



INTERACTIVE EFFECT OF THIAMIN (VITAMIN B₁) AND COPPER ON GROWTH, TOTAL PIGMENTS, PHOTOSYNTHESIS AND SOME RELATED METABOLIC ACTIVITIES OF *CHLORELLA VULGARIS* BEIJER CULTURES

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ABSTRACT :

This study followed the interactive effect of thiamin (vitamin B₁) and CuSO₄ on growth criteria, total pigments, photosynthesis, respiration, carbohydrates, proteins and free amino acids of *Chlorella vulgaris* Beiger cultured for 7 days.

When *Chlorella vulgaris* cultures was treatment with only CuSO₄, the values of growth parameters, total carbohydrate contents, total proteins and free amino acids were significantly raised up to the treatment level of 4 μM of CuSO₄. Under relatively higher levels (8 and 10 μM) of CuSO₄, the values of these parameters were significantly lowered. On the other side, respiration rate, the contents of soluble carbohydrates and soluble proteins were significantly raised with the rising of CuSO₄ concentrations up to the level of 10 μM CuSO₄.

On the other hand, the interactive effect of CuSO₄ and thiamin (200 ppm) on growth parameters, total pigments, photosynthetic rate, and some related metabolic activities of *Chlorella* exerted a significant increase under the various levels (2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 μM) of CuSO₄. On the contrary, this interactive effect of 200 ppm thiamin and CuSO₄ significantly reduced the respiration rate of *Chlorella*, subjected to various levels (2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 μM) of CuSO₄.

INTRODUCTION:

Excess copper in soil leads to toxic effects on plant metabolism such as growth inhibition, oxidative stress and membrane damage, alteration of enzyme activity, inhibition of photosynthesis etc. (Lidon *et al.*, 1993, Ciscato *et al.*, 1997). On the other side, copper is an essential micronutrient, being a component of

enzymes involved in several important metabolic and physiological processes. The function of copper as a plant nutrient is based mostly on the participation of enzymatically bound copper in redox reactions (Marschner, 1998). Besides other functions, copper is also involved in the photosynthetic electron transport, being a component of plastocyanine, and plays an important role in the regulation of

PSII-mediated electron transport (Baròn *et al.*, 1995). Commonly observed toxic effect on photosynthetic apparatus include decrease of photochemical activities, damage to the structure and composition of the thylakoid membrane and alterations at the pigment level (Ouzounidou, 1996 and Ciscato *et al.*, 1997). On the other hand, excess copper seems to have an inhibitory effect on the activity of both photosystems (Droppa and Horwath, 1990). Similarly, the results of several studies on the photosynthetic apparatus in excess Cu-treated plants reported that Cu have a complex toxic action at the level of primary reactions of photosynthesis. In this context, Lidon *et al.*, (1993) found that the decrease of photochemical activities (mainly by PSII) was shown to be accompanied by an alternation of the inner structure and composition of the thylakoid membrane. However other works, reported that the decrease in those pigment is accompanied by an inhibiting aminolevulinic dehydratase and / or stimulates chlorophyll per oxidation by inducing production of hydroxyl radicals (Martinon *et al.*, 1982 and Fernando and Henriques 1991). On the contrary, Lidon and Henriques (1991) found that a small increase in chlorophylls and carotenoids in *Spinacea oleracea* when exposed to higher levels of Cu.

In this respect, some works were conducted to try to alleviate the inhibitory effects of some heavy metals and salinity stress by using some exogenously added (Zidan, 1991, Arrigoni *et al.*, 1992; Desouky, 1995 and Desouky, 2001). The counteractive effects of thiamin might linked with the physiological role of this vitamin. Such vitamins can be used as coenzyme performed generally the major physiological functions in the plant cells (Kefeli, 1981). Mohamed *et al.*, (1988) reported that thiamin increased the protein contents of *Chlorella vulgaris*, and the highest protein contents were produced in the

presence of the concentration of 100 ppm thiamin. Similarly, Makled (1995) working with two green algae; namely *Chlorella vulgaris* and *Akistrodesmus falcatus*, reported that the addition of thiamin, nicotinic acid or pyridoxine exerted a considerable increase in growth rate, the synthesis of total pigments, photosynthetic oxygen evolution, carbohydrate contents and protein contents. On the other side, some other investigators found that the growth criteria, total pigments, photosynthetic oxygen evolution, carbohydrate contents and protein contents and free amino acids were markedly raised, when exposed to salinity stress and treatment with any of the vitamins applied (200 ppm of ascorbic acid, thiamin and pyridoxine) (Zidan ,1991, Arrigoni *et al.*, 1992 and Desouky, 1995). Similarly, Desouky, (2001) found that the growth parameters (cell number and dry weight) total pigments of *Chlorella vulgaris* cultures were significantly stimulated, when the algal cultures were subjected to various concentrations (20, 40, 60 80 and 100 ppm) of ZnCl₂ and treated with any of the vitamins applied (200 ppm of thiamin, pyridoxine and riboflavin).

As far as the works available, rarely studies were intentionally conducted using thiamin aiming to alleviate the toxic effects of higher concentrations of copper on the algae cells. Therefore, this work was conducted to try to alleviate the inhibitory effects of excess copper after addition of thiamin.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Tested alga:

Chlorella vulgaris Beijer was collected from the River Nile and used as a test organism. Beijerinck's nutritive culture the test algal was

used as a medium for enrichment and growth of the tested algal (Stein, 1966).

Treatments:

Chlorella vulgaris Beijer cultures were subjected to various concentrations (2,4,6,8 and 10 μM) of CuSO_4 without and with 200 ppm of thiamin for 7 days. The control cultures (00) Cu^{2+} and (00) thiamin was left without any treatments.

Analytical methods:

1-Determination of cell number: Haemocytometer, (0.1mm depth) having improved Naubuer ruling was used. One drop of the algal suspension was pipetted on the slide, covered and left two minutes for algal setting. The mean counts of four replicates were taken into consideration and the results were measured as cells ml^{-1} algal suspension.

2-Determination of dry weight: A definite volume (50-ml) of algal suspension was filtered through weighed glass fiber filter. The cells after being precipitated on the filter were washed twice with distilled water and dried over night in an oven at 105 °C. The data were measured as $\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ algal suspension.

3-Determination of photosynthetic pigments: The pigment fractions chlorophyll a, chlorophyll b and carotenoids were calculated by using the equations mentioned by Metzner *et al.*, (1965). The results were expressed as ($\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ algal suspension).

4-Determination of oxygen evolution and oxygen uptake: Oxygen evolution (photosynthetic rate) and oxygen uptakes (dark respiration) were measured by using oxygen electrode (ORION Model 97-08) according to the method adopted by Lessler *et al.*, (1956). The results were measured as $\mu\text{ mole O}_2 \text{ ml}^{-1}$ algal suspension hr^{-1} .

5-Determination of carbohydrates: By using the anthrone-sulphoric acid reagent according to the method Badour (1959). The data were measured as $\mu\text{g mg}^{-1}$ dry weight.

6-Determination of proteins: By using folin reagent according to the method adopted by Lowry *et al.*,(1951). The data were expressed as $\mu\text{g mg}^{-1}$ dry weight.

7-Determination of free amino acids: By using the method of Moore and Stein (1948). The results were measured as $\mu\text{g mg}^{-1}$ dry weight.

8-Statistical Analysis: Four replicates were used in this study and the data were statistically analyzed to calculate the Least Significant Difference (L.S.D) according to Snedecor and Cochran (1972).

RESULTS:

The results present in this study elucidated the important role of thiamin on counteraction the toxic effects of CuSO_4 on growth, photosynthetic pigments, photosynthetic oxygen evolution and some related metabolic activities of *Chlorella vulgaris* after the culture being treated for 7 day.

Treating *Chlorella vulgaris* cultures with only CuSO_4 , the growth criteria (cell number and dry weight), total pigments, photosynthetic oxygen evolution rate, total carbohydrate contents, total protein contents and free amino acid were significantly elevated up to the level of $4\mu\text{M}$ CuSO_4 . Under relatively higher concentrations (6, 8 and 10 μM) of CuSO_4 , the values of these parameters were significantly decreased (Tables 1-a, 2-a, 3-a & 4 -a). On the other side, respiration rate, the contents of soluble carbohydrates and soluble protein contents were significantly raised with rising of treatment levels of CuSO_4 . The maximum value of respiration was obtained at the level of 10 μM CuSO_4 used only (Table 2-a). The maximum values of soluble carbohydrates and soluble

proteins were recorded at the level of 6 μM CuSO_4 as compared with those of the control (Tables 3-a. and 4-a).

On the other hand, the interactive effect of 200 ppm thiamin and CuSO_4 on cell number, dry weight, photosynthetic pigments, photosynthetic oxygen evolution, respiration, carbohydrate contents, protein contents and free amino acids of *Chlorella vulgaris* cultured for 7 days. A significant increased in the values of cell number, dry weight, photosynthetic pigments, photosynthetic oxygen evolution, the contents of total carbohydrate, total protein contents and free amino acids of *Chlorella*

vulgaris cultured were obtained under the various treatment levels of CuSO_4 and 200 ppm of thiamin, when compared with those of the control (Tables 1-b and 2-b, 3-b & 4-b). On the other side, the respiration rate of *Chlorella* was significantly decreased, under the various concentrations of CuSO_4 and treatment with 200 ppm thiamin, when compared with that of the control (Table 2-b). As it can seen from the above results the toxic of effect CuSO_4 on plant metabolism such as growth, photosynthetic pigments photosynthetic rate and some related metabolic activities was partially alleviated on *Chlorells vulgaris* cells.

Table (1-a): Effects of copper sulfate on cell number (cell ml^{-1} algal suspension) , dry weight ($\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ algal suspension) and total pigments ($\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ algal suspension) of *Chlorella vulgaris* Beiger cultured for 7 days.

Treatment CuSO_4 (μM) : Thiamin (ppm)	Cell number	% control	Dry weight	% control	Chloro. a	Chloro. b	Carotenoids	Total Pigments	% control
00 : 00	500 x10 ⁴	100.00	485	100.00	3.20	1.75	2.16	7.11	100.00
2 : 00	520x10 ^{4**}	104.00	52.0**	107.21	3.50*	2.10**	3.18**	8.78**	123.48
4 : 00	540x10 ^{4**}	105.00	580**	119.58	3.80**	2.70**	4.20**	10.70**	150.49
6 : 00	480x10 ^{4**}	96.00	430**	88.65	2.50**	1.23**	2.01**	5.76**	80.73
8 : 00	420x10 ^{4**}	84	400**	82.47	2.12**	1.08**	1.50**	4.70**	66.10
10 : 00	400x10 ^{4**}	80	380**	78.35	1.80**	0.95**	1.21**	3.96**	55.69
*L .S.D at 5%	6.205		12.400		0.201	0.080	0.046	0.490	
**L .S. D at 1%	12.250		25.300		0.401	0.016	0.088	0.690	

Table (1-b): The interactive effect of copper sulfate and 200 ppm of thiamin on cell number (cell ml^{-1} algal suspension), dry weight ($\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ algal suspension) and total pigments ($\mu\text{g ml}^{-1}$ algal suspension) of *Chlorella vulgaris* Beiger cultured for 7days.

Treatment CuSO_4 (μM) : Thiamin (ppm)	Cell number	% control	Dry weight	% control	Chloro. a	Chloro. b	Carotenoids	Total Pigments	% control
00: 00	500 x10 ⁴	100.00	485	100.00	3.20	1.75	2.16	7.11	100
00 : 200	540 x10 ^{4**}	108.00	515**	106.18	3.82*	2.50	2.18**	8.50*	119.54
2 : 200	580x10 ^{4**}	116.00	565**	116.49	4.20**	2.68	3.55**	10.43**	146.69
4 : 200	650x10 ^{4**}	130.00	640**	131.95	5.53**	3.10	3.90**	12.53**	176.23
6 : 200	550x10 ^{4**}	110.00	520**	107.21	3.50**	2.44	3.12**	9.06**	127.42
8 : 200	530x10 ^{4**}	106.00	505**	104.12	3.25*	2.33	3.95**	8.53*	199.97
10 : 200	510x10 ⁴	102.00	500*	103.09	3.01**	2.01	2.22	7.24*	101.82
*L .S.D at 5%	10.212		9.22		0.045	0.012	0.995	1.220	
**L .S. D at 1%	20.236		18.250		0.095	0.030	1.520	2.001	

Table (2-a): Effects of copper sulfate on photosynthesis (Oxygen evolution) and respiration (Oxygen uptake) (μ mole O_2 ml^{-1} algal suspension hr^{-1}) of *Chlorella vulgaris* Beiger cultured for 7days.

Treatment $CuSO_4$ (μM) : Thiamin (ppm)	Oxygen evolution	% Control	Oxygen uptake	% Control
00 : 00	1.250	100.00	0.858	100.00
2 : 00	1.385**	110.80	0.636**	74.12
4 : 00	2.120**	169.60	0.838**	97.73
6 : 00	1.025**	82.60	1.230**	143.34
8 : 00	0.925**	74.00	1.305**	152.09
10 : 00	0.857**	68.56	1.425**	166.08
*L .S.D at 5%	0.002		0.001	
**L .S. D at 1%	0.004		0.003	

Table (2-b):The interactive effects of copper and 200 ppm of thiamin on photosynthesis and respiration (μ mole O_2 ml^{-1} algal suspension hr^{-1}) of *Chlorella vulgaris* Beiger cultured for 7days.

Treatment $CuSO_4$ (μM) : Thiamin (ppm)	Oxygen evolution	% Control	Oxygen uptake	% Control
00 : 00	1.250	100.00	0.858	100.00
00 : 200	1.420**	113.60	0.555	94.87
2 : 200	1.560**	124.80	0.540**	92.30
4 : 200	2.780**	222.40	0.490**	57.10
6 : 200	1.520**	121.60	0.554**	64.56
8 : 200	0.450**	116.00	0.570**	66.43
10 : 200	0.310**	104.80	0.600**	76.92
*L .S.D at 5%	0.010		0.001	
**L .S. D at 1%	0.040		0.004	

Table (3-a): Effect of copper sulfate on soluble, Insoluble and total carbohydrates (μg mg^{-1} dry weight) algal suspension) of *Chlorella vulgaris* Beiger cultured for 7days.

Treatment $CuSO_4$ (μM): Thiamin (ppm)	Soluble Carbohydrates	% Control	Insoluble Carbohydrates	% Control	Total Carbohydrates	% Control
00 : 00	40.20	100.00	168.12	100.00	208.32	100.00
2 : 00	53.22**	132.38	180.72	107.99	233.97**	112.29
4 : 00	60.44**	150.34	218.55	129.99	278.99**	133.92
6 : 00	70.50**	175.37	160.80	95.64	231.30**	11.03
8 : 00	39.10	97.26	150.70	89.63	153.53**	73.70
10 : 00	30.20**	75.12	120.83	71.87	151.03	72.49
*L .S.D at 5%	4.180		6.174		7.336	
**L .S. D at 1%	6.330		9.350		11.110	

Table (3-b): The interactive effects of copper and 200 ppm of thiamin on soluble, Insoluble and total carbohydrates (μg mg^{-1} dry weight) of *Chlorella vulgaris* Beiger cultured for 7days.

Treatment $CuSO_4$ (μM): Thiamin (ppm)	Soluble Carbohydrates	% Control	Insoluble Carbohydrates	% Control	Total Carbohydrates	% Control
00 : 00	40.20	100.00	168.12	100.00	208.32	100.00
00 : 200	44.60**	110.94	177.60**	105.63	222.63**	106.66
2 : 200	49.60**	123.38	200.90**	119.49	250.50**	120.24
4 : 200	50.30**	125.12	250.40**	148.41	300.70**	144.34
6 : 200	52.60**	130.84	220.30**	131.03	272.90**	131.00
8 : 200	45.30**	122.68	210.40**	125.14	255.70**	112.74
10 : 200	42.20*	104.97	190.60**	113.37	232.80**	111.75
*L .S.D at 5%	1.800		4.122		8.787	
**L .S. D at 1%	3.330		6.150		13.306	

Table (4-a): Effects of copper sulfate on soluble, Insoluble, total proteins and free amino acids ($\mu\text{g mg}^{-1}$ dry weight) of *Chlorella vulgaris* Beiger cultured for 7days.

Treatment CuSO ₄ (μM) : Thiamin (ppm)	Soluble Proteins	% Control	Insoluble Proteins	% Control	Total Proteins	% Control	Free Amino acids	% Control
00 : 00	38.15	100.00	240.60	100.00	278.75	100.00	18.02	100.00
2 : 00	52.92**	138.71	266.52**	110.77	319.44**	114.59	22.12**	122.75
4 : 00	62.17**	162.96	305.21**	126.85	367.38**	131.79	28.12**	156.04
6 : 00	77.98**	204.40	250.72**	104.20	328.70**	117.91	17.81**	98.83
8 : 00	33.82**	88.65	180.90**	75.18	214.72**	77.02	16.40**	91.00
10 : 00	30.90**	80.99	166.84**	69.34	197.74**	70.93	12.30**	68.25
*L .S.D at 5%	2.280		5.490		10.552		0.090	
**L .S. D at 1%	5.995		8.320		20.233		0.180	

Table (4 -b): The interactive effect of copper sulfate and 200 ppm of thiamin on soluble , Insoluble , total proteins and free amino acids ($\mu\text{g mg}^{-1}$ dry weight) of *Chlorella vulgaris* Beiger cultured for 7 days.

Treatment CuSO ₄ (μM) : Thiamin (ppm)	Soluble Proteins	% Control	Insoluble Proteins	% Control	Total Proteins	% Control	Free Amino acids	% Control
00 : 00	38.15	100.00	240.60	100.00	278.75	100.00	18.02	100.00
00 : 200	45.30	118.74	260.99	108.47	306.290	109.87	22.80	126.52
2 : 200	55.20	144.69	34.90	143.34	400.10	143.53	28.16	156.27
4 : 200	67.23	176.22	390.90	162.46	458.13	164.35	44.30	246.83
6 : 200	60.40	158.32	330.50	137.36	390.90	140.23	40.60	225.30
8 : 200	52.30	137.09	310.44	129.02	362.74	130.13	35.40	196.44
10 : 200	44.19	115.83	299.30	124.39	343.49	123.22	25.60	142.06
*L .S.D at 5%	3.750		6.250		12.258		1.010	
**L .S. D at 1%	5.522		12.260		4.568		3.020	

DISCUSSION:

This study elucidated the interactive effects of copper and thiamin on growth, photosynthetic pigments, photosynthesis and some related metabolic activities of *Chlorella vulgaris* cultured for 7 days. These parameters were significantly elevated up to the level of only 4 μM of CuSO₄. Under relatively higher levels of CuSO₄, the values of these parameters were significantly lowered. On the other side, the respiration rate, soluble carbohydrates and soluble proteins were raised whatever the levels of CuSO₄. In accordance with this, Sandmann and Böger (1980) found that the influence of copper ions (Cu²⁺) on *Scenedesmus* exhibits many inhibiting effects according to copper concentration in the medium. The same authors reported that the growth parameters and chlorophyll contents of *Scenedesmus* cells were decreased when treated with higher concentrations of Cu. This is also in accordance with the results for higher plants, algae and cyanobacteria (Shioi *et al.*, 1978 a,b; Sandmann and Böger, 1980 and Ouzonidou *et al.*, 1996).

In accordance with this, some other investigators found that the excess copper may result in membrane damage, suppression of enzyme activity, cell death and inhibition of both the light reaction of photosynthesis and root growth (Kennedy and Gonsalves, 1987 and Walker and Web, 1981; Lanaras *et al.*, 1993 and Doncheva *et al.*, 1996). In this context, several workers reported that photosynthesis is greatly affected by copper availability (Fernando and Henriques 1991). However, there have been some conflicting results about the effects of copper toxicity on the photosynthetic apparatus. In accordance with this, that the decrease in the pigment levels the results this could be due to inhibition aminolevulinic dehydratase and/or stimulating chlorophyll peroxidation by inducing radicals (Martinon *et al.*, 1981, Fernando and Henriques 1991 and Nathalie *et al.* 2001). On the contrary, Baszynski, *et al.*, (1982), reported a small increase in chlorophylls and carotenoids in *Spinaces oleracea* when exposed to high concentrations treatment of copper.

Exogenously added 200 ppm thiamin (vitamins B₁) alleviate the inhibitory effects of some heavy metals and salinity stress (Zidan, 1991; Arrigoni *et al.*, 1992 ; Desouky, 1995 and Desouky, 2001). Such vitamins can be used as coenzyme performed generally the major physiological functions in the plant cells (Kefeli, 1981). In this context, Mohamed *et al.*, (1988) reported that thiamin increased the protein contents of *Chlorella vulgaris*, and the highest protein content was produced in the presence of the concentration of 100 ppm thiamin. Similarly, Makled (1995) working with two green algae; namely *Chlorella vulgaris* and *Akistrodesmus falcatus*, reported that the addition of thiamin, nicotinic acid or pyridoxine exerted a considerable increase in growth rate, the synthesis of total pigments, photosynthetic oxygen evolution, carbohydrate contents and protein contents, whatever the concentration of thiamin applied. On the other side, some other investigators working with higher plants and algae found that growth criteria, total pigments, photosynthetic oxygen evolution, carbohydrate contents and protein contents and free amino acids were markedly raised, when exposed to various salinity levels and treated with any of the vitamins applied (200 ppm of ascorbic acid, thiamin and pyridoxine) (Zidan ,1991; Arrigoni *et al.*, 1992 and Desouky, 1995). Similarly, Desouky, (2001) found that the growth parameters (cell number and dry weight) total pigments of *Chlorella vulgaris* cultures were significantly stimulated, when the algal cultured were subjected to various concentrations (20, 40, 60 80 and 100 ppm) of ZnCl₂ and treated with any of the vitamins applied (200 ppm of thiamin, pyridoxine and riboflavin). Finally, the excess of copper concentration is considered as a toxic effect on growth and some related metabolic activities of *Chlorella vulgaris* cells. On the other side, the exogenous added

thiamin has partially alleviated the toxic effect of higher concentrations of CuSO₄ on *Chlorella vulgaris* cultures.

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التأثيرات المتداخلة لكل من عنصر النحاس والثيامين (فيتامين ب₁) على النمو
والأصباغ الكلية والبناء الضوئي والتنفس وبعض الأنشطة الأيضية
لمزارع طحلب " كلوريللا فولجارييس " بيجر
سيد عباس دسوقي عبد الحليم

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يهدف هذا البحث إلي إظهار التأثيرات المتداخلة لكل من عنصر النحاس والثيامين (٢٠٠ جزء /
المليون) في إيقاف التأثير العكسي الضار والسام الناتج من معالجة مزارع طحلب " كلوريللا فولجارييس
بيجر" بتركيزات مختلفة (٢، ٤، ٦، ٨، ١٠ ميكرو مول) من كبريتات النحاس علي محددات النمو
والأصباغ الكلية ومعدل البناء الضوئي والتنفس والمواد الكربوهيدراتية الكلية والبروتينيات الكلية والأحماض
الأمينية.

وقد أظهرت النتائج ما يأتي :

- ١- زيادة محددات النمو(عدد الخلايا والوزن الجاف) والأصباغ الكلية ومعدل البناء الضوئي (الأوكسجين
المتصاعد) والمواد الكربوهيدراتية الكلية والبروتينيات الكلية والأحماض الأمينية زيادة معنوية كبيرة تفوق
مثيلاتها في المزرعة الضابطة عند المستويات المنخفضة حتي مستوى ٤ ميكرو مول من كبريتات
النحاس. أما عند المستويات العالية من كبريتات النحاس حتى مستوى ١٠ ميكرو مول فإنها تؤدي
إلي تثبيط تلك العوامل. كما يلاحظ زيادة معدلات كل معدل التنفس والمواد الكربوهيدراتية الذائبة والمواد
البروتينية الذائبة عند المستويات العالية من كبريتات النحاس .
- ٢- أما عند معالجة مزارع طحلب "كلوريللا فولجارييس" بيجر المجهدة بتركيزات مختلفة من كبريتات
النحاس بواسطة تركيز ٢٠٠ جزء/مليون من الثيامين فإنه يلاحظ أيضاً زيادة محددات النمو(عدد الخلايا
والوزن الجاف) والأصباغ الكلية ومعدل البناء الضوئي (الأوكسجين المتصاعد) والبروتينيات الكلية،
الأحماض الأمينية زيادة معنوية كبيرة تفوق مثيلاتها في المزرعة الضابطة.