

## THE INFLUENCE OF NUTRIENT SUPPLY AND PLANT DENSITY ON THE YIELD OF FIBRE HEMP

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the developed countries, e.g. US, UK and Netherlands and Germany national rural community development programs have been started, reviving and for increasing their sustainability in recent years. (BAGBY 1988, WERF 1991, RIDDLESTONE-DESAI 1994, BÓCSA-KARUS 1997).

In these countries among others, the feasibility of reviving the cultivation and processing of fibre crops (kenaf, fibre hemp, flax) was investigated as a sustainable industry for the bioregion. The possibility of producing textiles and paper mats for thermal insulanon, press-melded intenor panels for the automobile industry and other products from these crops were examined based on sustainable land use, utilising modern intermediate scale technology for their processing.

Research institutes across continental Europe are studying hemp. Research has produced a plant with a low narcotic content which caused the revival of hemp growing since 1993. Reviving the cultivation of fibre hemp may be a start of a success story in these countries.

Hemp production in Hungary has high quality, internationally recognized traditions. Hungary has high yield, high quality, low THC content-hemp varieties. Hemp production and processing boomed before 1989, but is at a low today. Lack of capital and long overdue technical improvements are facing the Hungarian hemp industry.

The establishment of the necessary industrial background, this plant can become a viable and stable crop for Hungarian agriculture. It is not threatened by overproduction as crops in the food industry, it is profitable, and satisfies the requirements of sustainable agricultural production.

Publications before 1990 on hemp in Hungary mainly cover the varieties, breeding, biological, ecological and general cultural practices of the hemp crop (BÓCSA 1967, 1968/a, 1968/b, 1969, 1970, BÓCSA-HORKAY 1977, BÓCSA-MANNINGER 1981, MÁNDY-BÓCSA 1962, 1965, HORKAY 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1986, HORKAY-BÓCSA 1978, JAKOBÉY 1953/a, 1953/b, 1965). The literature in fertilization was very limited (CSÓKÁS 1914, BEKE 1962, JAKOBÉY 1970, RUZSÁNYI 1967, 1970, GYÖRGY 1989).

Among the plant nutrients the nitrogen plays the main role in the formation of hemp yield. VAN DER WERF et. al (1995/a, b) reported the inter-plant competition which may cause self-thinning and it reduces stem yield and quality. More self-thinning took place at 200 kg than 80 kgNha<sup>-1</sup>, and 50 cm row width then 12,5 and 25 cm. In Netherlands the stem yield was maximum at 90 plants m<sup>-2</sup>. The stem yield was 10,4 tha<sup>-1</sup> at 80 kgNha-1 and 11,3 tha<sup>-1</sup> at 200 kgNha<sup>-1</sup>.

The data on exact fertilization trials which would take into consideration the soil type, fertility status and the crop rotation are needed to form a fertilization advicery system of fibre hemp.

One of the important goals of agrochemical research for plant analysis purposes is to examine the optimal nutrient supply limits, nutrient ratios of crops, and interactions between different nutrients in the different developmental phases of the plant. (MOLLER - NIELSEN, 1976, FRIIS - NIELSEN 1976, SUMNER 1977, DEBRECZENI 1979, ELEK - KADAR 1980, KADAR et al.1981, IZSAKI 1988).

Results of these studies will enable the practical applictaion of plant analysis, described by BERGMANN - NEUBERT /1976/, BUZAS /1987/ , KADAR /1987/ and IZSAKI /1988/ as the following:

- diagnosis of nutrient deficiency and surplus
- analysis of plant's nutrient supply and nutrient content in order to achieve high yield and good quality
- confirmation of soil analysis
- control of fertilisation practice, fertilisation advising
- yield and quality forecast
- analysis of developmental problems

The wide applicability of plant analysis methods is clear, but based on the limitations of its interpretation and employment, it cannot substitute soil analysis. In the fertilisation recommendation system the results of soil and plant analysis should be built. /AMBERGER 1980, KADAR 1980, SARKADI 1981, BERINGER 1985/..

From 1989 the goal of our research were to determine:

- the dry matter accumulation of fibre hemp on different nutrient supplies of the soil,
- the change of nutrient concentration and rates of 9 elements in the plant during the growing season,
- the nutrient accumulation of fibre hemp,
- the optimum time of diagnostic plant analysis of fibre hemp,
- nutrient supply limit values for diagnostic plant analysis for fibre hemp,
- the specific nutrient uptake of 1t of good quality fibre hemp yield,
- the effect of nutrient supply on the quantity and quality of the yield,
- the influence of nutrient supply on self-thinning of fibre hemp.
- the influence of decreased plant density on the yield.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Fibre hemp fertilization experiment was undertaken in the south-east part of Hungary from 1990 to 1993 and 1996- 1999. Sojabean and broad bean were grown prior to the hemp every year.

We applied four levels of N, P, K fertilizers in total combinations ( $4 \times 4 \times 4 = 64$ ) to determine the stem yield, we selected eleven treatments to examine the development of the dry matter accumulation, nutrient content and nutrient accumulation of fibre hemp during the growing season. From P and K treatments the P<sub>1</sub>, K<sub>1</sub> aimed at the maintenance of sufficient nutrient

supply level in the soil, whereas the P<sub>2</sub>, P<sub>3</sub> and K<sub>2</sub>, K<sub>3</sub> aimed at the development of the different nutrient supply level (Table 1.).

The total area of the basic plots was 20 m<sup>2</sup>, in split-split plots design and with three replicates.

Kompolti fibre hemp variety was planted in the first week of April. The seeding rate was 90 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> in 1990-1993 and 1996, 90 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> and 45 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> in 1997 and 45 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> in 1999 with a row space of 12 cm. Total above-ground plant organ samples were taken every second week, six times during the growing season.

The samples contained the above ground plant organ of 2x1 m rows by plots (and did not contain the fallen leaves). We measured the green matter, dry matter and determined nine mineral elements from samples.

In 1999, we took leaf samples on 30<sup>th</sup> of May for determine nutrient supply limit value of fibre hemp for diagnostic plant analysis. In this time the hemp was 70-80 cm tall and has 5-6 couple total formed leaves.

At harvesting time we measured the stem yield weight of every 192 netto plots (15,75 m<sup>2</sup> area/plot), technical height and straw diameter of 100 plants by plots.

The soil was chernozem meadow which was calcareous in the depth and it had adequate N, P, K supply (Table 2.).

From 1990 to 1993, in three of the four years the annual precipitation was less than the average of the previous 75 years. In 1993, there was a drought because the accumulated deficiency of precipitation including the three previous years, was about 400 mm. From 1996, years the precipitation was average or more than the previous years.

We did not use chemical protection except for against Psylloides attenuate at emergence time, and we did not need to use any other cultivation.

The data of the test were evaluated by analysis of variance according to SVÁB (1981) methods.

Table 1. The applied treatments and their influence on the nutrient supplies of the soil  
(1989-1995, Szarvas)

Treatments of "A" factor	N, kg ha <sup>-1</sup>		NO <sub>3</sub> -N, kg ha <sup>-1</sup> in 0-60 cm soil						
	Yearly	Cumulative 1990-1993	1989	1990	1991	1992	1995	1996	1998
N <sub>0</sub>	N <sub>0</sub>	0	72	57	50	70	68	25	12
N <sub>1</sub>	N <sub>80</sub>	320	72	84	74	102	95	34	20
N <sub>2</sub>	N <sub>160</sub>	640	72	110	71	125	146	36	24
N <sub>3</sub>	N <sub>240</sub>	960	72	144	79	119	208	35	25
LSD <sub>5%</sub>			-	26	-	41	31	-	-

Treat- 1992 factors	P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> , kg ha <sup>-1</sup>			AL-P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> , mg kg <sup>-1</sup> in 0-40 cm soil*						
	Shared	Cumulative		1989	1990	1991	1992	1995	1996	1998
		1989- 1992	1989- 1994							
P <sub>0</sub>	P <sub>0</sub>	0	0	132	111	113	107	125	133	126
P <sub>1</sub>	P <sub>100</sub> /year	400	600	132	110	112	120	137	159	154
P <sub>2</sub>	P <sub>500</sub> /4 years	500	1000	132	168	143	151	195	192	170
P <sub>3</sub>	P <sub>1000</sub> /4 years	1000	2000	132	233	206	210	287	233	225
LSD <sub>5%</sub>				-	47	40	42	59	-	-

Treat- ments of "C" factors	K <sub>2</sub> O, kg ha <sup>-1</sup>			AL-K <sub>2</sub> O, mg kg <sup>-1</sup> in 0-40 cm soil						
	Shared	Cumulative		1989	1990	1991	1992	1995	1996	1998
		1989- 1992	1989- 1994							
K <sub>0</sub>	K <sub>0</sub>	0	0	296	280	281	268	246	254	272
K <sub>1</sub>	K <sub>300</sub> /year, from autumn 1993 100 kg/year	1200	1400	296	317	333	307	356	359	370
K <sub>2</sub>	K <sub>600</sub> /4 year	600	1200	296	360	353	289	406	408	402
K <sub>3</sub>	N <sub>1200</sub> /4 year	1200	2400	296	388	391	318	466	436	442
LSD <sub>5%</sub>				-	56	49	35	67	-	-

\* 0-40 cm = average of 0-20 cm and 20-40 cm

Table 2. Examined characteristics of soil before the trial  
Szarvas, 1989 autumn

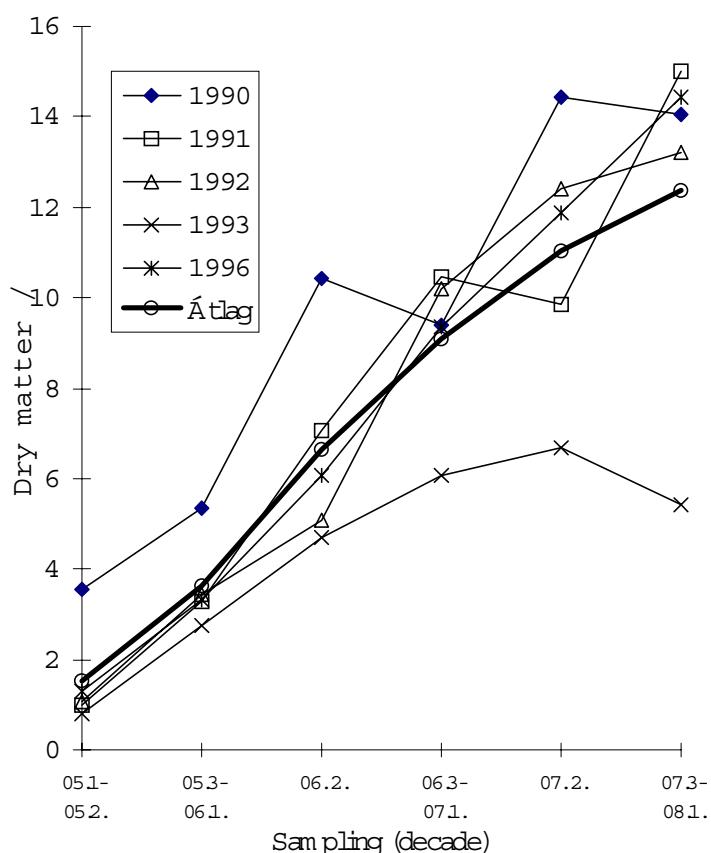
Soil Levels Cm	pH (KCl)	Upper limit of plasticity according to Arany	CaCO <sub>3</sub> %	Total salt %	NO <sub>3</sub> +NO <sub>2</sub>	AL-P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	AL-K <sub>2</sub> O
					mg/kg		
0 - 20	5,2	50	0,0	0,03	13,7	156	322
20 - 40	5,2	48	0,0	0,03	9,6	109	270
40 - 60	6,0	48	0,1	0,05	4,8	57	234

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Dry matter accumulation

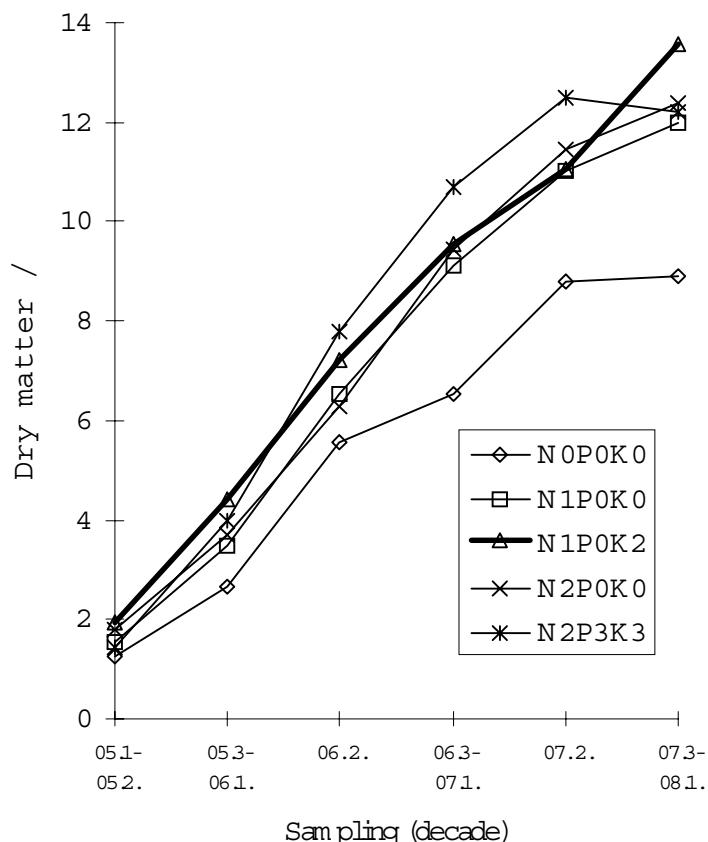
The dry matter yield was  $11,92 \text{ tha}^{-1}$  in 1991-1993 on average in spite of the precipitation deficiency (402 mm) during the experiment. It was  $15,01 \text{ tha}^{-1}$  in good precipitation supply year (1991) and  $5,44 \text{ tha}^{-1}$  in drought year (1993). It was  $14,22 \text{ tha}^{-1}$  in 1996. The intensive dry matter accumulation began from beginning of June. In 1992 and 1996 the accumulation curves were continued and in 1993 it was condensing. (Figure 1.)

Figure 1. Dry matter accumulation of fibre hemp  
(1990-1993, 1996, Szarvas)



The typical accumulation curve has two peaks which happened in the two better years 1990, 1991. This was mentioned by BREDEMANN (1945), in MÁNDY-BÓCSA (1962), too. This is in connection with the female plants' energetic development during and after male plants' flowering.

Figure 2. Influence of nutrient supply on dry matter accumulation  
(1990-1993, Szarvas)

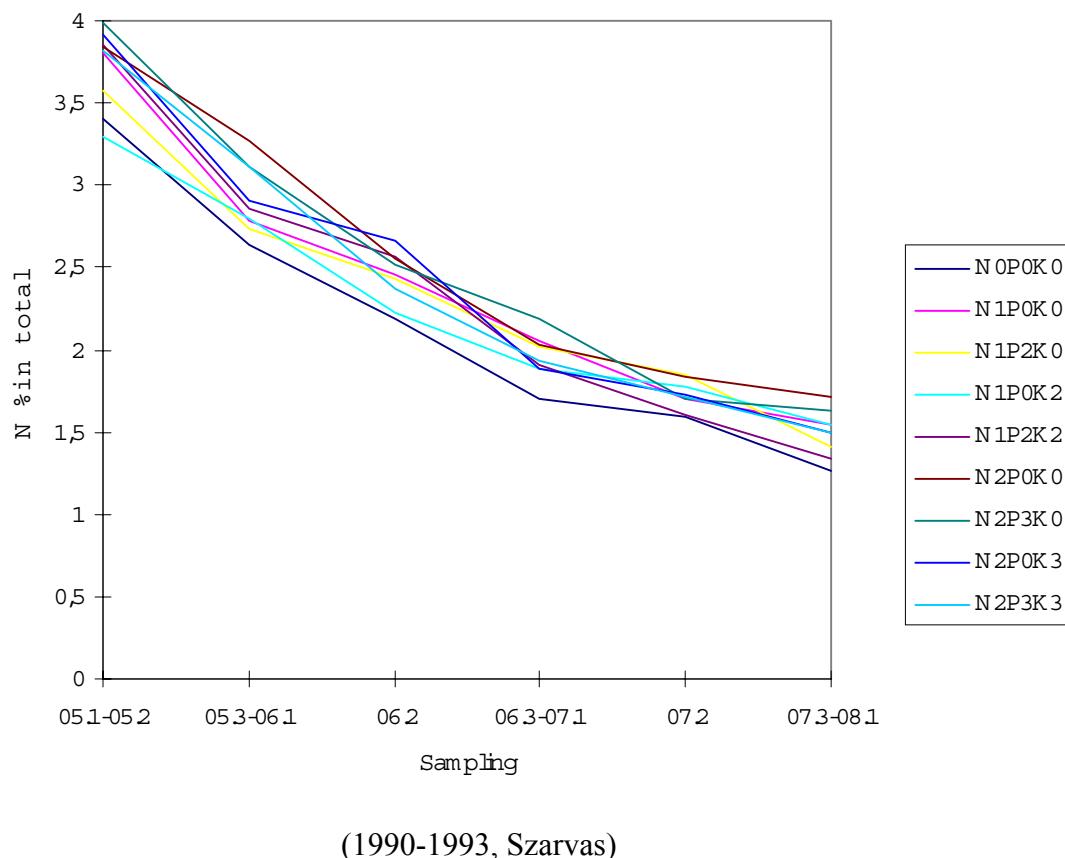


The N fertilization and its every P and K combination increased the dry matter yield of the hemp on chernozem meadow soil which had medium humus and P-, and high K content. The best result was given by N<sub>1</sub>P<sub>0</sub>K<sub>2</sub> treatment ( N<sub>1</sub>= 80 kgNha<sup>-1</sup>; P<sub>0</sub>= 110-130 ppm AL-P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> and K<sub>2</sub>= 360 AL-K<sub>2</sub>O level in the soil).

### 3.2. Changes of nutrient concentrations of fibre hemp

The best time to sampling of hemp for plant analysis is the end of May , because in this time the differences in nutrient supply are already expressed in the nutrient concentration and it is before the intensive dry matter accumulation.( Figure 3.)

Figure 3. The change of N content of fibre hemp



### 3.3. Nutrient accumulation

The intensive nutrient uptake of fibre hemp occur before the middle of June. Eighty-ninety percent of the total N, 70 % of the total P, 86 % of total K, 100 % of total Ca and 95 % of total Mg accumulated by the middle of June (Figure 4.).

To form high quantity (in the average of 4 experiment year  $13,57 \text{ tha}^{-1}$ ) and good quality stem yield needed maximum  $215 \text{ kgNha}^{-1}$ ,  $23 \text{ kgPha}^{-1}$  and  $234 \text{ kgKha}^{-1}$  (Figure 5., 6., 7.)

Figure 4. The dry matter and macronutrients uptake of fibre hemp  
(1990-1993, Szarvas)

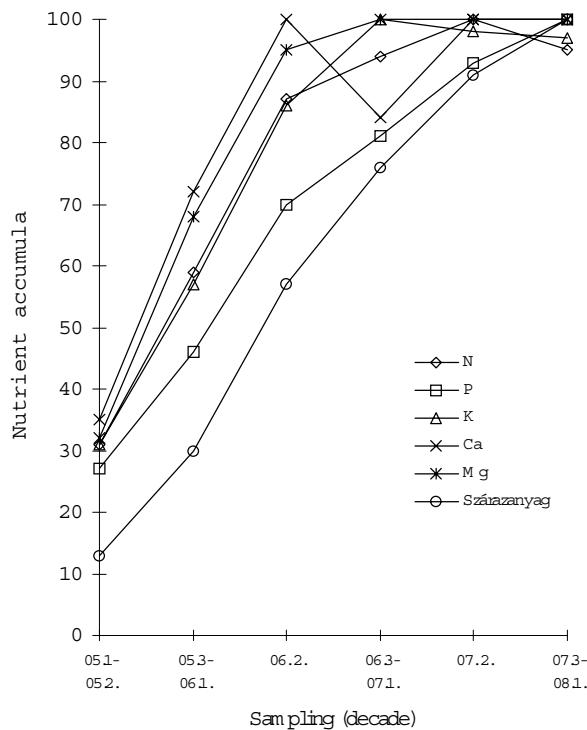


Figure 5. Influence of nutrients supply of N-uptake of fibre hemp  
(1991-1993, Szarvas)

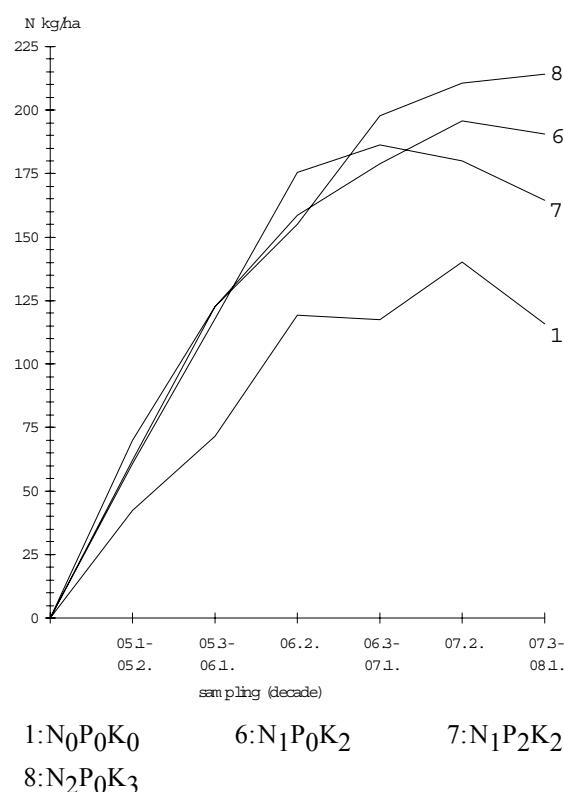


Figure 6. Influence of nutrient supply on P-uptake of fibre hemp  
(1991-1993, Szarvas)

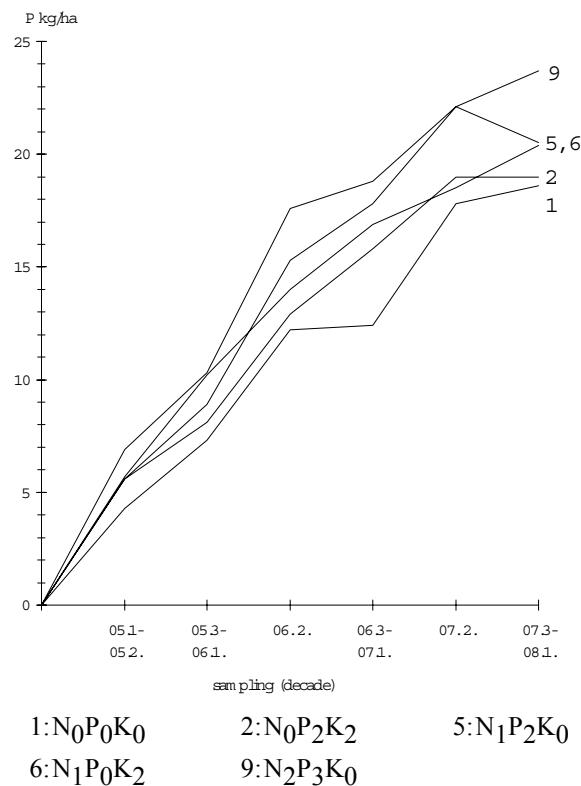
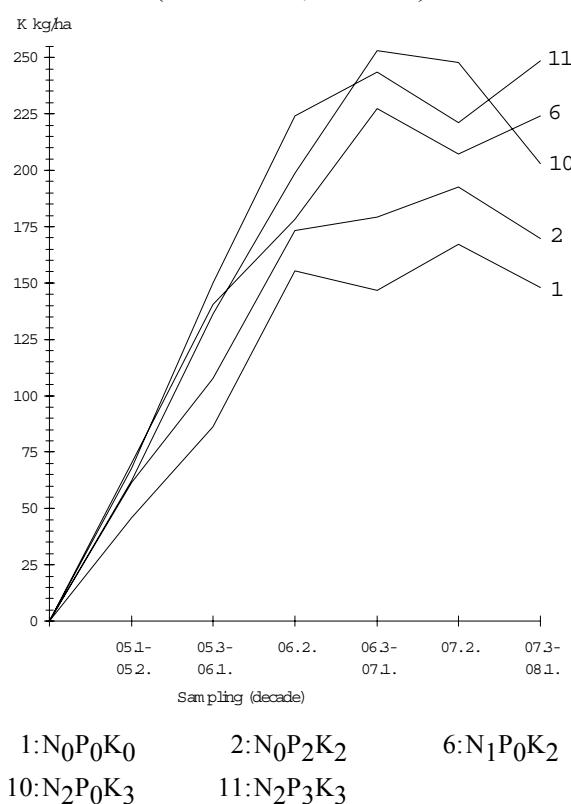


Figure 7. Influence of nutrient supply on K-uptake of fibre hemp  
(1991-1993, Szarvas)



### 3.4. The optimum time of the diagnostic plant analysis of fibre hemp

The optimum time of the diagnostic plant analysis of fibre hemp - on the bases of nutrient content, dry matter accumulation and nutrient uptake - is between in the end of May and the beginning of June, when the plants have 70-80 cm length and 4-5  $\text{tha}^{-1}$  dry matter weight. The fibre hemp nutrient supply limit value in the 5-6 couple of leaves are in the Table 3.

Table 3. The nutrient supply limit values of fibre hemp in the 5-6. leave couple (the just have finished their formation) (Szárvas, 1999)

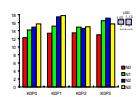
Nutrient	Low	Optimum	High
N %	< 5	5 - 6	6 <
P %	< 0,5	0,50 - 0,60	0,6 <
K %	< 2,50	2,70 - 3,00	3,30 <
Ca %	< 2,40	2,40 - 3,00	3,20 <
Mg %	< 0,60	0,60 - 0,80	0,80 -
Fe mg/kg	< 65	65 - 105	105 <
Mn mg/kg	< 85	85 - 130	130 -
Zn mg/kg	< 25	25 - 40	40 -
Cu mg/kg	< 2	2 - 5	5 <

### 3.5. The influence of nutrient supply on stem yield.

#### 3.5.1. The effects of N fertilization at different soil P levels

As shown in Figure 8., N fertilization resulted in significant stem yield increasing at all P levels of the soil as compared to the control.

Figure 8. The effect of N supply and P level of the soil on stem yield of fibre hemp (1990-1992, Szárvas)



$\text{P}_2\text{O}_5$  fertilization/4 years:

0      100/year      500      1000

Average AL- $\text{P}_2\text{O}_5$  ppm:

110      120      150      230

At P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>3</sub> level 80 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> and 160 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of N caused significant increase in stem yield but a further increase in the amount of N had no significant effect (Figure 8., Table 4.).

Table 4. The influence of N, P, K supplies on the yield of fibre hemp (1999, Szarvas)

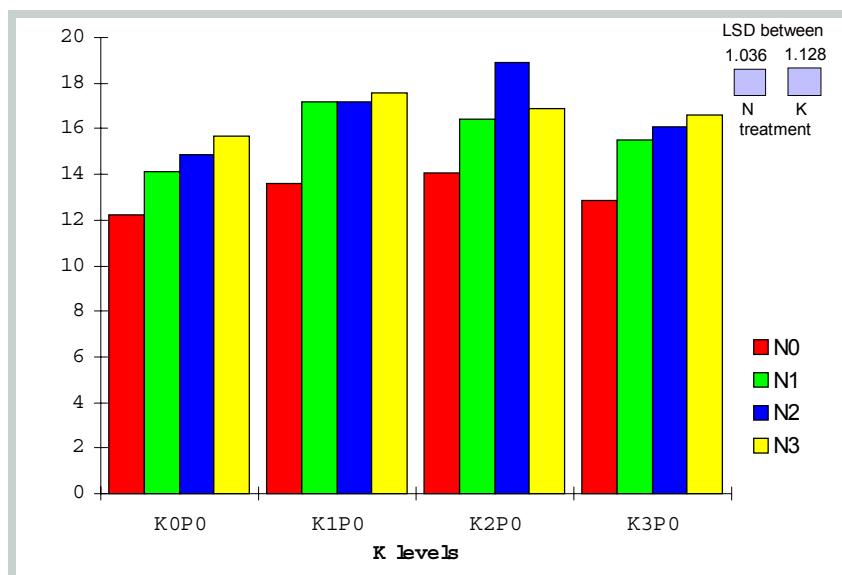
N-, P- supply	A <sub>1</sub>	A <sub>2</sub>	A <sub>3</sub>	A <sub>4</sub>	Average
	272	370	402	442	
	K <sub>0</sub>	K <sub>1</sub>	K <sub>2</sub>	K <sub>3</sub>	
<b>P<sub>0</sub> = 126 mg/kg AL-P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub></b>					
N <sub>0</sub> P <sub>0</sub>	3,61	7,01	6,09	5,72	5,60
N <sub>80</sub> P <sub>0</sub>	9,49	12,44	7,06	6,25	8,81
N <sub>160</sub> P <sub>0</sub>	10,13	13,32	7,56	10,48	10,37
N <sub>240</sub> P <sub>0</sub>	12,77	13,48	8,60	9,97	11,20
Average	9,00	11,56	7,32	8,10	8,99
<b>P<sub>1</sub> = 154 mg/kg AL-P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub></b>					
N <sub>0</sub> P <sub>1</sub>	10,80	7,62	5,70	8,88	8,25
N <sub>80</sub> P <sub>1</sub>	11,95	10,25	7,45	13,52	10,79
N <sub>160</sub> P <sub>1</sub>	12,22	14,91	13,81	14,84	13,94
N <sub>240</sub> P <sub>1</sub>	13,15	14,30	16,89	15,33	14,91
Average	12,03	11,77	10,96	13,14	11,97
<b>P<sub>2</sub> = 170 mg/kg AL-P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub></b>					
N <sub>0</sub> P <sub>2</sub>	7,62	10,85	6,30	9,64	8,60
N <sub>80</sub> P <sub>2</sub>	8,04	11,07	7,94	14,25	10,32
N <sub>160</sub> P <sub>2</sub>	12,00	12,44	9,77	17,21	12,85
N <sub>240</sub> P <sub>2</sub>	16,83	16,83	17,10	17,05	16,90
Average	11,12	12,74	10,22	14,53	12,16
<b>P<sub>3</sub> = 225 mg/kg AL-P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub></b>					
N <sub>0</sub> P <sub>3</sub>	10,96	8,05	8,93	9,64	9,39
N <sub>80</sub> P <sub>3</sub>	14,19	9,37	9,15	14,25	11,74
N <sub>160</sub> P <sub>3</sub>	14,04	10,85	9,15	16,21	12,56
N <sub>240</sub> P <sub>3</sub>	15,73	13,92	9,86	17,05	14,14
Average	13,73	10,54	9,27	14,28	11,95
In the average of P treatments					
N <sub>0</sub>	8,24	8,38	6,75	8,47	7,96
N <sub>80</sub>	10,91	10,78	7,90	12,06	10,41
N <sub>160</sub>	12,09	12,88	10,07	14,68	12,43
N <sub>240</sub>	14,62	14,58	13,11	14,85	14,29
Average	11,46	11,65	9,45	12,51	11,27

The P supply of the soil with no P fertilization of the experiment was between 110-130 ppm AL-P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>. This P supply level is considered sufficient on chernozem meadow soil for the fibre hemp, because with the annual application of 100 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> (P<sub>1</sub>) - preserving the supply level increased stem yield can be achieved. At higher P levels the stem yield did not increase significantly.

## 5.2. The effects of N fertilization at different soil K levels

K fertilization resulted in significant stem yield increase up to K<sub>2</sub> level, as shown in Figure 9 and Table 4..

Figure 9. The effect of N supply and K level of the soil on stem yield of fibre hemp (1990-1992, Szarvas)



K <sub>2</sub> O fertilization/4 years:				
0	300/year	600	1200	
Average AL-K <sub>2</sub> O ppm:				
280	320	360	390	

N fertilization resulted in a consistent increase in yield at all K levels compared to the control. The highest increase was found at K<sub>1</sub> and K<sub>2</sub> levels. The K supply of the soil (without K fertilization) was between 250-280 ppm AL-K<sub>2</sub>O in the experimental years. This K supply level is considered medium on chernozem meadow soil for the fibre hemp, because with K fertilization on better (K<sub>1</sub>-K<sub>2</sub>) supply level (300-400) ppm AL-K<sub>2</sub>O a 1-3 tha<sup>-1</sup> surplus can be achieved.

## 3.6. The specific nutrient uptake

The specific nutrient uptake of fibre hemp (18-19 tha<sup>-1</sup> stem yield).

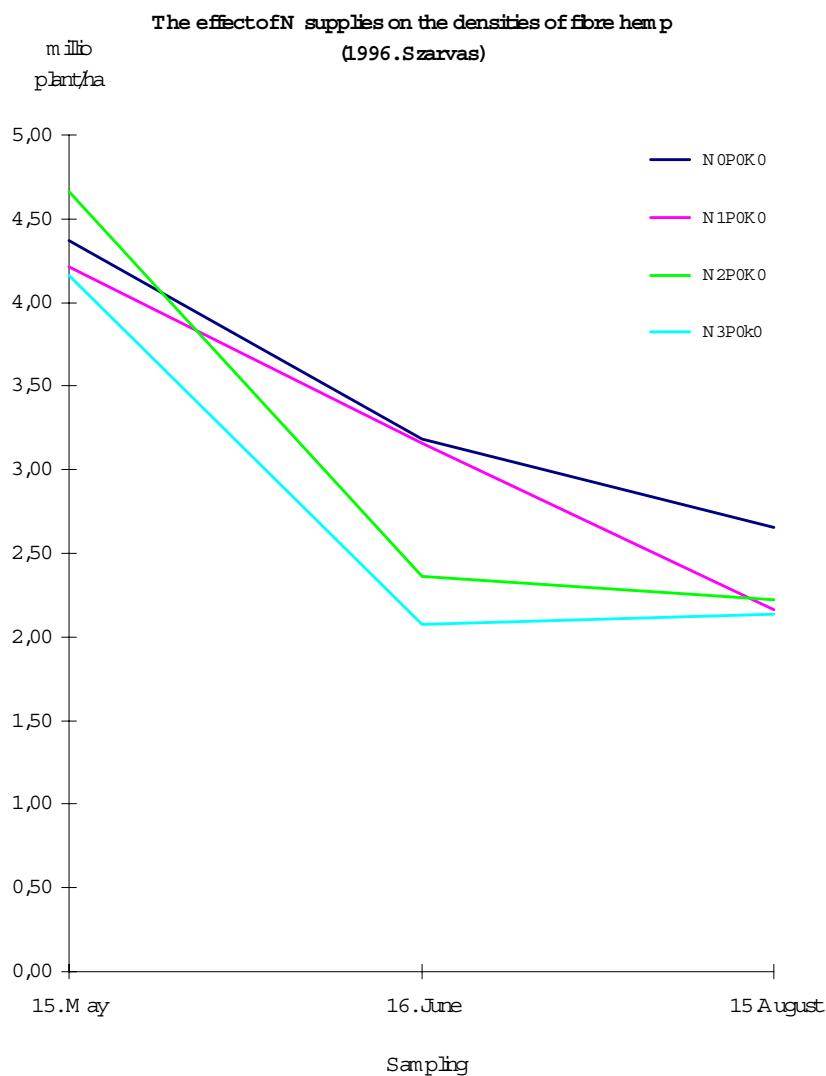
Specific nutrient uptake stem yield (+belong to leaves)								
kg t <sup>-1</sup>					g t <sup>-1</sup>			
N	P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	K <sub>2</sub> O	CaO	MgO	Fe	Mn	Cu	Zn
10-14	3,3-3,9	14-20	14-16	5-6	150-170	43-48	2,8-3,6	12,16

The reporting of specific nutrient uptake of fibre hemp helps to state precisely on specific nutrient requirement of hemp.

### 3.7. The density of hemp

The N fertilization decreased the number of plants during the growing season. From 4,5 million planted germs  $\text{ha}^{-1}$  we harvested only 2,29 million plants  $\text{ha}^{-1}$ . More N caused more self thinning (Figure 10.).

Figure 10. The effect of N supplies on the densities of fibre hemp  
(1996, Szarvas)



With 2,2 million planted germs  $\text{ha}^{-1}$  resulted in the same - 50 % - self-thinning. The quantity and the quality of stem yield was higher at 2,2 than 4,5 million planted germs  $\text{ha}^{-1}$  (Figure 11, 12.).

Figure 11.

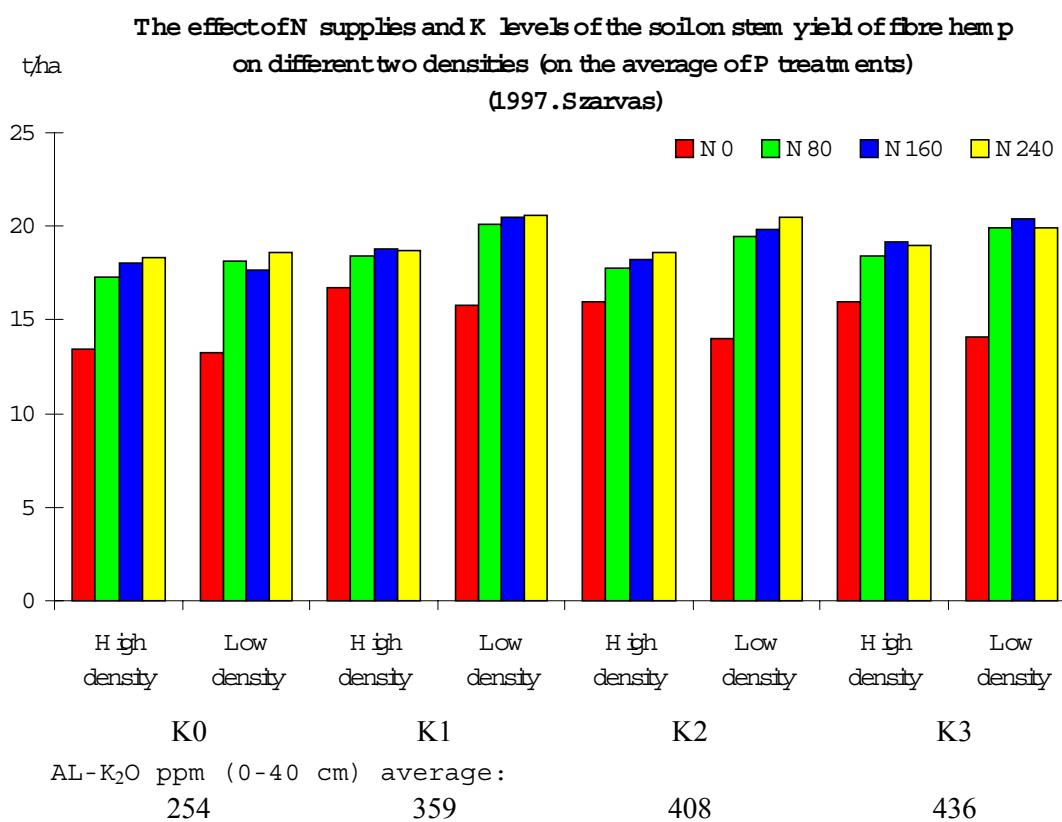
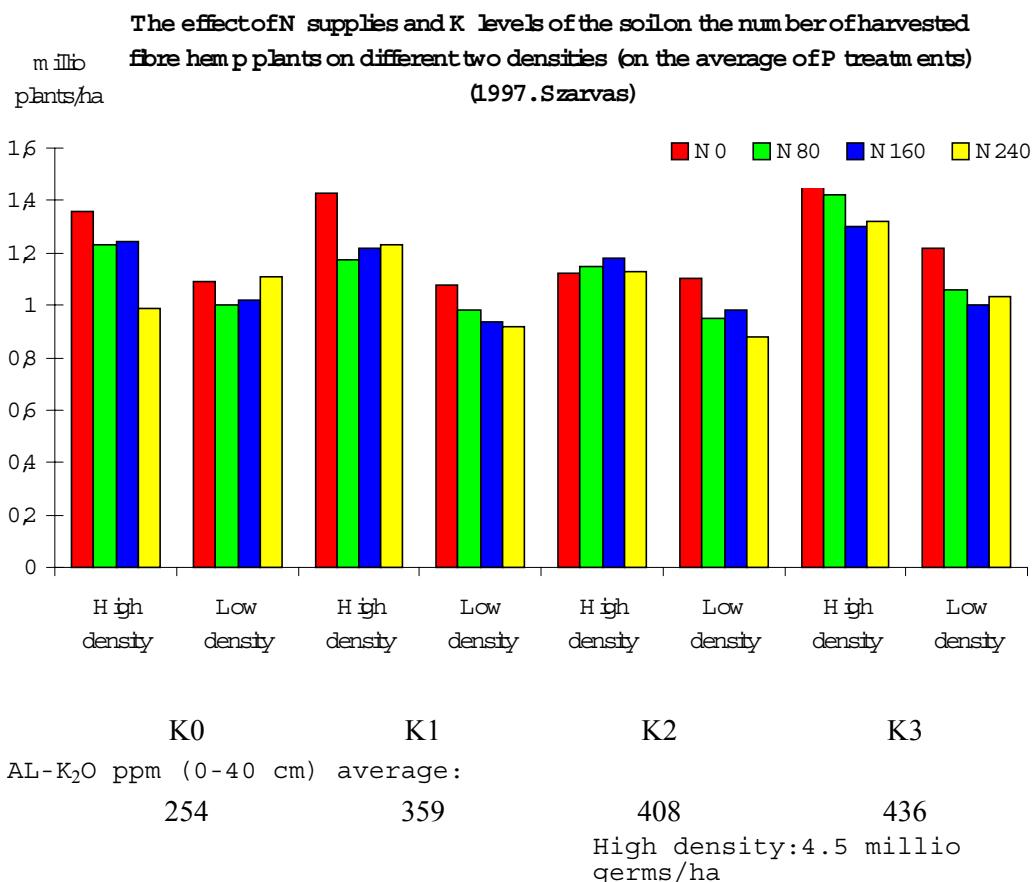


Figure 12.



Low density: 2.2 million  
germs/ha

Figure 13.

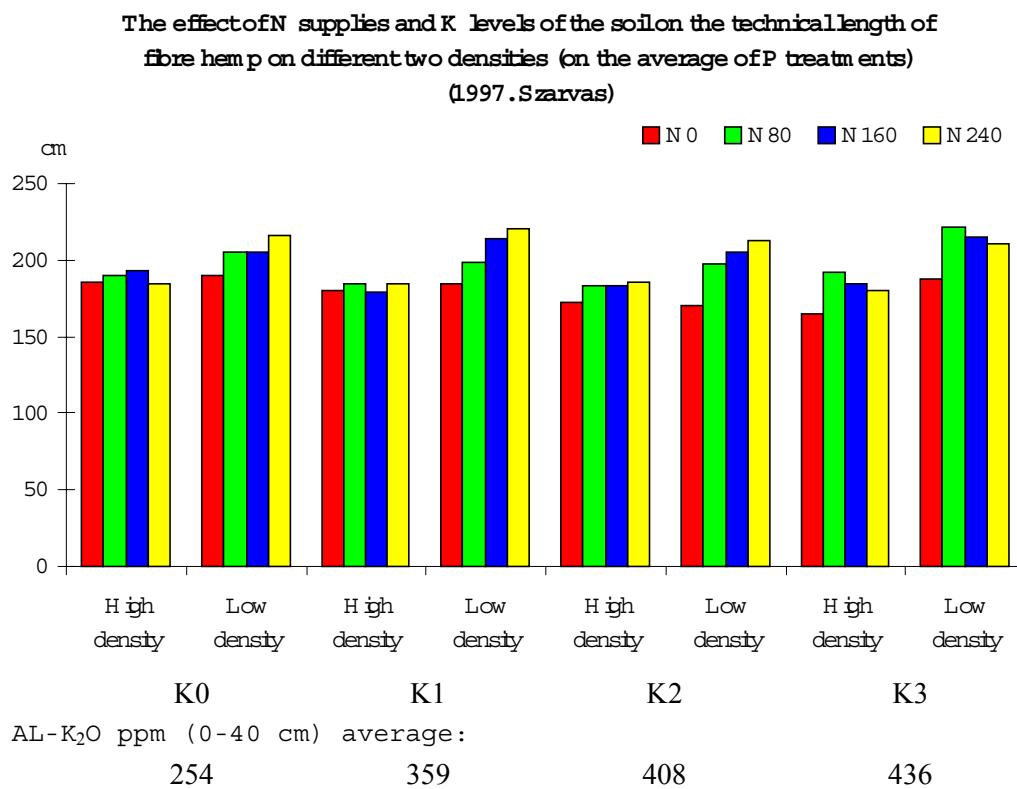
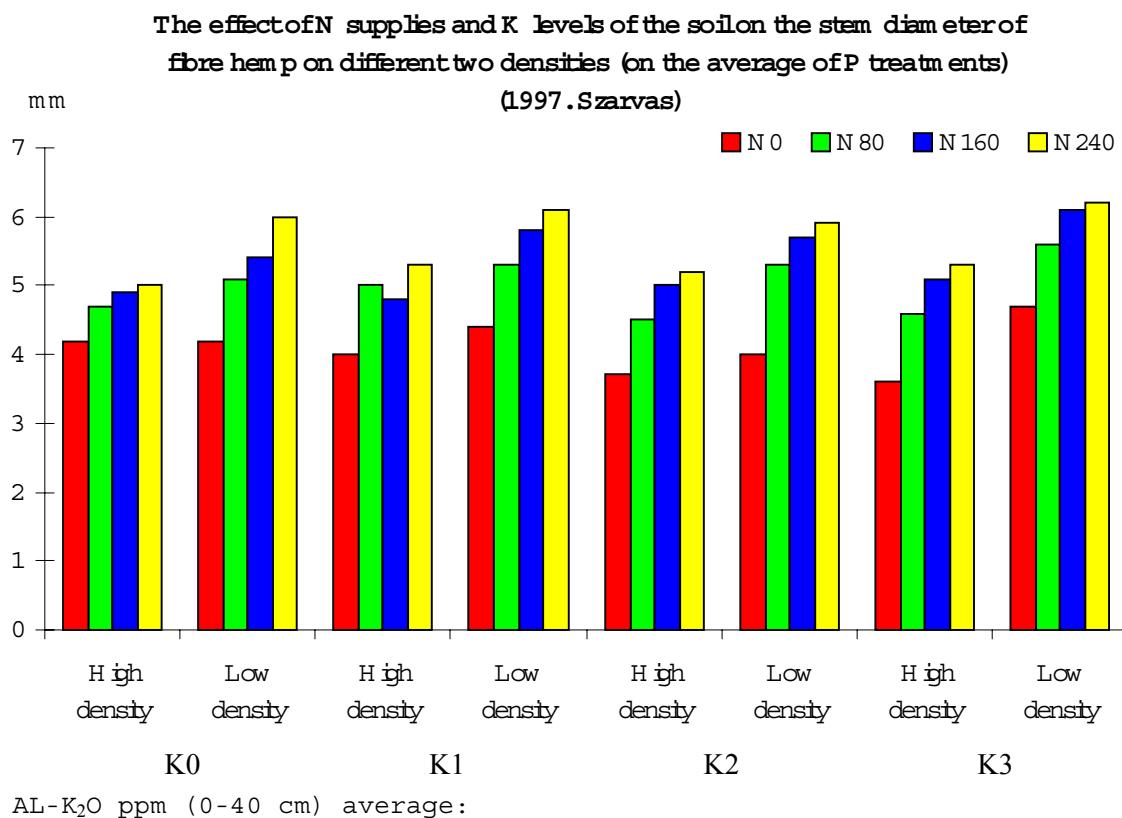


Figure 14.



254	359	408	436
		High density: 4.5 million germs/ha	
		Low density: 2.2 million germs/ha	

#### 4. CONCLUSION

We have determined the optimal plant analysis time for the Kompolt dioecious hemp variety. The optimal time under circumstances in Hungary is the end of May. We have determined this time based on drymatter accumulation, nutrient concentration and nutrient uptake.

At this time the plant is about 70-80 cm tall and has about 5-6 pairs of completely developed leaves. We have provided the optimal concentration for nine nutrients in the stage of 5-6 pairs of leaves.

We have determined the specific nutrient uptake of fibre hemp for nine nutrients. Under our circumstances for macronutrients these values are: 10-14 kg N, 3.3-3.9 kg P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> and 14-20 kg K<sub>2</sub>O.

For good yield on chernosom meadow soil with medium humus content fibrehemp needs maximum 80- 160 kg N ha<sup>-1</sup>. Soil with 110 - 160 ppm AL-P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> and 300 - 400 ppm AL-K<sub>2</sub>O content is sufficient, which can be maintained with a supply of 100 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> and 100-300 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> K<sub>2</sub>O.

For excellent quality hemp yield 2.5 million germsha<sup>-1</sup> is needed to plant. This also facilitates the hemp's weed-destruction ability.

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