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<https://doi.org/10.5109/24285>

出版情報：九州大学大学院農学研究院紀要. 43 (3/4), pp.395-401, 1999-02. Kyushu University
バージョン：
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Analyses of Accumulation of Silica in the Growth of Two Tropical Forages using Simple Equations

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(Received October 30, 1998 and accepted November 6, 1998)

The present study was conducted, using simple equations, to analyze the accumulation rate of silica [ARSi], that of minerals [ARM] and silica content changes with growth of Rhodes grass [Rg] and Greenleaf desmodium [Gd]. The following two equations were suggested for analyses:

$$\text{ARSi} = \frac{1}{W} \cdot \frac{d(Si)}{dt} = \left(\frac{1}{W} \cdot \frac{dM}{dt} \right) \cdot \frac{d(Si)}{dM}, \quad (\text{A})$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Changes in silica content} &= \frac{1}{1000} \cdot \left(\frac{(Si)_2}{W_2} - \frac{(Si)_1}{W_1} \right) \\ &= \left(1 - \frac{W_1}{W_2} \right) \cdot \left\{ \frac{1}{1000} \cdot \left(\frac{\overline{\text{ARSi}}}{\overline{\text{RGR}}} - \frac{(Si)_1}{W_1} \right) \right\}, \quad (\text{B}) \end{aligned}$$

where W =forage dry weight (g/m^2), Si =amount of silica in the forage (mg/m^2), M =amount of minerals in the forage (mg/m^2), $(1/W) \cdot (d(Si)/dt)$ =ARSi, $(1/W) \cdot (dM/dt)$ =ARM, $(d(Si)/dM)$ =accumulation of silica per unit accumulation of M [ASiAM], $\overline{\text{RGR}}$ =mean relative growth rate [RGR] of forages over the interval t_1 to t_2 , $\overline{\text{ARSi}}$ =mean ARSi over the interval t_1 to t_2 , $(1-W_1/W_2)$ =forage growth index [FG index], $\{\text{ARSi}/\overline{\text{RGR}} - (Si)_1/W_1\}/1000$ =an index for forage growth dependent silica accumulation [FGDSiA index].

Analyses using equation (A) suggested that Rg showed a higher selection of silica in the accumulation of minerals, when compared with Gd. Analyses using equation (B) suggested that Rg showed less active silica accumulation than forage growth, in contrast to more active silica accumulation than forage growth in Gd. It was suggested that the present methods accounted analytically for the accumulation characteristics of silica and its content changes with growth of forages.

INTRODUCTION

Silica, as well as other minerals, is absorbed from soil by plant roots, and the absorbed silica is deposited on plant fibers (Jones and Handreck, 1967). It is reported that silica depresses forage digestibility (Smith and Nelson, 1975; Smith and Urquhart, 1975; Van Soest, 1982; Shimojo and Goto, 1985, 1989; Minson, 1990). The content of silica is lower than that of lignin unless forages are grown on soil rich in silica or under water-logging

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condition like a paddy field. In many cases, therefore, the depression of forage digestibility by silica seems to be smaller than that by lignin. This is why we have so far taken up lignification only in the analysis, using simple equations, of the formation of indigestible materials with growth of forages (Shimojo *et al.*, 1995, 1997a, b, 1998a, d, g, h, i, 1999a, b, c).

It is considered of interest to apply simple equations to analyses of the absorption and accumulation of silica with growth of forages. Tobisa *et al.* (1997) analyzed, using the equation suggested by Hunt (1990), the absorption of some minerals by the root of *Aeschynomene americana* cv. Glenn when grown under the water-logging condition. To the analysis of the accumulation of silica, simple equations, which were suggested to the analysis of the accumulation of digestible materials (Shimojo *et al.*, 1998b, f, h, 1999a, b, c) and that of crude protein (Shimojo *et al.*, 1998c, e) with forage growth, might be expected to be applied, if modified appropriately.

The present study was designed to suggest simple equations to analyses of the accumulation of silica and its content changes with growth of forages, followed by applying them to two tropical forages, a grass and a forage legume.

EQUATIONS FOR ANALYZING ACCUMULATION OF SILICA AND ITS CONTENT CHANGES WITH FORAGE GROWTH

An equation suggested to the analysis of silica accumulation

An equation for describing silica accumulation rate per unit dry weight of the forage [ARSi] with its growth is suggested as follows:

$$\text{ARSi} = \frac{1}{W} \cdot \frac{d(Si)}{dt} \quad (1)$$

where W =forage dry weight (g/m^2), Si =amount of silica in the forage (mg/m^2).

Silica is actually absorbed by plants as a part of minerals, therefore, equation (1) is rewritten as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ARSi} &= \frac{1}{W} \cdot \frac{d(Si)}{dt} \\ &= \left(\frac{1}{W} \cdot \frac{dM}{dt} \right) \cdot \frac{d(Si)}{dM}, \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

where M =amount of minerals in the forage (mg/m^2), $(1/W) \cdot (dM/dt)$ =accumulation rate of minerals per unit W [ARM], $d(Si)/dM$ =accumulation of silica per unit accumulation of M [ASiAM].

Mean value over the interval t_1 to t_2 for each of ARSi, ARM and ASiAM is approximately as follows:

$$\overline{\text{ARSi}} = \frac{\log_e W_2 - \log_e W_1}{W_2 - W_1} \cdot \frac{(Si)_2 - (Si)_1}{t_2 - t_1}, \quad (3)$$

$$\overline{\text{ARM}} = \frac{\log_e W_2 - \log_e W_1}{W_2 - W_1} \cdot \frac{M_2 - M_1}{t_2 - t_1}, \quad (4)$$

$$\overline{\text{ASiAM}} = \frac{(Si)_2 - (Si)_1}{M_2 - M_1}, \quad (5)$$

where e =the base of natural logarithm.

An equation suggested to the analysis of silica content changes

An equation for describing changes in silica content with forage growth is suggested as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Changes in silica content} &= \frac{1}{1000} \cdot \left(\frac{(Si)_2}{W_2} - \frac{(Si)_1}{W_1} \right) \\ &= \left(1 - \frac{W_1}{W_2} \right) \cdot \left\{ \frac{1}{1000} \cdot \left(\frac{\overline{ARSi}}{\overline{RGR}} - \frac{(Si)_1}{W_1} \right) \right\}, \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

where \overline{ARSi} =mean ARSi over the interval t_1 to t_2 , \overline{RGR} =forage relative growth rate $[(1/W) \cdot (dW/dt)]$, \overline{RGR} =mean RGR over the interval t_1 to t_2 , $(1-W_1/W_2)$ =forage growth index [FG index], $\{\overline{ARSi}/\overline{RGR} - (Si)_1/W_1\}/1000$ =an index for forage growth dependent silica accumulation [FGDSiA index].

\overline{RGR} is approximately as follows:

$$\overline{RGR} = \frac{\log_e W_2 - \log_e W_1}{t_2 - t_1}. \quad (7)$$

Equation (6) is given according to the following procedures:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{(Si)_2}{W_2} - \frac{(Si)_1}{W_1} &= \frac{(Si)_1 + \Delta Si}{W_1 + \Delta W} - \frac{(Si)_1}{W_1} \\ &= \frac{\Delta Si}{W_1 + \Delta W} - \frac{(Si)_1 \cdot \Delta W}{W_1 \cdot (W_1 + \Delta W)} \\ &= \frac{\Delta Si}{W_2} - \frac{(Si)_1 \cdot \Delta W}{W_1 \cdot W_2} \\ &= \frac{\Delta W}{W_2} \cdot \left(\frac{\Delta Si}{\Delta W} - \frac{(Si)_1}{W_1} \right). \end{aligned} \quad (8)$$

Then, the ratio of ARSi to RGR is taken up as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{ARSi}{RGR} &= \frac{\frac{1}{W} \cdot \frac{d(Si)}{dt}}{\frac{1}{W} \cdot \frac{dW}{dt}} \\ &= \frac{d(Si)}{dW}. \end{aligned} \quad (9)$$

Thus, the following relation is suggested,

$$\frac{\Delta Si}{\Delta W} = \frac{\overline{ARSi}}{\overline{RGR}}. \quad (10)$$

Inserting equation (10) into equation (8) gives

$$\frac{(Si)_2}{W_2} - \frac{(Si)_1}{W_1} = \frac{\Delta W}{W_2} \cdot \left(\frac{\overline{ARSi}}{\overline{RGR}} - \frac{(Si)_1}{W_1} \right)$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= \frac{W_2 - W_1}{W_2} \cdot \left(\frac{\overline{\text{ARSi}}}{\text{RGR}} - \frac{(\text{Si})_1}{W_1} \right) \\
 &= \left(1 - \frac{W_1}{W_2} \right) \cdot \left(\frac{\overline{\text{ARSi}}}{\text{RGR}} - \frac{(\text{Si})_1}{W_1} \right). \quad (11)
 \end{aligned}$$

Dividing equation (11) by 1000 gives equation (6).

AN APPLICATION OF SUGGESTED EQUATIONS TO TWO TROPICAL FORAGES

Forages

Two tropical forages are Rhodes grass (*Chloris gayana* Kunth) and Greenleaf desmodium (*Desmodium intortum* (Mill.) Urb.) which were cut at 35 and 63 days of regrowth with a compound fertilizer (N:P₂O₅:K₂O=14:14:14%) dressed at a rate of 1.0 kg/a for each element immediately after the first cut and discard. Forage dry weight was determined by drying at 70 °C for 48 hr, minerals were determined by combustion at 600 °C for 3 hr, and silica was determined using the method of Goering and Van Soest (1970).

Characteristics of Rhodes grass [Rg] and Greenleaf desmodium [Gd] are shown in Table 1. The silica content in forage (g/g) was higher in Rg than in Gd at both days of regrowth (0.0156 versus 0.0024 at 35 days, 0.0123 versus 0.0032 at 63 days). This is in agreement with the review article on forage silica by Wilson (1982) that grasses generally contain higher amount of silica than forage legumes. Mineral content in forage (g/g) is higher in Rg than in Gd at both days of regrowth (0.1146 versus 0.0841 at 35 days, 0.0798 versus 0.0705 at 63 days), but the content difference between Rg and Gd decreased with growth of them. Silica concentration in minerals (g/g) is higher in Rg than in Gd at both

Table 1. Characteristics of Rhodes grass [Rg] and Greenleaf desmodium [Gd].

Forages Regrowth(days)	Rg		Gd	
	35	63	35	63
Forage dry weight: $W(\text{g/m}^2)$	225.56	515.00	190.00	315.28
Silica amount in forage: $Si(\text{g/m}^2)$	3.51	6.36	0.46	1.00
ditto: $Si(\text{mg/m}^2)$	3510.0	6360.0	460.0	1000.0
Silica content in forage(g/g)	0.0156	0.0123	0.0024	0.0032
Mineral amount in forage: $M(\text{g/m}^2)$	25.85	41.10	15.98	22.23
ditto: $M(\text{mg/m}^2)$	25850.0	41100.0	15980.0	22230.0
Mineral content in forage(g/g)	0.1146	0.0798	0.0841	0.0705
Silica concentration in minerals(g/g)	0.1358	0.1547	0.0288	0.0450

Silica: determined using the method of Goering and Van Soest (1970).

Minerals: determined as crude ash by the combustion of forages at 600 °C for 3 hr.

days of regrowth (0.1358 versus 0.0288 at 35 days, 0.1547 versus 0.0450 at 63 days), and the concentration increased with growth in both Rg and Gd.

Accumulation of silica with growth of Rg and Gd

The accumulation of silica in Rg and Gd analyzed using ARSi, ARM and ASiAM over the interval of 28 days of regrowth are shown in Table 2a. ARSi was higher in Rg than in Gd (0.2903 versus 0.0780), and this was due to both higher ARM (1.5535) and ASiAM (0.1869) in Rg compared with those (0.9023 and 0.0864, respectively) in Gd. The ratio of Rg to Gd in ARSi (3.7240) was higher than that in ARM (1.7217), suggesting that Rg showed a higher selection of silica in the accumulation of minerals, when compared with Gd. This resulted in the ratio of Rg to Gd in ASiAM to be 2.1630. It is suggested that the present method accounts analytically for how silica and minerals accumulate with growth of forages and how the accumulation of them shows differences between forages.

Changes in silica content with growth of Rg and Gd

Changes in silica content analyzed using FG index and FGDSiA index over the interval of 28 days are shown in Table 2b. The change in silica content was -0.0032 for Rg

Table 2. Analyses of the accumulation of silica and changes in its content with growth of Rhodes grass [Rg] and Greenleaf desmodium [Gd].

a) Analysis of the accumulation of silica with growth of Rg and Gd.

Forages Interval(days)	Rg 28	Gd 28	Rg/Gd
ARSi (mg/g/day)	0.2903	0.0780	3.7240
ARM (mg/g/day)	1.5535	0.9023	1.7217
ASiAM (mg/mg)	0.1869	0.0864	2.1630

ARSi=accumulation rate of silica per unit W , ARM=accumulation rate of minerals per unit W , ASiAM=accumulation of silica per unit accumulation of minerals.

b) Analysis of changes in silica content with growth of Rg and Gd.

Forages Interval(days)	Rg 28	Gd 28	Rg/Gd
Silica content changes	-0.0032	0.0008	-4.2782
FG index	0.5620	0.3974	1.4144
FGDSiA index	-0.0057	0.0019	-3.0248

FG index=an index for forage growth, FGDSiA index=an index for forage growth dependent silica accumulation.

and 0.0008 for Gd. The negative value in Rg was due to its negative FGDSiA index (-0.0057). The difference in silica content change was mainly due to the difference in FGDSiA index (-0.0057 versus 0.0019), because the difference in FG index between the two forages (0.5620 versus 0.3974) was not so large as that of FGDSiA index.

The negative FGDSiA index in Rg (-0.0057) is related to the fact that $\overline{ARSi}/\overline{RGR}$ is lower than $(Si)/W$, namely silica accumulation is less active than forage growth. This may cause a slight reduction in the content of silica during the growth of Rg (-0.0032). In contrast, the positive FGDSiA index in Gd (0.0019) brings about a slight increase in silica content (0.0008) through more active silica accumulation than forage growth. It is suggested that the present method accounts analytically for how silica accumulation is related to forage growth and how this relationship shows differences between forages.

Conclusions

Equations suggested in the present study might give some information about analyses of accumulation of silica, that of minerals and changes in silica content with growth of forages. There is a necessity for examining the present method by applying it to various forages grown under different conditions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank Mr. Yasukatsu Yano for his skilled technical assistance in the present study.

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