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Liang Jin
Lanzhou University, China

Chang Wang
Lanzhou University, China

Fujiang Hou
Lanzhou University, China

Shenghua Chang
Lanzhou University, China

Guiqi Zhang
Lanzhou University, China

See next page for additional authors

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Presenter Information

Liang Jin, Chang Wang, Fujiang Hou, Shenghua Chang, Guiqi Zhang, and Xiaojuan Wang

Effects of grazing on AM colonization and spore density in arid grasslands of Loess Plateau

Liang Jin , Chang Wang , Fujiang Hou , Shenghua Chang , Guiqi Zhang , Xiaojuan Wang*
College of Pastoral Agriculture Science and Technology , Lanzhou University , Gansu Grassland Ecological Research Institute . P . O . Box 61 , Lanzhou 730020 , China . * Correspondence author's E-mail : xiaojuanwang@lzu.edu.cn

Key words : arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi , herbivores , Loess Plateau

Introduction Arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi (AMF) form symbioses with the roots of the majority of terrestrial plant species . These associations are generally considered mutualistic to both plants and fungi . However , few studies focused on the relationships among AMF , plants , and herbivores . The objective of this study was to investigate the effects of grazing on AM in arid grasslands of the Loess Plateau .

Materials and methods This study was conducted in Huanxian Ecological Research Area of Lanzhou University (N37°12' , E106° 82') , located in Loess Plateau , Gansu Province , China . Four grazing intensity plots (0 , 2.7 , 5.3 and 8.0 sheep hm²) were designed in 2002 . Every plot area is 5000 m² with 3 replicates . *Stipabungeana* and *Artemisiacapillaries* are the two dominant species in the grassland . The roots and rhizosphere soil from *S . bungeana* and *A . capillaries* with 20 replicates were randomly collected in every plot for determining AM colonization rates and spore densities in 2006 . Data were analysed using One-way ANOVA with SPSS (v13 .0) .

Results Our results showed that there were no significant difference ($P > 0.05$) in AM colonization rates of *S bungeana* and *A capillaries* for four grazing intensities (Figure 1) . AM colonization rates in the roots of *S bungeana* are higher in 5.3 and 8.0 sheep hm² treatments than CK . However , the rates of AM colonization of *A . capillaries* decreased while the grazing intensity increased . AMF spore densities in rhizosphere soil of *S . bungeana* and *A . capillaries* under four grazing intensities significantly decreased ($P < 0.05$) as grazing intensity increased (Figure 2) .

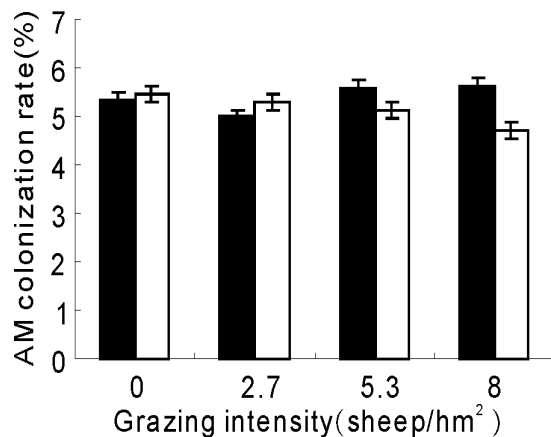


Figure 1 AMF spore density in the rhizosphere soil of *S . bungeana* and *A . capillaries* under four grazing .

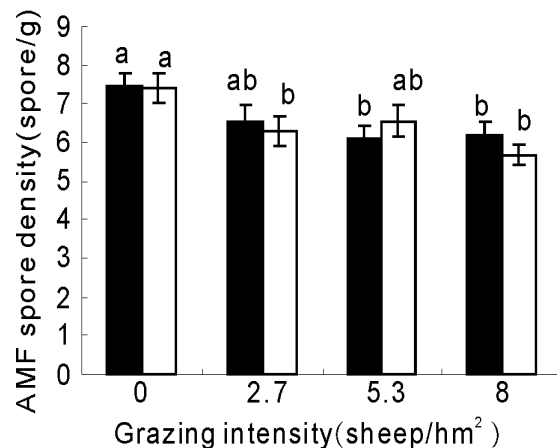


Figure 2 AMF colonization rate in roots of *S . bungeana* and *A . capillaries* under four grazing .

Note : The black bar shows the results of *S . bungeana* and the white bar shows the results of *A . capillaries* in Figure 1 and Figure 2 .

Discussion Our results showed that herbivores can regulate AMF colonization rates in various plants with different strategies . Aboveground consumers may reduce photosynthate translocated to the root system and available to mycorrhizal fungi , resulting in a reduction in AMF spore density in rhizosphere soil . In general , the grazing can result in a negative relationship with AMF sporeproduction .

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