

Response to Editor's Comment:

Query 1. The literature about nutrient levels (sufficiency and deficiency levels) in maize and found out that the values of N and Zn reported here for maize show that the plants in most cases suffered by N (mainly) and Zn deficiency. I think the authors should comment on that and justify the results reported here, even after the addition of nutrients.

Response: Soils of Pakistan are calcareous and inherently deficient in plant nutrients especially N, P and Zn. Further, summers are very hot with arid / semi-arid climatic conditions and little rainfall resulting in very low organic matter content (around 0.50 %). Applied N fertilizer losses are, therefore, very high due to NH_3 volatilization etc. Regarding Zn deficiency, applied Zn fertilizers are not fully bioavailable due to its fixation under calcareous and alkaline condition. Under above-mentioned soil / climatic conditions of Pakistan, the concentration of these nutrients in plants is just sufficient for having economical crop yield.

Query 2. LSD and CV values are not needed, so the tables could be deleted.

Response: Tables of LSD and CV values have been removed.

Query 3. Enzyme units should be clearly stated in the text (what is a Unit of SOD?).

Response: Enzyme units have been corrected and highlighted in Table 5 and 6.

Author's feedback: Point-wise response to each query has been given above.