



From Soil to Oil: The Crucial Roles of Potassium and Sulphur in Enhancing Oilseed Crop Quality

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Review Article

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ABSTRACT

Oilseed crops play a pivotal role in global agriculture, serving as primary sources for edible oils and biodiesel. The quality and productivity of these crops are profoundly influenced by soil nutrient availability, particularly potassium and sulphur. Potassium regulates essential physiological processes such as photosynthesis and nutrient transport, impacting oil accumulation and fatty acid composition in seeds. Conversely, sulphur is integral to protein synthesis, oil biosynthesis, and seed maturation, directly influencing oil content and overall quality. Effective management of these nutrients through optimized fertilization strategies and soil amendments enhances oilseed crop yield, improves oil composition, and bolsters resistance to environmental stresses. This review integrates insights from various studies to underscore the critical roles of potassium and sulphur in oilseed crop production. It explores the biochemical and physiological mechanisms underlying

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nutrient uptake and utilization by oilseed crops, emphasizing the genetic and molecular adaptations that facilitate efficient absorption from soil. The environmental implications of optimizing soil potassium and sulphur levels are also examined, considering impacts on ecological balance and groundwater quality. The paper highlights the economic significance of oilseed crops, not only as essential components in human diets and industrial processes but also as biofuel sources promoting sustainable energy alternatives. Moreover, oilseed cultivation contributes to soil health and conservation efforts through nitrogen fixation and conservation tillage practices, mitigating soil erosion and supporting biodiversity. By elucidating the multifaceted roles of potassium and sulphur in enhancing oilseed crop quality and productivity, this review provides a comprehensive perspective for stakeholders in agriculture, including farmers, policymakers, and researchers. It underscores the importance of nutrient management strategies in achieving sustainable agricultural practices that optimize crop yields while minimizing environmental impact.

Keywords: Oilseed crops; potassium; sulphur; crop quality; sustainable agriculture; nutrient management.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Objectives and Hypotheses

The research aims to analyse soil composition, specifically potassium and sulphur levels, in various agricultural regions to enhance crop quality. It focuses on assessing oil content, nutritional composition, and overall yield of oilseed crops grown in varying soil conditions [1]. The study also investigates the mechanisms of nutrient uptake by oilseed crops, aiming to unravel the biochemical and physiological processes involved in nutrient absorption. Genetic and molecular analysis is conducted to understand the interaction between oilseed crops and potassium-sulphur-rich soil [2]. The environmental impact of optimizing soil potassium and sulphur levels is also investigated, assessing ecological balance, groundwater quality, and overall environmental sustainability. The hypothesis is that oilseed crops grown in soil with optimized potassium and sulphur levels will exhibit enhanced oil content, leading to superior crop quality compared to those grown in nutrient-deficient soil [3]. The study hypothesizes that oilseed crops have specific molecular mechanisms facilitating efficient uptake of potassium and sulphur from the soil, revealing their adaptability to varying soil nutrient compositions. Genetic adaptations are hypothesized to enable certain oilseed crop varieties to thrive in specific soil conditions [4]. The research hypothesis suggests that optimizing soil nutrient levels will not only enhance crop quality but also have positive environmental repercussions, maintaining ecological balance and groundwater quality. The findings will provide valuable insights and practical agronomic recommendations for

farmers to optimize potassium and sulphur levels in their soil, improving oilseed crop yields and quality [5].

1.2 Importance of Potassium and Sulphur in Oilseed Crop Production

1.2.1 Overview of oilseed crops and their significance

Oilseed crops, including soybeans, sunflower, canola, cottonseed, and palm, are crucial for agriculture, economy, and nutrition. They are cultivated for the extraction of oils from their seeds, which are essential components in human diets, industrial processes, and biofuel production. Oilseeds are rich in unsaturated fatty acids, particularly omega-3 and omega-6, essential for human health [6]. They also contain protein, serving as valuable animal feed supplements. Oilseed crops are economically important, providing income for farmers and employment in processing industries. They are also used in biodiesel production, promoting eco-friendly energy alternatives and mitigating environmental impact. They also contribute to soil health and crop rotation, enhancing soil fertility through nitrogen fixation and preventing soil degradation. Oilseed-derived products are dietary staples worldwide, providing a significant portion of daily caloric intake for millions of people, especially in developing nations [7]. They also support conservation tillage practices, reducing soil erosion and preserving natural habitats. Some oilseed plants contribute to carbon sequestration, aiding in climate change mitigation efforts. Genetic research and precision farming technologies have led to the development of high-yielding, disease-resistant oilseed varieties and improved crop yields.

These advancements in oilseed cultivation contribute to a sustainable and sustainable agriculture [8].

1.2.2 The role of essential nutrients (potassium and sulphur) in plant growth and development.

Potassium is a crucial nutrient for plants, maintaining osmotic balance, activating enzymes, and enhancing disease resistance. It also strengthens cell walls, allowing plants to endure drought, salinity, and temperature stresses more effectively. Sulphur is a vital partner in growth, contributing to amino acid synthesis, chlorophyll formation, vitamin and enzyme activation, and pH regulation [9]. Potassium and sulphur are absorbed as ions by plant roots, facilitated by transport proteins, and travel through the plant's vascular system, xylem, and phloem. They also influence flower and fruit development, ensuring viable seeds and healthy fruits. Sulphur-rich proteins in seeds are vital for germination and early seedling growth [10]. Adequate potassium and sulphur levels enhance crop yields and nutritional value, enriching plants with essential proteins, minerals, and vitamins. They also provide environmental adaptability, reducing water loss during drought stress and ensuring continued growth in extreme temperatures [11-12]. Understanding nutrient cycles and using crop rotation practices can help in sustainable agriculture, where soil potassium and sulphur levels are replenished. Precision fertilization also optimizes the use of

these nutrients, reducing environmental impact [13].

1.3 Previous Research on Potassium and Sulphur in Oilseed Crops

Research on potassium and sulphur in oilseed crops has evolved, with early agricultural studies recognizing their importance in crop health. Nutrient deficiencies have been identified, with studies showing stunted growth, reduced seed size, and diminished oil content in crops lacking potassium [14]. Soil nutrient dynamics have been studied, with soil pH affecting potassium and sulphur availability, influencing crop growth and nutrient uptake. Genetic studies have identified genes responsible for potassium and sulphur transport in oilseed crops, aiding in the development of nutrient-efficient varieties [15]. Fertilization techniques have been explored, with studies focusing on optimal fertilization methods, impact on oil quality, environmental impacts, integrated nutrient management, crop-specific studies, climate change adaptation, precision agriculture, and economic analyses. The impact of potassium and sulphur on oil quality has been correlated with oil composition, demonstrating their roles in determining fatty acid profiles and overall oil quality (Fig. 1). Environmental concerns have been addressed, and integrated nutrient management approaches have been explored. Precision agriculture has also been developed, integrating data analytics, remote sensing, and variable rate technology to optimize crop growth [16].

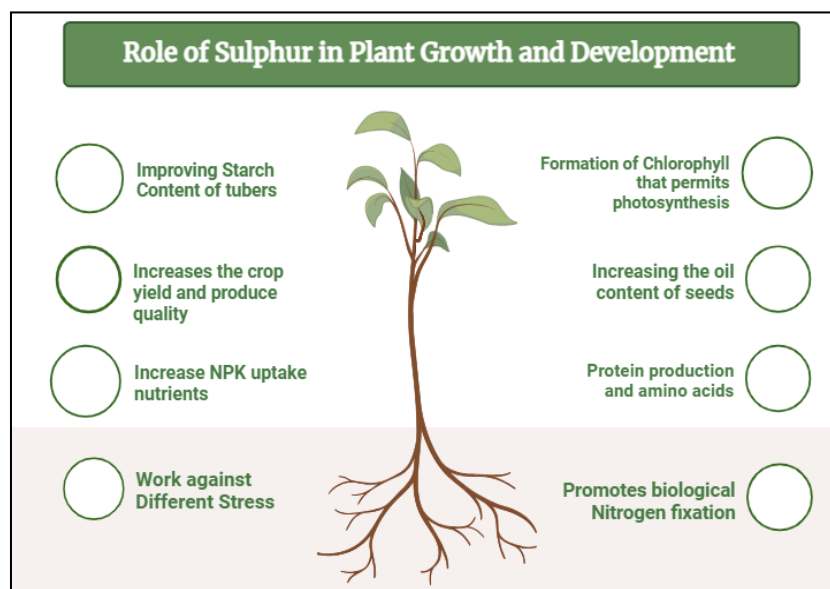


Fig. 1. Role of sulphur in plant growth and development

2. PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF POTASSIUM NUTRIENT UPTAKE AND TRANSLOCATION

2.1 Influence on Photosynthesis and Carbon Assimilation

Potassium plays a crucial role in photosynthesis by enhancing chlorophyll synthesis and maintaining stomatal opening, facilitating CO₂ intake. It also regulates stomatal conductance, ensuring proper CO₂ influx for photosynthesis [17]. Sulphur, on the other hand, is essential for chlorophyll formation and enzyme activation, directly impacting light-dependent reactions. Potassium activates enzymes involved in photosynthetic carbon fixation, ensuring efficient conversion of CO₂ to sugars during the Calvin cycle. Sulphur-enzyme interaction, particularly in Rubisco, is essential for optimal functioning. Both potassium and sulphur are essential for enzymes like rubisco, phosphoenolpyruvate carboxylase (PEPC), and ribulose-5-phosphate kinase, vital in the Calvin cycle [18]. Sulphur's incorporation into amino acids ensures proper enzyme synthesis and function, critical for carbon fixation. Proper K and S nutrition leads to increased photosynthetic rates, higher biomass production, and improved crop yield. It also aids in stress response, such as drought stress, stomatal regulation under water stress, and oxidative stress. Potassium enhances salt tolerance and counteracts salt-induced oxidative damage, while sulphur interactions with nitrogen pathways influence photosynthesis [19].

2.2 Impact on Water Relations and Osmoregulation

Potassium and sulphur play crucial roles in plant water management and osmoregulation. Potassium facilitates water uptake by plant roots, maintaining turgor pressure for efficient water transport [20]. Sulphur contributes to the osmotic potential of plant cells, influencing water movement within the plant [21]. Potassium ions are vital for osmoregulation, enabling plants to adjust their internal osmotic potential during water stress. Sulphur participates in the synthesis of Osmo protectants, aiding in osmotic adjustment under drought conditions. Potassium and stomatal conductance regulate stomatal opening and closure, while sulphur compounds indirectly influence stomatal behaviour, contributing to water conservation strategies. Plants with sufficient potassium show enhanced

drought tolerance due to optimized water use efficiency. Sulphur's involvement in osmoregulation aids plants in coping with osmotic stress. Potassium and cell turgor maintain structural integrity, while sulphur-containing compounds act as antioxidants, safeguarding cellular components from oxidative damage during water-related stresses (Fig. 2). Mycorrhizal associations enhance potassium and sulphur uptake, improving plant resilience under varying water availability [22].

2.3 Potassium and Seed Development

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2.4 Physiological Effects of Sulphur Assimilation and Metabolism in Plants

2.4.1 Role in protein synthesis and amino acid formation

Potassium (K) is a crucial element in the synthesis of proteins, the building blocks of life, and the formation of amino acids. It plays a vital role in enzymatic activation, nitrogen metabolism, protein synthesis, ribosome function, transfer RNA structure, and peptide bond formation. K ions activate enzymes involved in amino acid

biosynthesis, catalysing chemical reactions [26]. They also aid in nitrogen metabolism in plants, the assimilation of nitrogen from the soil, and the synthesis of amino acids within plant cells. Ribosomes, the cellular structures responsible for protein synthesis, require potassium ions for proper functioning. K ions stabilize the structure of ribosomal RNA (rRNA), a crucial component of ribosomes, ensuring accurate protein assembly. Transfer RNA (tRNA) structure is maintained by potassium ions, which ensure accurate amino acid incorporation into growing polypeptide

chains. Peptide bonds formed during translation help form functional proteins essential for various biological processes. K ions also serve as cofactors for enzymes involved in amino acid biosynthesis and protein synthesis, facilitating their catalytic activities [27]. They also participate in cellular signalling pathways that regulate gene expression related to protein synthesis. Proper K levels influence the transcription and translation of genes involved in amino acid biosynthesis, modulating the cellular machinery responsible for protein formation.

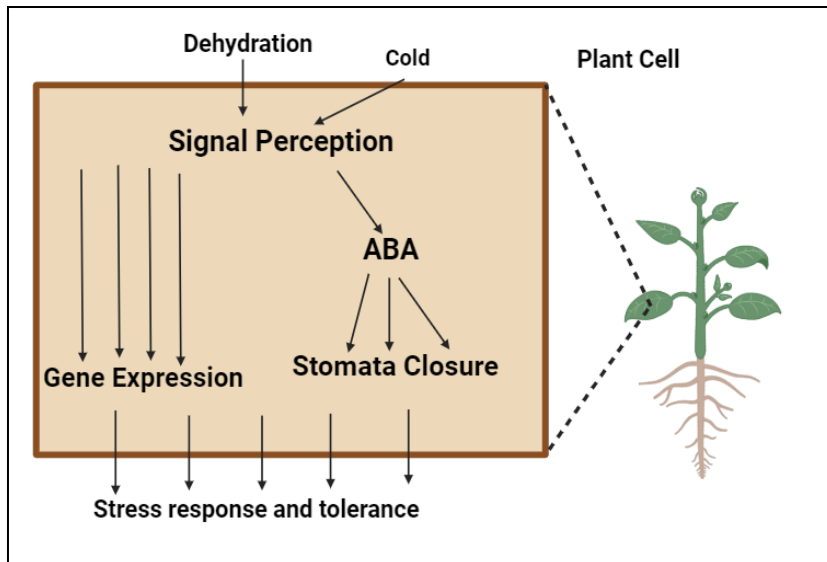


Fig. 2. Impact on water relations and osmoregulation

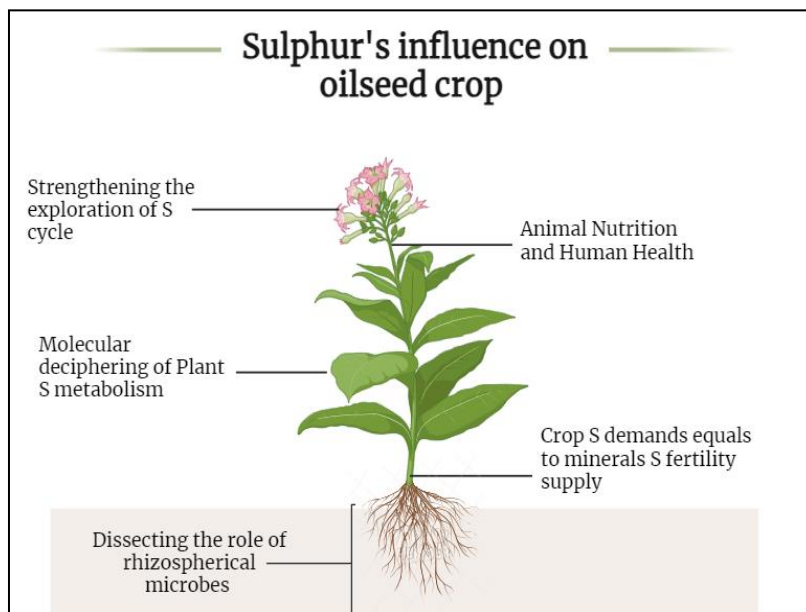


Fig .3 Sulphur's influence on oilseed crop

2.4.2 Sulphur's influence on oilseed crop quality and yield

Sulphur is a crucial nutrient for plants, enhancing the quality and yield of oilseed crops. It plays a significant role in protein synthesis and amino acid formation, which are essential for plant growth and seed nutritional value [28]. Sulphur also influences the composition of oils and fats, with proper sulphur nutrition enhancing the accumulation of unsaturated fatty acids, making oilseed crops healthier for human consumption (Fig. 3). Sulphur also contributes to oil stability by preventing oxidation, which can affect the taste and shelf life of oils [29]. It is essential for chlorophyll formation, enabling efficient photosynthesis, and leading to higher yields in oilseed crops. Sulphur also aids in stress tolerance, synthesizing stress-related compounds like phytoalexins and glucosinolates, enhancing plant defence mechanisms against various stresses. Sulphur also plays a role in livestock feed, as it influences oilseed crops' protein content and amino acid composition, providing essential nutrients to animals. High-quality feed leads to healthier livestock and sustainable agricultural practices. Lastly, sulphur management ensures efficient utilization of nutrient by plants, reducing environmental pollution. Adequate sulphur levels in soil minimize the leaching of sulphates, reducing the environmental impact of sulphur pollution. Proper sulphur management ensures that nutrient is utilized efficiently by plants, preventing excess runoff into water bodies [30].

3. INTERACTIONS BETWEEN POTASSIUM AND SULPHUR

3.1 Synergistic Effects on Plant Growth

Plant growth is influenced by the synergistic effects of various elements. Potassium and sulphur work together to regulate physiological processes, enhancing the uptake and utilization of sulphur [31]. This results in robust plant growth, improved stress tolerance, and enhanced yield. Water and nutrient uptake are also enhanced by potassium and sulphur, promoting proper hydration and strengthening root systems. Stress resilience is bolstered by the K-S-micronutrient collaboration, which includes potassium and sulphur, along with micronutrients like magnesium and manganese. Potassium maintains cell turgor, enhancing the plant's ability to withstand drought and salinity stress. Sulphur, vital for stress-related compound

synthesis, fortifies the plant's defense mechanisms, ensuring sustained growth even in adverse conditions [32]. Enzymatic harmony is achieved through the K-S-enzyme synergy, where potassium and sulphur catalyze biochemical reactions vital for nutrient metabolism and energy transfer. This enzymatic harmony fuels the plant's growth processes, optimizing resource utilization and promoting overall vigor. Carbon assimilation is influenced by the K-S-carbon assimilation synergy, where potassium aids in stomatal regulation and sulphur supports carbon assimilation and the synthesis of organic compounds [33]. This collaborative effort ensures efficient utilization of carbon, contributing to plant biomass accumulation. Understanding and harnessing these synergies can unlock innovative approaches to sustainable crop production, fostering healthier plants, higher yields, and a greener future.

3.2 Nutrient Balance and Plant Health

Nutrient balance is a crucial aspect of plant health, ensuring optimal growth, disease resistance, stress resilience, root health, and reproductive success. Plants require a balanced supply of essential nutrients, including nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, calcium, and trace elements, which promote robust development, vibrant blooms, and bountiful harvests [34]. A well-balanced nutrient profile fortifies plants against diseases by activating defense mechanisms, such as potassium regulation, which reduces the risk of pathogen entry. Nutrient balance acts as a buffer against environmental stressors, allowing plants to endure adversity and safeguard their health during challenging times. Well-fed roots exude organic compounds, fostering beneficial microbial communities that enhance nutrient availability by breaking down organic matter and fixing nitrogen [35]. This synergy between root health and nutrient balance creates a self-reinforcing cycle, amplifying the plant's nutrient uptake and overall well-being. Reproductive success is also significantly impacted by nutrient balance. Adequate phosphorus encourages prolific flowering, while balanced potassium levels promote fruit and seed development [36]. Trace elements like boron and manganese are essential for proper pollen germination and fertilization. When nutrients are in balance, plants bear the fruits of their labour, resulting in plump, nutritious, and abundant harvests.

4. CASE STUDIES AND FIELD OBSERVATIONS

Case studies and field observations have shown the significant role of potassium and sulphur in improving oilseed crop quality. In sunflower fields, a direct correlation between soil potassium levels and oilseed quality was observed, leading to significant improvements in yields and quality. Sulphur's influence on seed protein synthesis was also highlighted, with soybean seeds from sulphur-supplemented plants displaying a notable increase in protein content [37]. Balancing potassium and sulphur for disease resistance was observed, with canola fields affected by sulphur deficiency experiencing reduced instances of diseases like white mold. Nutrient management was also explored in groundnut cultivation areas, with oil extracted from potassium and sulphur-optimized groundnuts exhibiting a richer, nuttier aroma profile. Sensory analyses confirmed the heightened aromatic qualities, positioning these oilseeds in premium culinary markets [38]. Sustainable farming practices for oilseed enrichment were introduced across diverse farming communities, emphasizing organic matter incorporation and balanced nutrient application. In fields where this practice was adopted, oilseed crops, including rapeseed and sunflower, showed enhanced oil content and robust plant health, reflecting the harmonious balance achieved through potassium and sulphur optimization. These studies provide valuable insights into the complex relationship between potassium and sulphur in oilseed crop cultivation and yield improvement [39].

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Mechanisms Underlying the Observed Effects of Potassium and Sulphur

Scientists have discovered the intricate mechanisms that underpin the profound impacts of potassium and sulphur on oilseed crops. Potassium regulates osmotic balance within plant cells, maintaining turgor pressure essential for nutrient transport, cell expansion, and drought resilience [40]. Sulphur assimilation pathways transform sulphate ions into cysteine, a key amino acid, which serves as the precursor for essential sulphur-containing compounds like glutathione and methionine. These compounds are pivotal for protein synthesis and antioxidative defences, supporting overall plant health and oilseed quality. Potassium activates numerous

enzymes critical for photosynthesis, respiration, and nutrient uptake. In oilseed crops, enhanced photosynthetic rates driven by potassium ensure efficient carbon assimilation, boosting plant growth and enhancing carbon allocation to oil accumulation sites. Sulphur-rich compounds, such as glucosinolates, serve as potent defence mechanisms in oilseed crops like mustard and rapeseed, deterring herbivores and pathogens, ensuring plant survival [41]. Sulphur's availability profoundly influences the synthesis of these secondary metabolites, fortifying oilseeds against adversities. The interplay between potassium and sulphur impacts enzymatic regulation, ensuring balanced levels of nutrients facilitate the activity of enzymes responsible for nutrient transport, enhancing the overall nutrient profile of oilseed crops. Sulphur-mediated protein structure and function, such as disulfide bridges in proteins, benefit from sulphur-mediated structural integrity, ensuring the stability of oil bodies and preserving oil quality during storage and processing [42].

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR OILSEED CROP MANAGEMENT AND PRODUCTION

The discovery of potassium and sulphur's significant impact on oilseed crops has led to new cultivation strategies. These discoveries provide a blueprint for healthier, more abundant oilseed harvests. Precision nutrient management involves adjusting fertilization practices based on the specific needs of oilseed crops, ensuring optimal nutrient availability [43]. Enhanced drought resilience is achieved through osmotic regulation strategies, which maintain turgor pressure and enable oilseed crops to endure drought conditions. Integrated pest management leverages sulphur-induced glucosinolates, boosting natural defences against pests. Soil health optimization is achieved through microbial partnerships, with sulphur-rich cover crops and organic matter enhancing soil microbiota. Sustainable crop rotation involves introducing potassium and sulphur-demanding crops strategically in rotations, optimizing soil nutrient levels and fostering soil fertility for successive oilseed plantings. Quality-oriented post-harvest handling involves proper storage techniques, attention to environmental conditions, and understanding the influence of sulphur on protein stability [44]. Research-driven innovation is driven by continuous exploration of the evolving landscape of agricultural research, involving collaboration between scientists, agronomists, and farmers. Understanding the nuanced

interactions of potassium and sulphur in diverse oilseed varieties informs future breeding programs and agronomic techniques, ensuring resilience against emerging challenges. These implications lead to proactive, eco-conscious oilseed crop management, nurturing oilseed crops that flourish in the present and sow the seeds of a greener, more bountiful agricultural future [45].

7. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Practical Guidelines for Optimizing Potassium and Sulphur Nutrition in Oilseed Crops

The application of potassium and sulphur in agriculture is crucial for the optimal nutrition and high-quality yields of oilseed crops. To achieve this, farmers, agronomists, and enthusiasts should follow several guidelines. To optimize soil health, conduct a thorough soil assessment to determine nutrient levels, particularly potassium and sulphur [46]. Create a tailored fertilizer regimen based on soil test results, using balanced potassium and sulphur content. Familiarize yourself with the specific requirements of different oilseed crops and adjust fertilization plans accordingly. Implement smart irrigation practices synchronized with the crop's growth phases to enhance potassium and sulphur uptake. Integrate organic matter into the soil, such as compost and cover crops, to promote soil health. Consider sulphur amendments or organic sulphur sources in sulphur-deficient soils. Maintain a balanced nutrient uptake through complementary nutrient management and regular soil monitoring [47]. Regularly monitor crop health to identify nutrient deficiencies or excesses. Stay updated on research findings and agricultural innovations related to potassium and sulphur nutrition, engage with extension services, attend workshops, and collaborate with fellow farmers. Embrace sustainable practices like crop rotation, cover cropping, and natural pest management techniques to enhance soil health. Ith, minimize nutrient runoff, and promote overall sustainability of oilseed cultivation [48].

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GROWERS AND AGRICULTURAL PRACTITIONERS

The cultivation of oilseeds requires a combination of traditional wisdom and

contemporary knowledge. To achieve success, growers and agricultural practitioners should conduct a comprehensive soil analysis, tailoring fertilization plans based on the nutrient profile of the crop. They should also adopt eco-friendly techniques, such as cover cropping, crop rotation, and organic matter incorporation, which enhance soil fertility and promote a balanced nutrient ecosystem [49]. Regular crop surveillance is essential to monitor and adjust fertilization and irrigation strategies. Efficient irrigation techniques should be implemented to align water supply with the crop's growth stages and avoid water stress. Collaboration and learning are essential for staying updated with industry trends. Crop rotation and diversification can break disease cycles and enhance soil structure [50]. Integrated pest management strategies should be implemented, focusing on biological and natural methods. Soil health improvement can be achieved by encouraging beneficial microorganisms and using organic amendments. Continual education is crucial for staying informed about advancements in agricultural sciences. Detailed records of cultivation practices, yields, and soil amendments should be kept to identify patterns and optimize future strategies. Financial planning should be strategic, allocating resources wisely, and investing in quality seeds, soil amendments, and sustainable practices to ensure long-term soil fertility [51].

9. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS AREAS REQUIRING FURTHER INVESTIGATION AND STUDY

9.1 Potential Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research questions focus on optimizing nutrient utilization, climate resilience, biological interactions, genetic expression and breeding, nutrient uptake dynamics, soil health, economic and environmental impact, and biofortification for nutritional enhancement. Oilseed crops with balanced potassium and sulphur levels exhibit higher oil content and enhanced nutritional profiles compared to those with imbalanced or deficient nutrient levels [52]. These crops demonstrate increased resilience to drought and other environmental stressors, leading to higher yields and quality. Biological interactions between oilseed plants and beneficial soil microorganisms enhance the availability of potassium and sulphur, leading to improved

nutrient uptake, plant health, and seed yield and quality [53]. Genetic variations within oilseed species influence the plant's ability to absorb, transport, and utilize potassium and sulphur, impacting crop yield and quality. Breeding for specific genetic traits can enhance nutrient use efficiency. Nutrient uptake dynamics in oilseed crops provide insights into optimizing nutrient management practices, leading to improved crop performance. Continuous oilseed cultivation may deplete soil potassium and sulphur levels, negatively impacting soil structure and microbial diversity. Implementing sustainable agricultural practices can mitigate these effects. Precision potassium and sulphur management in large-scale oilseed farming operations can enhance oilseed yields and quality, leading to increased profits for farmers while minimizing environmental impact. Biofortification strategies involving potassium and sulphur supplementation can enrich oilseed crops with essential nutrients, making them more nutritionally valuable for human and animal consumption [54].

10. CONCLUSION

This review explores the role of potassium and sulphur in oilseed crop production, providing valuable insights for agricultural practices and scientific research. The study examines the physiological effects of potassium on nutrient uptake, photosynthesis, water relations, osmoregulation, and seed development, while sulphur impacts protein synthesis, amino acid formation, and oilseed crop quality. The interactions between potassium and sulphur reveal their synergistic effects on plant growth, nutrient balance, and overall plant health. Real-world applications are demonstrated through case studies and field observations, providing practical insights into the dynamic interplay of these nutrients in agricultural settings. The review also discusses the interpretation of results, revealing the underlying mechanisms behind observed effects. Implications for oilseed crop management and production are thoroughly examined, offering practical suggestions for farmers and practitioners. Practical applications and recommendations are presented, providing clear guidelines for optimizing potassium and sulphur nutrition in oilseed crops. Future research directions are outlined, with potential research questions and hypotheses proposed. This review paper consolidates existing knowledge and serves as a roadmap for sustainable and innovative practices in oilseed cultivation.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of manuscripts.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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