AgroScience Today

Popular Article

e-ISSN: 2583-0147

Volume 6 Issue 2
Page: 1111 - 1116

Biochemical Edge - Transforming Agribusiness for A Greener and Profitable Future

Tulika Sarkar

Department of Agricultural Biochemistry, Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya, Mohanpur, Nadia, West Bengal, India.

Corresponding author's e-mail: *tulikaedu98@gmail.com*

Published on: April 30, 2025

ABSTRACT

Growing worldwide food demand calls for sustainable agricultural advances. This article examines how microbial technology and biochemical remedies are revolutionizing current agriculture. Biostimulants, biopesticides, and biofertilizers improve soil fertility, insect control, and stress tolerance while lowering reliance on artificial agrochemicals. Through biochemical processes like osmolyte buildup, antioxidant defense, and RNA interference, genetically modified (GM) crops further promote resistance and productivity. Better yields, input efficiency, and environmental sustainability are demonstrated by Syngenta, Bayer, IFFCO, and Cargill's practical applications. However, widespread adoption is hampered by financial considerations, legal limitations, and low awareness. Along with circular bioeconomy models, future directions include CRISPR gene editing, microbial consortia, and AI-powered precision farming. Together, these developments present a possible route to agribusiness that is profitable, climate-resilient, and sustainable.

INTRODUCTION

As the demand for food rises with global population growth, agribusiness must adopt creative and sustainable solutions as the world's population grows and increasing food demand. The impact of advanced biotechnologies, biochemical solution and microbiological applications on modern agriculture is examined in this article. GM crops, improvements in the study of the microbiome, and microbial-based treatments are reducing reliance on artificial agrochemicals while transforming food safety, insect control, and soil fertility. Bio-based agrochemicals and renewable bioenergy are further strengthened by incorporating biowaste into a circular economy. Agribusiness companies are acknowledging the need for sustainable management techniques in response to mounting environmental and social constraints. In order to promote sustainability, increase profitability, and guarantee a resilient agricultural future, this issue emphasizes the revolutionary role that biochemical innovations play.

How can sustainable high yields be maintained while reducing dependency on agrochemicals through microbial applications and biochemical solutions?

1. BIOFERTILIZER

Live microorganisms included in biofertilizers improve soil fertility by making nutrients more readily available. Mycorrhizal fungi enhance the absorption of water and nutrients, whereas cyanobacteria such as Nostoc and Anabaena fix nitrogen from the atmosphere. By increasing crop yields, their use lessens the need for artificial fertilizers.

Example- Azospirillum and Rhizobium, which are nitrogen-fixing bacteria, are two examples of microbes that naturally transform atmospheric nitrogen into forms that plants may use to improve soil fertility.

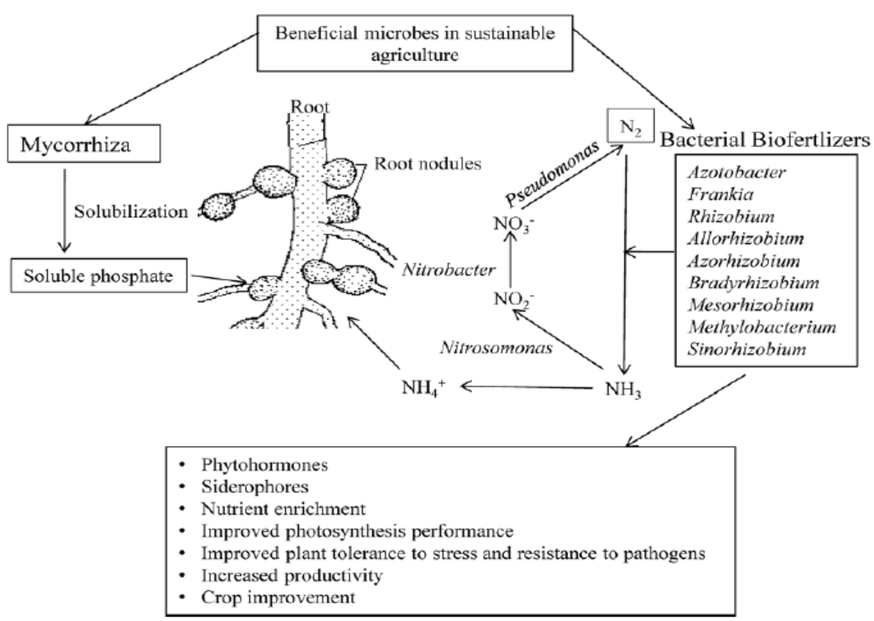

Figure 1. Potential use of soil microbes (Bhardwaj et al., 2014)

2. BIOSTIMULANT

Biostimulants are chemicals and microbes that improve crop quality, stress tolerance, and nutrient uptake. They consist of helpful bacteria that increase plant resilience, humic acids, and seaweed extracts. Biostimulants promote sustainable crop production by lessening the effects of salinity and drought. They promote climate-smart agriculture by improving soil health and production. Theoretically, combining microbial inoculants with humic or seaweed extracts could increase crop yield in ways that are more repeatable (Calvo et al., 2014).

Example- By increasing grain yield and root development, seaweed extracts lessen the need for nitrogen fertilizers in the production of wheat and rice.

3. BIOPESTICIDE

Biopesticides are an environmentally beneficial substitute for artificial insecticides because they are made from natural sources. Without endangering the ecosystem or beneficial organisms, they target particular pests. For instance, ***Bacillus thuringiensis*** regulates insect larvae in maize and cotton.

What Biochemical Developments in GM Crop Biochemistry are benefited Agribusiness?

1. DROUGHT AND SALINITY TOLERANCE

Normal plant metabolism is disrupted by drought and salinity stress, which results in decreased growth and yield loss. Genetically modified crops are intended to control stress-response circuits biochemically. Between 1997 and 2010, the economic benefits of Bt cotton to farmers were $10.9 billion, with an additional $1.8 billion in 2010 alone. 3.9 million hectares of bt cotton were planted in China in 2011, continuing to help about 7 million small and resource-poor farmers (James, 2015)

A. Osmolyte Accumulation: Increased production of proline, trehalose, and glycine betaine in GM crops shields cells against dehydration.

B. Water-Use Efficiency: Genes regulating root architecture and stomatal closure ensure better water retention and uptake.

C. Antioxidant Defence: GM crops decrease oxidative stress by increasing the activity of peroxidase (POD), catalase (CAT), and superoxide dismutase (SOD).

2. NUTRITIONAL ENHANCEMENT

Biochemical modifications enhance the nutritional value and quality of food.

A. Biofortification: β-carotene, found in crops like Golden Rice, helps fight vitamin A deficiency.

B. Enhancement of Lipid and Protein Profiles: The altered oil content of GM soybeans promotes heart health.

3. PEST AND DISEASE RESISTANCE

Diseases and insect infestations drastically lower crop yields. GM crops increase resistance by using biochemical techniques.

A. Bt Toxins: Insecticidal proteins produced by crops with Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) genes precisely target pests such as maize borers and cotton bollworm.

B. RNA Interference (RNAi): This method protects crops like genetically modified papaya against the Papaya Ringspot Virus (PRSV) by silencing vital pest or viral genes.

Real-World Applications

1. Syngenta's Biostimulant Technology: Under drought stress, seaweed-based biostimulants like EPIVIOTM and Quantis, which promote root growth and nutrient absorption, have been shown to increase grain yield by 15% while lowering reliance on artificial fertilizers.

2. Bayer's BioAg: Using strains such as Azospirillum and Rhizobium, nitrogen-fixing biofertilizers are being developed organically. The VOTiVO biofertilizer from Bayer has been shown to increase maize and soybean yields by up to 10%.

3. Cargill's Sustainable Farming: Cargill's RegenConnect™ program offers carbon farming incentives and microbial-based soil health solutions to farmers. By increasing soil organic matter by 15%, the initiative has helped reduce carbon emissions and promote sustainable agribusiness.

4. IFFCO's Nano Urea: Nano Urea (Nano scale Nitrogen particles) is a liquid fertilizer created by Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Ltd (IFFCO) to take the place of conventional urea applications. It has demonstrated

5. Rasi Seeds – Bt Cotton Success: By transferring the Bt gene into cotton, bollworm infections are naturally occurring without the need for heavy pesticides. Due to higher yields and lower input costs, it has resulted in a 50% decrease in the usage of pesticides and a 30–40% rise in farmer income in India.

THE CHALLENGES

The commercialization of microbial and GM treatments is impeded by regulatory limitations and delayed approvals. Environmental variables affect field performance, although synthetic agrochemicals continue to be used because they are more affordable. Large-scale implementation is impacted by adoption constraints such as farmer awareness and microbiological product storage restrictions. Resolving these issues is essential to bio-based agriculture's broad success.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The development of CRISPR gene editing, microbial consortia, and AI-powered precision farming will improve crop resilience, stress tolerance, and nutrient uptake. Growing circular bioeconomy projects will encourage the production of bioenergy and biofertilizers from agricultural waste. In order to maximize output while reducing environmental effect, sustainable agribusiness will depend on incorporating these advancements.

CONCLUSION

Agribusiness is being revolutionized by advances in biochemistry and microbial applications, which improve crop resilience, improve soil health, and lessen reliance on chemicals. Plant growth and immunity are greatly enhanced by sophisticated biochemical pathways, including microbial metabolites, stress-responsive enzymes, and synthetic osmolytes. Precision farming combined with biochemistry-driven solutions can guarantee a sustainable, high-yield, and sustainable agricultural future, notwithstanding acceptance and regulatory obstacles.

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