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EFFECTS OF CROP MANAGEMENT ON WINTER HARDINESS AND YIELD OF BOLTING WINTER BEET CULTIVATED FOR ANAEROBIC DIGESTION

ABSTRACT

Planting of sugar beet in summer or autumn and overwintering the crop in the field (winter beet) may contribute to nearly perfect utilization of the site specific growth factors radiation and water, especially in early spring. This may result in a high yielding crop which can (1) be harvested early in the growing season (May) and (2) provide a substrate favourable for anaerobic digestion. A basic prerequisite for such a winter beet cropping system is a high winter hardiness under German climatic conditions. Field trials at two different sites in Germany (Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein, maritime climate and Göttingen, Lower Saxony, continental climate) were conducted to investigate the influence of crop management (sowing date, plant density) on yield and winter hardiness of bolting winter beets. Crop management clearly affected the beet size (maximum beet diameter, beet weight) and total biomass yield, which decreased with both, increasing plant density and later sowing. In November harvest a high total dry matter yield of up to $\sim 32 \text{ t ha}^{-1}$ was observed, though that was only attained when sugar beets were sown in April.

Overwintering in the field turned out to be risky but doesn't seem to be impossible. When sufficiently with snow covered, those sugar beets even withstood air temperatures below $-15 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ without frost damages. August sown sugar beets with less maximum beet diameter proved to be more frost tolerant than previously sown sugar beets (April, June).

The field trials are to be continued in 2010. This project is part of the joint program 'Bioenergie 2021' funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

INFLUENCE DE LA GESTION DE BETTERAVES SUR LA TOLÉRANCE AU GEL ET LE RENDEMENT DE BETTERAVES AUTOMNALES MONTÉES POUR UNE FERMENTATION ANAÉROBIQUE

RÉSUMÉ

La culture de betteraves à sucre, avec semis en été ou automne et hibernation en plein champ (betterave automnale) pourrait contribuer à l'exploitation la plus complète des conditions de croissance spécifiques du site qui sont l'irradiation et l'eau. Ainsi deviendrait-il possible d'atteindre un rendement élevé en biomasse, pouvant être récoltée très tôt durant la période de végétation et présentant des propriétés de fermentation avantageuses. Une condition préalable essentielle pour la culture de betteraves automnales est une résistance au gel suffisamment élevée dans les conditions climatiques allemandes. Pour analyser l'influence de la gestion (période de semis, densité de peuplement) sur le rendement en biomasse et la résistance au gel des betteraves sucrières, des essais au champ ont été mis

en place dans le nord (Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein, climat maritime) et au centre (Göttingen, Basse-Saxe, climat continental) de l'Allemagne. La gestion de la culture influe de façon très nette sur la taille de la betterave (diamètre maximal, poids) et le rendement total en biomasse qui diminuaient au fur et à mesure que la densité du peuplement augmentait et le semis était retardé. Avec un total allant jusqu'à environ 32 t de matière sèche ha⁻¹, on enregistrait en novembre un rendement très élevé, mais qui était atteint seulement par un semis précoce en avril. L'hivernation se révélait pleine de risques, mais pas impossible. Sous une couverture de neige, ces betteraves sucrières supportaient des températures de l'air en dessous de -15°C sans dégâts de gel. Des betteraves semées plus tard (août) avec un diamètre maximal moindre prouvaient une plus forte tolérance au gel. Les essais seront continués en 2010/2011. L'étude fait parti d'un projet commun 'Bioenergie 2021' encouragé par le Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF/Ministère de l'éducation et de la recherche).

EINFLUSS DES MANAGEMENTS VON ZUCKERRÜBEN AUF DIE WINTERHÄRTE UND DEN ERTRAG SCHOSSENDER WINTERRÜBEN ZUR ANAEROBEN FERMENTATION

KURZFASSUNG

Planting of sugar beet in summer or autumn and overwintering the crop in the field (winter beet) may contribute to nearly perfect utilization of the site specific growth factors radiation and water, especially in early spring. This may result in a high yielding crop which can (1) be harvested early in the growing season (May) and (2) provide a substrate favourable for anaerobic digestion. A basic prerequisite for such a winter beet cropping system is a high winter hardiness under German climatic conditions. Field trials at two different sites in Germany (Kiel, Schleswig-Holstein, maritime climate and Göttingen, Lower Saxony, continental climate) where conducted to investigate the influence of crop management (sowing date, plant density) on yield and winter hardiness of bolting winter beets. Crop management clearly affected the beet size (maximum beet diameter, beet weight) and total biomass yield, which decreased with both, increasing plant density and later sowing. In November harvest a high total dry matter yield of up to ~32 t ha⁻¹ was observed, though that was only attained when sugar beets were sown in April.

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