% NPK + 75% Rice bran generally induced significantly higher uptakes,
197 although the values were not significantly different from other fertilizers (soles and their
198 combinations) investigated, but the values were generally higher than the control (Table 6).
199 The results vividly supported the research findings of Babajide and Salami (2010) and
200 Babajide (2014) who reported improved nutrient uptakes via both sole fertilizer applications
201 and their combinations under varying agro-ecological zones and soil fertility conditions.

202

203 **4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

204 All fertilizer materials applied significantly enhanced tomato growth, yields and
205 nutrient uptakes, compared to the control. Locally produced rice bran is a potential fertilizer
206 material, which could be used for efficient arable crop production. Rice bran is a dependable
207 soil amendment, which could improve soil conditions and crop quality. Integration of rice
208 bran with chemical fertilizer may be more effective and efficient in inducing better crop
209 performance, than its sole application, particularly under low fertile soil conditions. Sole
210 application of 100% NPK and Rice bran significantly improved fruit yield by 831.5% and
211 597.1% respectively, while their combinations significantly enhanced tomato fruit yield
212 ranging from 819% to 1127%. Significantly delayed leaf shedding and prolonged leaf
213 production observed in tomato plants which received rice bran applications at 50% level and
214 above, is a good indicator of possible enhancement of prolonged flowering and fruiting, as
215 also manifested in significantly higher fruit yields. Therefore, since there is an increasing
216 awareness nowadays, on the environment friendly benefits of fertilizer production and usage,

217 application of either 75% or 100% NPK fertilizer should be totally discouraged. Hence, 75%
 218 Rice Bran + 25% NPK could be recommended or alternatively 50% Rice Bran + 50% NPK,
 219 for tomato production in the study area. This promotes continuous availability and
 220 maintenance of soil organic matter. Hence, improved soil quality and tomato production
 221 ensured. Also, alleviation of chemical fertilizer loads or inputs, as well as their residual
 222 effects established in soils, of the study area.

223 **Table 1: Results of the physico-chemical analysis of the soil sample used**

Soil Characteristics	Value
pH (H ₂ O)	6.10
Organic Carbon(gkg ⁻¹)	4.42
Total N (gkg ⁻¹)	0.19
Available P (mgkg ⁻¹)	3.57
Fe (mgk ⁻¹)	11.10
Cu (mgkg ⁻¹)	2.36
Zn (mgkg ⁻¹)	2.87
Exchangeable K (cmolk ⁻¹)	0.21
Exchangeable Na (cmolk ⁻¹)	0.22
Exchangeable Ca (cmolk ⁻¹)	19.52
Exchangeable Mg (cmolk ⁻¹)	3.11
Sand (%)	75.03
Silt (%)	14.15
Clay (%)	10.82
Textural class	Sandy loam

224

225 **Table 2: Nutrient compositions of fertilizer materials used**

NUTRIENT CONCENTRATIONS			
FERTILIZER	N	P	K
MATERIALS			

NPK FERTILIZER	15.0 %	15.0 %	15.0 %
RICE BRAN	1.0 %	1.2 %	1.7 %

226

227 **Table 3: Effect of combining organic and inorganic Fertilizer materials on growth**
 228 **parameters of tomato (*Lycopersicon lycopersicum*)**

229

Treatments	Plant height (cm)	Stem Circumference (cm)	Leaf Area (cm ²)	Number of Leaves	Number of Branches
Control	42.1c	0.7c	16.2b	101.0c	4.0b
100% NPK	91.3a	2.9a	34.6a	186.3b	19.2a
75% NPK + 25 % Rice Bran	90.1a	2.8a	33.2a	201.4b	18.4a
50 % NPK + 50 % Rice Bran	98.2a	2.9a	36.6a	236.5a	20.2a
25 % NPK + 75 % Rice Bran	96.6a	3.3a	35.2a	242.3a	18.2a
100% Rice Bran	82.5b	2.5ab	31.2a	232.5a	16.3a

230 Means followed by the same letters are not significantly different at p=0.05, using DMRT.

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234 **Table 4: Influence of combined application of organic and inorganic fertilizer materials**
 235 **on Fruit Attributes and Fruit yield of tomato (*Lycopersicon lycopersicum*)**

236

Treatments	Days to 50% flowering	Fruit Diameter (cm)	Cumulative Number of Fruits	Cumulative Fruit Weight (gplant ⁻¹)	Fruit Yield (tons ha ⁻¹)
Control	92.2b	1.6c	15.0c	13.1b	7.3c
100% NPK	68.1a	4.0b	38.0ab	43.1a	60.7a
75% NPK + 25 % Rice Bran	67.6a	4.2b	39.0ab	41.4a	59.8a
50 % NPK + 50 % Rice Bran	60.4a	5.4a	46.0a	48.3a	82.3a
25 % NPK + 75 % Rice Bran	60.6a	5.3a	47.0a	45.1a	78.5a
100% Rice Bran	71.2a	3.8b	30.0b	39.2a	43.6b

237 Means followed by the same letters are not significantly different at p=0.05, using DMRT.

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242 **Table 5: Effect of organic and inorganic fertilizer combinations on biomass yield of**
 243 **tomato (*Lycopersicon lycopersicum*)**
 244

Treatments	Above- ground Biomass Fresh Weight (gplant ⁻¹)	Above-ground Biomass Dry Weight (gplant ⁻¹)	Below-ground Biomass Fresh Weight (gplant ⁻¹)	Below-ground Biomass Dry Weight (gplant ⁻¹)
Control	116.1c	28.7d	12.8c	5.1cd
100% NPK	240.1a	78.3a	30.0a	9.8a
75% NPK + 25 % Rice Bran	196.1b	67.2ab	25.0a	6.4bc
50 % NPK + 50 % Rice Bran	204.6ab	68.1ab	24.7a	7.1ab
25 % NPK + 75 % Rice Bran	200.8ab	59.5bc	22.1bc	8.6ab
100% Rice Bran	162.2b	49.4c	15.6bc	6.0bc

245 Means followed by the same letters are not significantly different at p=0.05, using DMRT.

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247

248

249 **Table 6: Nutrient uptakes of tomato (*Lycopersicon lycopersicum*) as influenced by organic and**
 250 **inorganic fertilizer combinations**
 251

TREATMENTS	NUTRIENT UPTAKES (gkg ⁻¹)		
	N	P	K
Control	12.4c	1.1c	1.1d
100% NPK	46.7b	9.2b	14.6c
75% NPK + 25 % Rice Bran	57.3ab	21.5a	18.6b
50 % NPK + 50 % Rice Bran	65.4a	21.2a	20.6ab
25 % NPK + 75 % Rice Bran	63.9a	24.1a	22.7a
100% Rice Bran	61.7a	22.3a	22.6a

252 Means followed by the same letters are not significantly diffe

253

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