INSTITUTO FEDERAL GOIANO - CAMPUS RIO VERDE DIRETORIA DE PESQUISA E PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM CIÊNCIAS AGRÁRIAS - AGRONOMIA

Proteção de plantas de soja contra os efeitos deletérios da restrição hídrica: papel do sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio e sulfeto de hidrogênio

Autora: Priscila Ferreira Batista Orientador: DSc. Alan Carlos Costa

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PROTEÇÃO DE PLANTAS DE SOJA CONTRA OS EFEITOS DELETÉRIOS DA RESTRIÇÃO HÍDRICA: PAPEL DO SULFATO DE ZINCO, FOSFITO DE POTÁSSIO E SULFETO DE HIDROGÊNIO

Autora: Priscila Ferreira Batista

Orientador: DSc. Alan Carlos Costa

Tese apresentada, como parte das exigências para a obtenção do título de DOUTORA EM CIÊNCIAS AGRÁRIAS - AGRONOMIA, no Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências Agrárias – Agronomia do Instituto Federal Goiano – Campus Rio Verde, Área de concentração em Produção Vegetal Sustentável no Cerrado.

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CAPÍTULO II.

LISTA DE SÍMBOLOS, ABREVIAÇÕES E UNIDADES

Α	Taxa fotossintética	$(\mu mol CO_2 m^{-2} s^{-1})$
Cl a	Clorofila <i>a</i>	$(\mu g \text{ cm}^{-2})$
Cl b	Clorofila b	$(\mu g \text{ cm}^{-2})$
CO_2	Dióxido de carbono	
Ε	Taxa transpiratória	$(\text{mmol H}_2\text{O m}^{-2}\text{ s}^{-1})$
ETR	Taxa de transporte de elétrons	$(\mu mol m^{-2} s^{-1})$
F ₀	Fluorescência inicial	
FSII	Fotossistema II	
F_v/F_m	Rendimento quântico potencial do fotossistema II	
g _s	Condutância estomática	$(mol H_2O m^{-2} s^{-1})$
H_2O_2	Peróxido de hidrogênio	
MDA	Malonaldeído	(mmol/g MF)
TBA	Ácido tiobarbitúrico	
TCA	Ácido triclorácetico	
SOD	Dismutase do superóxido	
CAT	Catalase	
APX	Peroxidase do ascorbato	
POX	Peroxidase	
$\Psi_{\rm w}$	Potencial hídrico	
CRA	Conteúdo relativo de água	
TLE	Taxa de liberação de eletrólitos	
ETR/A	Relação entre taxa aparente de transporte de	
	elétrons e assimilação de CO ₂	
Y _{NPQ}	Coeficiente de extinção não fotoquímica	
Φ_{PSII}	Rendimento quântico efetivo de conversão	
	fotoquímica de energia no FSII	

RESUMO GERAL

BATISTA, PRISCILA FERREIRA. Instituto Federal Goiano – Campus Rio Verde – GO, maio de 2018. Proteção de plantas de soja contra os efeitos deletérios da restrição hídrica: papel do sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio e sulfeto de hidrogênio. Orientador: Dsc. Alan Carlos Costa. Coorientadora Dsc^a. Caroline Müller

A restrição hídrica pode ocasionar, perdas drásticas na produção e qualidade dos grãos da soja e, consequentemente, decréscimo na rentabilidade do produtor. Essas informações nos alertam para a imprescindível busca por métodos alternativos para minimizar os efeitos negativos iminentes do déficit hídrico. Nesse cenário alguns compostos à base de macro e micronutrientes têm sido utilizados em estudos visando a potencialização da tolerância de plantas aos diferentes estresses abióticos. Dentre esses compostos destacam-se o sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio e sulfeto de hidrogênio. Assim, objetivou-se com este estudo avaliar as respostas fisiológicas, bioquímicas e morfológicas de plantas de soja tratadas com substâncias à base de nutrientes e expostas à restrição hídrica, além de determinar a dose adequada de cada composto avaliado. O presente trabalho está estruturado em dois capítulos. O capítulo 1 objetivou avaliar as respostas fisiológicas de plantas de soja tratadas com os compostos sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio e sulfeto hidrogênio e definir a dose potencial na mitigação dos efeitos deletérios do déficit hídrico. O estudo foi realizado com plantas de soja da cultivar NS 7000 IPRO-Nidera, cultivadas em substrato contendo solo e areia (2:1), previamente corrigidos e adubados, em casa de vegetação climatizada. As plantas de soja, ao atingirem o estádio de desenvolvimento V4, foram expostas ao déficit hídrico (50% capacidade máxima de retenção de água) e pulverizadas com sulfato de zinco (SZ; $0,0; 1,6; 33; 66,5; 100 \text{ g/L ha}^{-1}$, fosfito de potássio (FP; 0,0; 2,5; 5; 10; 20 mL/L ha $^{-1}$) e sulfeto de hidrogênio (SH; 0,0; 0,001; 0,003; 0,006; 0,014 mL/L ha⁻¹). Em paralelo,

plantas de soja foram pulverizadas com os mesmos compostos e doses supracitadas. Após oito dias da aplicação dos tratamentos, foram avaliadas as características fisiológicas e morfológicas das plantas de soja. Constatou-se que as doses de 1.6 g/L ha ¹ de sulfato de zinco, 2.5 mL/L ha⁻¹ de fosfito de potássio e 0,006 mL/L ha⁻¹ de sulfeto de hidrogênio foram eficazes ao impedir os efeitos deletérios do déficit hídrico nas plantas de soja, permitindo a manutenção das trocas gasosas e atividade fotoquímica com valores similares às plantas não submetidas ao estresse hídrico, além de evitar os danos nas membranas celulares. As doses previamente selecionadas no capítulo 1, foram utilizadas no estudo do capítulo 2, que objetivou avaliar as respostas nas características fisiológicas e no metabolismo de plantas de soja submetidas à restrição hídrica e tratadas com sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio e sulfeto hidrogênio, em dois estádios ontogênicos, a fim de verificar o papel destes compostos na proteção das plantas contra os efeitos deletérios do déficit hídrico. O experimento foi realizado nas mesmas condições descritas anteriormente, composto por duas reposições hídricas: plantas controle (PC, 100% CMRA, capacidade máxima de retenção de água) e déficit hídrico (DH, 50% CMRA); e aplicação de três compostos: sulfato de zinco (SZ, 1.6 g/L ha⁻¹), fosfito de potássio (FP, 2,5 mL/L ha⁻¹) e sulfeto de hidrogênio (SH, 0,006 mL/L ha⁻¹). Após oito dias de exposição aos tratamentos, foram avaliadas as características de trocas gasosas e atividade fotoquímica, concentração de pigmentos fotossintéticos, prolina e malonaldeído, permeabilidade de membranas, metabólico através do conteúdo de ácidos orgânicos e aminoácidos e alterações morfológicas nas plantas de soja. A aplicação desses compostos permitiu a manutenção dos parâmetros fotossintéticos e da integridade da membrana celular nas plantas de soja, pelo aumento do conteúdo de ácidos orgânicos e aminoácidos e das enzimas antioxidantes, tanto no estádio de desenvolvimento V4 como no estádio de desenvolvimento R1. Este estudo nos permitem propor que o fosfito de potássio, o sulfato de zinco e o sulfeto de hidrogênio atuam na sinalização de respostas indutoras ao déficit hídrico, cujas respostas finais ajudam a mitigar o déficit hídrico. Os compostos utilizados neste estudo possuem alto potencial na proteção de espécies agrícolas expostas a episódios de seca podendo reduzir, de modo significativo, os danos causados pela limitação hídrica.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Seca, Glycine max, Fotossíntese, Perfil metabólico

ABSTRACT

BATISTA, PRISCILA FERREIRA. Instituto Federal Goiano – Campus Rio Verde-GO, May 2018. Soybean plants protection against the deleterious effects of water restriction: the role of zinc sulfate, potassium phosphite and hydrogen sulphide. Advisor: Dsc. Alan Carlos Costa. Coadvisor: Dsc^a. Caroline Müller

The water restriction can cause drastic losses in the production and quality of the soybean grains and, consequently, decrease in the profitability of the producer. This information alerts us to the need of searching alternative methods to minimize the imminent negative effects of the water deficit. In this scenario some compounds based on macro and micronutrients have been used in studies aiming the potentiation of the plants tolerance to the different abiotic stresses. These compounds include zinc sulfate, potassium phosphite and hydrogen sulfide. Thus, the objective of this study was to evaluate the physiological, biochemical and morphological responses of soybean plants treated with nutrient-based substances exposed to water restriction, in addition to determining the appropriate dose of each compound evaluated. This paper is structured in two chapters. Chapter 1 aimed to evaluate the physiological responses of soybean plants treated with zinc sulfate, potassium phosphite and hydrogen sulfide the physiological responses of soybean plants treated with zinc sulfate, potassium phosphite and hydrogen sulfide the physiological responses of soybean plants treated with zinc sulfate, potassium phosphite and hydrogen sulfide compounds and to define the potential dose to mitigate the deleterious effects of water deficit. The study was carried out with soybean plants of the NS 7000 IPRO-Nidera cultivar,

cultivated in soil and sand (2:1) substrates, previously corrected and fertilized, under a heated vegetation. The soybean plants were exposed to the water deficit (50% maximum water retention capacity) and sprayed with zinc sulfate (SZ, 0.0, 0.1, 0.3; (PF 0.0, 0.7, 1.5, 3.0, 6.0 L c. p ha⁻¹), hydrogen sulphide (SH, 6; 1.6 L c. p ha⁻¹), potassium phosphite ; 0.0; 1.3; 3.9; 7.2; 14.5 L c. p ha⁻¹). In parallel, soybean plants were sprayed with the same compounds and doses mentioned above. After eight days of treatments application, the physiological and morphological characteristics of soybean plants were evaluated. It was found that the doses of 1.3 L c. p ha⁻¹zinc sulfate, 0.7 L c. p ha⁻¹ of potassium phosphite and 0.6 L c. p ha⁻¹ of hydrogen sulphide were effective in preventing the deleterious effects of water deficit in soybean plants, allowing the maintenance of gas exchanges and photochemical activity with values similar to plants not submitted to water stress, in addition to avoiding damage to cell membranes. The doses previously selected in chapter 1 were used in the study of chapter 2, which aimed to evaluate the responses in the physiological characteristics and the metabolism of soybean plants subjected to water restriction and treated with zinc sulfate, potassium phosphite and hydrogen sulfide, in two ontogenic stages, in order to verify the role of these compounds in the protection of plants against the deleterious effects of water deficit. The experiment was carried out under the same conditions described previously, composed of two water replenishments: control plants (100% MWRC, maximum water retention capacity) and water deficit (50% CMRA); (1.3 L c. p ha⁻¹), potassium phosphite (0.7 L c. p ha⁻¹) and hydrogen sulphide (0.6 L c. p ha⁻¹). After eight days of exposure to treatments, the characteristics of gaseous exchanges and photochemical activity, photosynthetic pigment concentration, proline and malonaldehyde, membrane permeability, metabolic profile through the content of organic acids and amino acids and morphological changes in soybean plants were evaluated. The compounds application allowed the maintenance of photosynthetic parameters and cell membrane integrity in soybean plants, by increasing the organic acids and amino acids contents and antioxidant enzymes, both in the V4 development stage and in the R1 development stage. This study allows us to propose that potassium phosphite, zinc sulfate and hydrogen sulfide act in signaling responses to water deficit, whose final responses help to mitigate the water deficit. The compounds used in this study have a high potential in the protection of agricultural species exposed to drought episodes and can significantly reduce the damage caused by water restriction.

KEY WORDS: Drought, Glycine max, Photosynthesis, Metabolic profile.

INTRODUÇÃO GERAL

A soja (Glycine max (L.) Merrill) é a principal cultura dentre as leguminosas produzidas no mundo (Bandillo et al., 2017), representando 61% da produção mundial de oleaginosas (Soystats, 2018). Os grãos de soja são utilizados em diferentes setores industriais, como na produção de farelo, farinhas, óleo, bebidas, biodiesel, dentre outros (Ferrari et al., 2005; Liao et al., 2008; Santos et al., 2014). O alto consumo dos produtos à base de soja tem ocasionado a constante expansão da produção global nos últimos 50 anos, ampliando o cultivo para regiões com menores níveis de precipitação, influenciando diretamente na rentabilidade da produção (Do et al., 2016; Bandillo et al., 2017). A expansão das áreas cultivadas associada à crescente instabilidade climática torna iminente que a produção da soja enfrente desafios em âmbito mundial (Garrett et al., 2013). No Brasil, tem ocorrido, nos últimos 10 anos, os piores períodos de seca já registrados, e tem afetado drasticamente a agricultura (Gutiérrez et al., 2014). A ocorrência de longos períodos de seca, resultante da diminuição da precipitação, denominados veranicos, tem sido cada vez mais frequente e intensa (Dai, 2013), e tem sido uma grande barreira para o setor agrícola mundial.

O déficit hídrico, por reduzir o conteúdo de água nas células, acarreta alterações morfofisiológicas, as quais podem culminar em severas perdas na produtividade das culturas. Li e colaboradores (2015) reportaram redução acentuada na taxa fotossintética líquida, na concentração de CO_2 intercelular, decorrentes da limitação estomática e desidratação do citoplasma, em plantas de batata sob restrição hídrica. Essas alterações fotossintéticas também podem estar relacionadas com perdas no conteúdo de pigmentos cloroplastídicos e na diminuição da expressão do gene que codifica a ativase da RuBisCO (Bayramov e Guliyev, 2014; Zhou et al., 2015). Adicionalmente, a restrição hídrica provoca a peroxidação de lipídios das membranas, tornando-as menos estáveis, mediante reações com espécies reativas de oxigênio (Martins et al., 2005; Ghobadi, et al., 2013; Zhou et al., 2015) e, por conseguinte, desencadeando o estresse oxidativo. Além dos lipídios das membranas, o estresse oxidativo acarreta oxidação de macromoléculas essenciais tais como ácidos nucleicos e proteínas (Apel e Hirt, 2004), podendo ocasionar a senescência prematura da planta (Baker and Orlandi 1995). Os efeitos resultantes de períodos de déficit hídrico, no entanto, são dependentes da duração e intensidade do estresse e, ainda, do cultivar e estádio de desenvolvimento da planta (Ambavaram et al., 2014; Mickelbart et al., 2015).

Nesse cenário, alguns compostos à base de macro e micronutrientes têm sido utilizados em estudos visando a potencialização da tolerância de plantas aos diferentes estresses abióticos. Dentre estes compostos, destacam-se o sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio e sulfeto de hidrogênio.

O sulfato de zinco (ZnSO₄), principal adubo foliar à base zinco (34%), apresenta grande relevância para o metabolismo vegetal, manutenção da integridade das membranas celulares e na síntese de proteínas (Jeshni et al., 2017). A pulverização desse adubo foliar em plantas de milho (Vazin, 2012) e camomila (Jeshni et al., 2017), expostas ao estresse hídrico, promoveu incremento no número de grãos e na produtividade de óleos essenciais, respectivamente. A mitigação do estresse hídrico por esse composto pode ser associada à sinalização do sistema antioxidante, importante para a manutenção das atividades fisiológicas das plantas (Monjezi e Hassanzadehdelouei, 2013; Zafar et al., 2014).

Fosfito de potássio, um sal inorgânico de ácido fosforoso (H₃PO₃), contém o fósforo como seu principal constituinte (39%) (Lovatt et al., 2006). Os sais do fosfito, de modo geral, são compostos de maior solubilidade em comparação aos sais análogos a base de fosfato (Lovatt et al., 2006), além de ser um produto de baixo custo. No vegetal, o fosfito apresenta translocação sistêmica via floema e xilema (Silva et al., 2011; Dalio et al., 2014). Estudos têm demonstrado a eficiência do fosfito na indução da tolerância a estresses bióticos e abióticos. Já é conhecida a ação do fosfito na defesa vegetal por atuar nas vias dependentes de ABA em resposta ao ataque de patógenos (Eshraghi et al., 2014). Além disso, o fosfito de potássio atua na estabilidade da maquinaria fotossintética e dos pigmentos cloroplastídicos, por potencializar o sistema

antioxidativo e evitar danos causados por espécies reativas de oxigênio em consequência a exposição à radiação UV-B (Oyarburo et al., 2015). O fosfito, ainda, aplicado de forma isolada, foi eficaz na manutenção do desenvolvimento das plantas, além de ocasionar aumento acentuado na produtividade de maracujá (Junqueira et al., 2011).

O sulfeto de hidrogênio (H₂S) é uma molécula de sinalização envolvida na modulação de processos fisiológicos das plantas submetidas ao estresse hídrico (Zhang et al., 2010; García-Mata e Lamattina, 2013). O sulfeto de hidrogênio atua como gasotransmissor na sinalização da célula guarda pelo controle estomático independente de ABA (García-Mata e Lamattina, 2013). Segundo os autores, ao se difundir nas células guarda, o H₂S pode modular diretamente a atividade de canais iônicos ou indiretamente por atuar nos transportadores de cálcio ou reguladores cGMPI (García-Mata e Lamattina, 2013). O sulfeto de hidrogênio também atuou ao favorecer a atividade da RuBisCO em plantas de cevada expostas ao estresse por alumínio (Chen et al., 2013) e no aumento do teor de clorofila em folhas de plantas de soja submetidas ao déficit hídrico (Zhang et al., 2010), características diretamente envolvidas no processo fotossintético. Sendo assim, a aplicação desse produto pode ser uma alternativa promissora para mitigar os efeitos da restrição hídrica em cultivares de soja.

Neste contexto, as integrações entre os dados fisiológicos, bioquímicos e morfológicos fornecerão informações importantes na mitigação do estresse hídrico, mediante a aplicação de sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio e sulfeto de hidrogênio.

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OBJETIVO

OBJETIVO GERAL

Objetivou-se com este estudo avaliar as respostas de compostos à base de macro e micronutrientes nas características fisiológicas, bioquímicas, morfológicas e metabólicas de plantas de soja expostas ao déficit hídrico.

OBJETIVOS ESPECÍFICOS

 Avaliar as respostas de diferentes doses de sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio, e sulfeto de hidrogênio nas características fisiológicas de plantas de soja expostas à restrição hídrica e determinar, para cada produto, uma dose potencial na mitigação dos danos ocasionados pela seca.

2. Avaliar alterações morfofisiológicas, bioquímicas e metabólicas de plantas de soja, em dois estádios ontogênicos, expostas ao déficit hídrico e tratadas com sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio e sulfeto hidrogênio.

3. CAPÍTULO I

FOTOSSÍNTESE E RELAÇÕES HÍDRICAS COMO INDICADORES DO PAPEL DO SULFATO DE ZINCO, FOSFITO DE POTÁSSIO E SULFETO DE HIDROGÊNIO NA PROTEÇÃO DE PLANTAS DE SOJA CONTRA OS EFEITOS DELETÉRIOS DA RESTRIÇÃO HÍDRICA

(Normas de acordo com a revista Plant Physiology and Biochemistry)

RESUMO

A restrição hídrica pode ocasionar alterações fisiológicas, metabólicas e morfológicas nas plantas de soja, acarretando perdas drásticas na produção e na qualidade dos grãos. O objetivo do presente estudo foi avaliar as respostas de diferentes doses de sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio, e sulfeto de hidrogênio nas características fisiológicas de plantas de soja expostas à restrição hídrica e determinar, para cada produto, uma dose potencial na mitigação dos danos ocasionados pela seca.. Neste estudo, foram realizados três experimentos independentes utilizando plantas de soja (cultivar NS 700 IPRO Nidera) cultivadas em substrato contendo solo e areia (2:1), em casa de vegetação climatizada. As plantas foram crescidas em condições hídricas adequadas até o estádio de desenvolvimento V4, quando então se realizou a imposição dos tratamentos. O tratamento hídrico foi imposto pela manutenção das plantas sob irrigação (100% da capacidade máxima de retenção de água, CMRA) e sob déficit hídrico (50% CMRA). E, em paralelo, para cada experimento, foram realizadas aplicações foliares de sulfato de zinco (SZ; 0,0; 1,6; 33; 66,5; 100 g/L ha⁻¹), fosfito de potássio (FP; 0,0; 2,5; 5; 10; 20 mL/L ha⁻¹) e sulfeto de hidrogênio (SH; 0,0; 0,001; 0,003; 0,006; 0,014 mL/L ha⁻¹). Os experimentos foram conduzidos em delineamento experimental de blocos ao acaso, em esquema fatorial 2×5 , composto por dois níveis de imposição hídrica e cinco dosagens do produto, com quatro repetições. Após oito dias da imposição dos tratamentos foram avaliados os parâmetros de potencial hídrico, suculência foliar, conteúdo relativo de água, concentração de pigmentos cloroplastídicos, trocas gasosas, fluorescência da clorofila a, taxa de liberação de eletrólitos e características biométricas. No presente estudo, constatou-se que as doses de 1,6 g/L ha⁻¹ de sulfato de zinco, 2,5 mL/L ha⁻¹ de fosfito de potássio e 0,006 mL/L ha⁻¹ de sulfeto de hidrogênio impedem os efeitos deletérios do déficit hídrico em plantas de soja ao evitar os danos nas membranas celulares e assim permitir a manutenção das trocas gasosas e a eficiência fotoquímica em valores similares às plantas não estressadas, sendo essas alternativas promissoras diante do estresse.

Palavra Chave: *Glycine max* L.; adubação foliar; déficit hídrico; características morfofisiológicas.

ABSTRACT

The water restriction can cause physiological, metabolic and morphological changes in soybean plants, leading to drastic losses in grain yield and quality. The objective of the present study was to evaluate the responses of different doses of zinc sulfate, potassium phosphite, and hydrogen sulphide to the physiological characteristics of soybean plants exposed to water restriction and to determine, for each product, a potential dose in the damages mitigation (NS 700 IPRO Nidera cultivar) cultivated in a substrate containing soil and sand (2: 1), in an indoor greenhouse. The plants were grown under adequate water conditions until the V4 development stage, when the treatments were applied. The water treatment was imposed by keeping the plants under irrigation (100% of the maximum water retention capacity, MWRC) and under water deficit (50% MWRC). At the same time, for each experiment, foliar applications of zinc sulfate (SZ; 0.0; 1.6; 33; 66.5; 100 g/L ha⁻¹), potassium phosphite (FP; 0.0; 2.5; 5; 10; 20 mL/L ha⁻¹), and hydrogen sulfide (SH, 0.0, 0.001, 0.003, 0.006, 0.014 mL/L ha⁻¹) were done. The experiments were conducted in a randomized complete block design, in a 2×5 factorial scheme, composed of two levels of water stress and five product dosages, with four replications. After eight days of treatment imposition, parameters of water potential, succulence, relative water content, chloroplastidic pigments concentration, gas exchange, chlorophyll a fluorescence, electrolyte release rate and biometric characteristics were evaluated. In the present study, it was found that the doses of 1.6 g/L ha⁻¹ of zinc sulfate, 2.5 mL/L ha⁻¹ of potassium phosphite and 0.006 mL/L of ha⁻¹ of hydrogen sulfide avoid the deleterious effects of water deficit in soybean plants by avoiding damage to cell membranes and allowing the maintenance of gas exchange and photochemical efficiency in values similar to non-stressed plants and these are promising alternatives in the face of stress.

KEY WORDS: *Glycine max* L.; foliar fertilization; water deficit; morphological characteristics.

3.1. Introdução

A soja (Glycine max (L.) Merrill) é a oleaginosa mais amplamente cultivada no mundo (Bandillo et al., 2017), possuindo um elevado valor econômico devido ao grão e inúmeros produtos de seus derivados, como farelo, óleo, dentre outros, além da alta geração de empregos (Hirakuri e Lazzarotto, 2014). Nas últimas décadas foi a cultura com maior expansão no Brasil, correspondendo atualmente a 49,45% da área nacional plantada (CONAB, 2018). A liderança nas exportações do agronegócio brasileiro, posiciona a soja e derivados como responsável por 34% do Produto Interno Bruto, gerando em torno de 23 bilhões ao ano (Fraga 2017; CONAB, 2018). A região Centro Oeste é a maior produtora de soja, representando quase metade da produção nacional (CONAB, 2018). Entretanto, devido à instabilidade climática, tem se intensificado nessa região períodos de chuvas escassas e mal distribuídas. Os denominados períodos de veranicos têm coincidido com os estádios de desenvolvimento vegetativo (V4) e reprodutivo (R1), os quais são considerados críticos para a produtividade da sojicultura (Marcuzzo et al., 2012; CONAB, 2013). A restrição hídrica pode ocasionar perdas drásticas na produção e na qualidade dos grãos da soja e, consequentemente, afetar a rentabilidade do produtor. Reduções de até 80% da produtividade da soja já foram registradas em decorrência de períodos de secas prolongadas no Brasil (Faria et al., 2007).

O déficit hídrico promove alterações fisiológicas, metabólicas e morfológicas nas plantas. Dentre os danos fisiológicos, destacam-se efeitos iniciais no *status* hídrico, o qual altera o controle estomático, afetando as taxas transpiratórias e fotossintéticas das plantas (Ambavaram et al., 2014). De acordo com a severidade do estresse, pode ocorrer o aumento na produção de espécies reativas de oxigênio que resultarão na peroxidação de lipídios das membranas celulares (Ghobadi, et al., 2013). A permanência desse estresse promove, ainda, o murchamento da folha comprometendo o crescimento e a sobrevivência das plantas (Cavalcante et al., 2009; do Carmo Araújo e Deminicis, 2009). Essas informações alertam para a imprescindível busca por métodos que auxiliem na mitigação dos efeitos do déficit hídrico em plantas de soja.

Dentre os possíveis métodos, compostos à base de macro e micronutrientes têm sido estudados nos últimos anos visando potencializar a tolerância de plantas ao déficit hídrico (Waraich et al., 2011; Vazin, 2012). Já foi observado aumento no rendimento do grão de milho diante da aplicação foliar de zinco (Liu et al., 2016) e manutenção do desenvolvimento, juntamente com aumento na produtividade de maracaju diante da aplicação de fosfito (Junqueira et al., 2011) atuando diretamente na lucratividade das colheitas (Kuwahara e Souza, 2009; Khoshgoftarmanesh et al., 2011). Dentre os compostos, o sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio e sulfeto de hidrogênio tem sido promissor para o aumento de tolerância de plantas a estresses.

O sulfato de zinco, atualmente utilizado como adubo foliar, é facilmente translocado pelo floema para as diferentes partes das plantas (Ibrahim e Ramadan, 2015). Tem sido relatado que a aplicação foliar de ZnSO₄ aumentou o rendimento e a qualidade das sementes de soja (Pandey et al., 2013), além de promover o incremento nos parâmetros de crescimento, produtividade e qualidade de grãos de plantas de milho Khalid et al. (2013). Os benefícios do sulfato de zinco também foram observados em plantas de trigo (Monjezi e Hassanzadehdelouei, 2013) e girassol (Zafar et al., 2014) expostas ao estresse hídrico. Segundo os autores, o sulfato de zinco desencadeou efeito positivo nas características fotossintéticas e no ajustamento osmótico, pelo conteúdo de prolina em plantas submetidas ao estresse hídrico, demonstrando ser uma alternativa promissora para a atenuação dos danos da restrição hídrica em plantas.

O fosfito de potássio, composto por sais inorgânicos de ácido fosforoso, tem sido descrito por atenuar estresses biótico (Oyarburo et al., 2015). O fosfito de potássio aumentou acentuadamente a produtividade de maracujá em comparação com outros compostos (Junqueira et al., 2011). No entanto, o papel do fosfito de potássio nas plantas pode variar em função da sua concentração no tecido, além de ser espécie dependente. Plantas de eucalipto submetidas a estresse por patógenos, apresentaram fitotoxicidade com lesões em função da pulverização com fosfito de potássio em duas diferentes dosagens (2,5 g L⁻¹ e 10 g L⁻¹) (Pilbeam, et al., 2011). Entretanto, a dosagem de 5 g L⁻¹ de fosfito de potássio em plantas de faia-europeia, também submetidas ao estresse por patógenos, permitiu a manutenção da eficiência fisiológica dessas plantas

O sulfeto de hidrogênio (H_2S), por ser uma molécula de sinalização, está envolvida na modulação de processos como aumento no teor de clorofila e na biomassa de plantas de soja submetidas ao déficit hídrico (Zhang et al., 2010). Esse composto atua, ainda, na indução da capacidade antioxidante e diminuição da concentração de espécies reativas de oxigênio em plantas de ervilha submetidas ao estresse por arsênio (Singh et al., 2015). Ressalta-se que o papel de sulfeto de hidrogênio nas plantas pode variar em função da concentração utilizada. Produtos à base de H₂S, em concentrações baixas, pode atuar como doador de elétrons e estimular a síntese de ATP, que é essencial para a redução do carbono (Hu et al., 2015). Plantas de cevada pulverizadas com sulfeto de hidrogênio apresentaram aumento no sistema antioxidante, no aumentando a expressão da H⁺-ATPase submetidas ao estresse por alumínio (Chen et al., 2013). Em concentrações mais elevadas pode causar a inibição na produção de ATP, abscisão foliar precoce, lesões nas folhas e, consequentemente, redução no crescimento das plantas (Hu et al., 2015).

Neste contexto, a avalição de diferentes doses de sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio e sulfeto de hidrogênio em plantas de soja expostas ao déficit hídrico, fornecerão informações para a identificação de compostos e doses eficazes na mitigação do estresse hídrico nessa cultura. Sendo assim, foi avaliada a hipótese de que o sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio e sulfeto de hidrogênio, podem induzir a tolerância de plantas de soja à restrição hídrica. Portanto, o objetivo do presente estudo foi avaliar respostas de diferentes doses de sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio e sulfeto de hidrogênio nas características fisiológicas de plantas de soja expostas à restrição hídrica e determinar, para cada produto, uma dose potencial na mitigação dos danos ocasionados pela seca.

3.2. Material e Métodos

3.2.1. Material vegetal, desenho experimental e condições experimentais

Os experimentos foram conduzidos em casa de vegetação climatizada do Instituto Federal Goiano – Campus Rio Verde, Goiás, Brasil. Nestes estudos, foram utilizadas plantas de soja da cultivar NSRO 7000 IPRO (Bayer, Rio Verde -GO), sendo essa uma cultivar indicada para a região Centro-Oeste do Brasil, de alta tecnologia e rendimento (Nidera, 2016).

Foram realizados três experimentos independente em estádios de desenvolvimento V4, sendo esse o considerados o estádio mais críticos para a produtividade da sojicultura. As plantas foram cultivadas em vasos de polietileno contendo 3L de substrato. O substrato foi preparado a partir de uma mistura de solo Latossolo Vermelho distroférrico (LVdf) e areia (2:1) corrigido com calcário dolomítico PNRT 100, para 60% da saturação da base. O substrato foi fertilizado com solução nutritiva de acordo com análise química do solo e recomendação para solos de Cerrado, contendo ureia, fosfato de mono-amônio, cloreto de potássio, sulfato de magnésio, cobre, zinco e ácido bórico (Sousa e Lobato, 1996). Para obtenção das plantas, inicialmente, foram semeadas dez sementes por vaso, e após a germinação, efetuou-se o desbaste, mantendo apenas uma planta por vaso.

O regime de água foi implementado através da reposição hídrica em duas condições: plantas controle (irrigadas) (PC, 100% capacidade máxima de retenção de água - CMRA) e déficit hídrico (DH, 50% CMRA). O controle da água do solo foi mantido pelo método gravimétrico.

Os compostos pulverizados foram aplicados em cinco diferentes doses, sendo: sulfato de zinco (ZS; ZnSO₄ · 7H₂O, Sigma-Aldrich, Saint Louis, MO, EUA), nas doses 0.0 (controle); 1,6; 33; 66,5; 100 g/L ha⁻¹; fosfito de potássio (PP; GRAP PHILL, 30% de P₂O₅, 20% de K₂O) pulverizado nas doses 0.0 (controle); 2,5;5;10;20 mL/L ha⁻¹ e sulfeto de hidrogênio (HS; doador de NaHS de H₂S, Sigma-Aldrich, Saint Louis, MO, EUA), nas doses 0,0 (controle); 0,001; 0,003; 0,006; 0,014 mL/L ha⁻¹. Os compostos foram aplicados no momento em que as plantas atingiram os tratamentos hídricos previamente definidos. A aplicação dos compostos foi realizada utilizando um pulverizador costal (Herbicat® Catanduva, Brasil) com pressão constante mantida por CO₂ comprimido (5 kgf cm⁻²), munido de barra com quatro pontas de pulverização e bicos tipo leque (Teejet, modelo XR110/02VP). Os produtos foram aplicados no início da manhã.

As avaliações foram realizadas, em cada experimento, oito dias após a imposição do déficit hídrico e aplicação dos compostos. O desenho experimental consistiu em

blocos ao acaso em esquema fatorial 2×5 , sendo duas reposições hídricas (100% e 50% capacidade máxima de retenção de água - CMRA) x cinco dosagens, com quatro repetições.

3.2.2 Detalhamento das avaliações

3.2.2.1 Trocas gasosas, fluorescência da clorofila a e teor de clorofilas a

As trocas gasosas das plantas foram avaliadas para registro da taxa fotossintética (A, µmol CO₂ m⁻² s⁻¹), condutância estomática (g_s , mol H₂O m⁻² s⁻¹) e transpiração (E, mmol H₂O m⁻² s⁻¹). As avaliações foram realizadas em folhas completamente expandidas, utilizando o analisador de gases no infravermelho (IRGA; LI6400xt, Licor, Nebraska, EUA), com radiação fotossinteticamente ativa constante (1000 µmol m⁻² s⁻¹), concentração atmosférica de CO₂ (Ca, ~400 µmol mol⁻¹) e temperatura (ou ~25 °C) e umidade relativa (~70 %) ambientes.

As avaliações da fluorescência da clorofila *a* foram realizadas nas mesmas folhas utilizadas para as avaliações das trocas gasosas, utilizando um fluorômetro modulado (IRGA; LI6400xt, Licor, Nebraska, EUA) acoplado ao IRGA. Inicialmente, as folhas foram adaptadas ao escuro para que os centros de reação estivessem completamente abertos (aceptores primários oxidados) com perda de calor mínima, permitindo obter as variáveis de indução da fluorescência: fluorescência inicial (F₀) e fluorescência máxima (F_m). A partir desses valores foi calculado o rendimento quântico potencial do fotossistema II (FSII; $F_v/F_m = (F_0-F_m)/F_m$) (Genty et al., 1989). As variáveis da fase lenta foram obtidas após a aplicação de uma iluminação actínica, seguida de um pulso de luz actínica saturante para a determinação da fluorescência steady-state (F) e da fluorescência máxima em amostra adaptada à luz (Fm'), respectivamente, permitindo calcular o rendimento quântico efetivo de conversão fotoquímica de energia no FSII $(\Phi_{PSII}) = (F_m'-F) / F_m'$ e o coeficiente de extinção não fotoquímico $(Y_{NPQ} = (F_m-F_m') / F_m')$ F_m) (Genty et al. 1989). O Φ_{PSII} foi utilizado ainda para estimar a taxa aparente de transporte de elétrons (ETR = $\Phi_{PSII} \times PAR \times Leaf_{ABS} \times 0.5$) (Bilger et al., 1995), em que PAR é o fluxo de fótons (μ mol m⁻² s⁻¹) incidente sobre a folha; *Leaf_{ABS}* correspondente à fração de luz incidente absorvida pelas folhas e 0,5 à fração de energia de excitação distribuída para o FSII (Laisk e Loreto, 1996). A relação entre taxa aparente de transporte de elétrons e a assimilação de CO_2 (*ETR/A*) foi calculada de acordo com Ribeiro et al. (2009).

O teor de clorofilas *a* (Cl*a*) foi determinado por um clorofilômetro (Clorofilog, modelo CFL-1030, FALKER, Automação Agrícola, Porto Algre, RS, Brasil),

3.2.2.2 Potencial hídrico, conteúdo relativo de água e suculência foliar

O potencial hídrico foliar na antemanhã (Ψ_w) foi medido usando câmara de pressão do tipo Scholander (modelo 3005-1412, Soilmoisture Equipment Corp., Goleta, CA, EUA).

Para obtenção do conteúdo relativo de água (CRA) e suculência foliar, foram coletadas entre as 08h e as 10 horas 15 discos foliares (0.5 cm^2) e foram pesados para obtenção da massa fresca (MF) e imersos em água destilada por seis horas. Em seguida, pesou-se a massa túrgida (MT) e, após secagem dos discos em estufa a 65°C por 48 horas, a massa seca (MS). O conteúdo relativo de água (CRA % =[MF-MS]/[MT-MS]x 100) foi calculado segundo a metodologia descrita por Barrs e Weatherley (1962). A suculência da folha foi determinado usando a equação: suculência = (MF)/(área), e expresso como mg MF cm² (Silveira et al., 2009).

3.2.2.3 Extravasamento de eletrólitos

A permeabilidade de membranas foi avaliada pela taxa de liberação de eletrólitos (TLE). Discos foliares (3 cm²) foram imersos em 30 mL de água destilada e mantidos à temperatura ambiente por 24 horas. Após esse período, a condutividade livre (CL, μ S cm⁻¹) das amostras foi avaliada em condutivímetro e, após acondicionamento dos tubos em estufa a 100 °C, obteve-se a condutividade total (CT, μ S cm⁻¹). A taxa de liberação de eletrólitos (TLE (%) = CL/CT x 100) foi calculada de acordo com a metodologia descrita por Vasquez-Tello et al. (1990) e Pimentel et al. (2002). As folhas foram coletadas entre as 08 e as 10 horas.

3.2.2.4 Análises biométricas

As plantas foram mensuradas para a determinação da altura (cm) e diâmetro do caule (mm). As folhas e os caules foram coletados e secos de forma individualizada em estufa de circulação forçada de ar (65 °C), até peso constante, para obtenção da massa seca das folhas (g) e massa seca dos caules (g).

3.2.2.5 Análise estatística

Os dados fatoriais obtidos foram submetidos à análise de variância (p < 0,05) (Apêndice 1), para as doses foram comparados pelo teste de Tukey. As análises estatísticas foram realizadas por meio do software Sisvar (SISVAR, versão 5.4).

3.3. Resultados

3.3.1. Trocas gasosas e clorofila a e teor de clorofilas a

Foi observado efeito melhorador na clorofila *a* (Cl*a*) em plantas de soja tratadas com sulfato de zinco na dosagem dose de 1,6 g/L ha⁻¹, do fosfito de potássio em ambas as dosagens e do sulfeto de hidrogênio em doses elevadas (> 0,003 mL/L ha⁻¹), mesmo diante do déficit hídrico (Figura 1). Valores menores foram observados em plantas de soja submetidas somente ao DH.

A taxa fotossintética (*A*) das plantas de soja reduziu em mais de 54% sob DH (Figura 1) em ambos experimentos. Assim como a *A*, o DH reduziu pronunciadamente a condutância estomática (g_s) e a taxa transpiratória (*E*) das plantas de soja nos experimentos, com valores em torno de 0,177 mol H₂O m⁻² s⁻¹ e 2,11 mmol m⁻² s⁻¹, respectivamente (Figura 1).

O sulfato de zinco e o fosfito de potássio, nas menores doses aplicadas, mantiveram nas plantas de soja a *A* similares ao controle (Figura 1), diferentemente do observado nas maiores doses destes compostos. Já o sulfeto de hidrogênio na dose de 0,006 mL/L ha⁻¹, também reverteu os efeitos deletérios do DH sobre as plantas de soja, mantendo estáveis os valores de da *A*, *gs* e *E* mesmo sob condições de estresse (Figura 1).



Figura 1. Clorofila *a* (Cl*a*), taxa fotossintética (*A*), condutância estomática (g_S) e taxa transpiratória (*E*) de plantas de soja controle (PC) e sob déficit hídrico (DH) tratadas com diferentes doses de sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio e sulfeto de hidrogênio, por um período de oito dias. Médias seguidas de pelo menos uma mesma letra maiúscula, dentro e, minúscula entre doses, não diferem entre si pelo teste de Tukey ao nível de 0,05 de probabilidade (p < 0,05).

3.3.2. Fluorescência da clorofila a

O DH ocasionou redução no rendimento quântico potencial (F_v/F_m) e efetivo (Φ_{PSII}) do FSII e na taxa de transporte de elétrons (ETR) nas plantas de soja. A menor dose de fosfito de potássio permitiu a manutenção de F_v/F_m , Φ_{PSII} , e ETR nessas plantas, com valores similares ao respectivo controle (Figura 2). A F_v/F_m não diferiu entre as doses de sulfato de zinco e sulfeto de hidrogênio aplicadas, independente da reposição

hídrica (Figura 2). No entanto, estes compostos permitiram maiores valores de F_m'/F_v' e ETR nas menores doses de sulfato de zinco e maiores doses de sulfeto de hidrogênio (Figura 2). O desequilibrio entre o fluxo de elétrons e a assimilação de CO₂ (*ETR/A*) foi aumentado sob exposição ao DH (Figura 2), efeito este que foi revertido nas plantas tratadas com 1.6 mL/L ha⁻¹ de sulfato de zinco, 2,5 g/L ha⁻¹ de fosfito de potássio e 0,006 mL/L ha⁻¹ de sulfeto de hidrogênio (Figura 2).



Figura 2. Rendimento quântico potencial do fotossistema II (F_v/F_m), rendimento quântico efetivo de conversão fotoquímica de energia no FSII (Φ_{PSII}), taxa de transporte de elétrons (ETR), relação entre taxa aparente de transporte de elétrons e assimilação de CO₂ (*ETR/A*) de plantas de soja controle (PC) e sob déficit hídrico (DH) tratadas com diferentes doses de sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio e sulfeto de hidrogênio, por um período de oito dias. Médias seguidas de pelo menos uma mesma letra maiúscula, dentro e, minúscula entre doses, não diferem entre si pelo teste de Tukey ao nível de 0,05 de probabilidade (p < 0,05).

3.3.3. Relações hídricas, taxa de extravasamento de eletrólitos e análises biométricas

Os compostos utilizados neste estudo não promoveram diferenças no potencial hídrico das plantas, no entanto, plantas sob DH demonstraram menores valores nesta característica (Figura 3). Nas plantas sob DH, foi observado murcha nas folhas, conforme se pode observar a redução do conteúdo relativo de água (CRA) e da suculência das folhas das plantas de soja (Figura 3). Entretanto, elevados valores tanto da suculência quanto do teor relativo de água em plantas expostas ao déficit hídrico com aplicação do sulfato de zinco na dosagem de 1,6 e 33 g/L ha⁻¹ e do fosfito de potássio na dosagem de 2,5 mL/L ha⁻¹ foram evidenciados (Figura 3).

A taxa de liberação de eletrólitos (TLE) aumentou em torno de 45% nas plantas de soja submetidas ao DH sem aplicação dos produtos em ambos os experimentos. Efeito deletério também foi evidenciado em doses elevadas (> 33 g/L ha⁻¹) do sulfato de zinco. Entretanto, o efeito melhorador destas substâncias na TLE foi observado em plantas de soja tratadas com sulfato de zinco na dose de 1.6 g/L ha⁻¹, fosfito de potássio na dose de 2,5 mL/L ha⁻¹ e sulfeto de hidrogênio na dose de 0,006 mL/L ha⁻¹, submetidas ao DH (Figura 3).

A altura da planta, diâmetro do caule e massa seca dos caules não diferiram em plantas de soja tratadas com diferentes doses de sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio e sulfeto de hidrogênio e submetidas ao DH (Apêndice 1). A massa seca das folhas, por outro lado, foi reduzida pela exposição das plantas ao estresse. O sulfato de zinco e fosfito de potássio na menor dosagem permitiu a manutenção da massa seca das folhas, de forma similar ao controle.



Figura 3. Potencial hídrico (Ψ_w), conteúdo relativo de água (CRA), suculência foliar e taxa de liberação de eletrólitos (TLE) de plantas de soja controle (PC) e sob déficit hídrico (DH) tratadas com diferentes doses de sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio e sulfeto de hidrogênio, por um período de oito dias. Médias seguidas de pelo menos uma mesma letra maiúscula, dentro e, minúscula entre doses, não diferem entre si pelo teste de Tukey ao nível de 0,05 de probabilidade (p < 0,05).

3.4. Discussão

Os resultados obtidos mostraram que o déficit hídrico (DH) reduziu características fisiológicas de plantas de soja em comparação com plantas bem irrigadas. Estes resultados estão de acordo com os demais obtidos por Zhang et al., (2010) e He et al. (2017). Em contrapartida o sulfato de zinco (SZ) na dosagem de 1.6 g/L ha⁻¹, o fosfito de potássio (FP) na dosagem de 2,5 mL/L ha⁻¹ e o sulfeto de hidrogênio (SH) na
dosagem de 0,006 mL/L ha⁻¹ resultaram efetivamente no alívio dos efeitos deletérios do DH e na melhoria das características fisiológicas de plantas de soja.

Como esperado o DH diminuiu as trocas gasosas das plantas de soja, observado pelas menores taxa fotossintética (A) e taxa transpiratória (E), e esse efeito foi basicamente em função da limitação estomática (g_s) . Sendo estes parâmetros bem conhecido em plantas sob restrição hídrica, objetivando a conservação da água e a manutenção da hidratação dos tecidos sob condições de seca (Tariq et al., 2018). No entanto, o grande dilema, nestas condições, é que a diminuição da g_s , leva a limitação da saída de água, mas, também a limitação da assimilação de carbono com consequências no metabolismo e no crescimento das plantas, afetando diretamente a produtividade (Ghobadi et al., 2013; Rajabi, et al., 2017). Diminuição do teor de clorofila a, rendimento quântico potencial do fotossistema II (F_v/F_m), taxa de transporte de elétrons (ETR) e rendimento quântico efetivo de conversão fotoquímica de energia no FSII (Φ_{PSII}) também foram observadas nessas plantas quando submetidas somente ao déficit hídrico, ou seja, menor quantidade de energia de excitação foi dissipada para a síntese de ATP e NADPH nos cloroplastos (Vercampt et al., 2016; Peloso et al., 2017). Contrapondo aos efeitos deletérios do DH, todos os compostos utilizados neste estudo, ocasionaram aumento da A, E, g_s , cla, F_v/F_m , ETR e também no Φ_{PSII} mesmo diante do déficit hídrico, promovendo nestas, valores semelhantes às plantas não estressadas. Isso está relacionado diretamente a atuação desses compostos nas plantas, sabe-se que o SZ está envolvido no processo de desintoxicação das espécies reativas de oxigênio, desempenhando papel protetor ao dano fotoxidativo nos cloroplastos, atuando diretamente no processo fotossintético (Cakmak, 2000; Rajabi, et al., 2017). Rajabi, et al., (2017) relaciona a ação do SZ no aumento na biossíntese de clorofila e consequentemente, manutenção da atividade fotossintética. Esse aumento da atividade fotossintética e do aumento da F_v/F_m foi observado em plantas de trigo submetidos ao DH com SZ (Ma et al., 2017). Essa manutenção da A proveniente do SZ também foi evidenciada em plantas de milho (Liu et al., 2016), e em trigo submetido ao DH (Karim et al., 2012). O FP tem como característica prevenir danos decorrentes do DH na maquinaria fotossintética, uma vez que aumenta expressão do gene psbA, essencial na performance fotossintética das plantas (Oyarburo et al., 2015). Além disso, o potássio é acumulado nas células guarda, promovendo a manutenção do turgor nas células e, atuando no controle estomático (Kuwahara e Souza, 2009). Essa manutenção da A e gs promovida por baixas doses de K⁺, também foi observada em plantas de milho expostas ao DH (Wei et al., 2013). Segundo Gonçalves et al. (2013) o FP em plantas de eucalipto, também sob déficit hídrico, acarretou em melhora na ETR. Já o SH em plantas atua como molécula de sinalização aumentando o conteúdo de tióis cisteína e glutationa (Riemenschneider et al., 2005) e reduz o acúmulo de óxido nítrico nas células guarda, causando a abertura estomática (Lisjak et al., 2010). Outra característica do SH está relacionada à ação deste composto na redução do peróxido de hidrogênio, e, consequentemente, impedindo sua sinalização nas células guardas, prejudicado o fechamento estomático induzido pelo ABA (Dawood et al., 2012). Chen et al. (2011) relataram que o SH em plantas de espinafre causou manutenção de gs e da *A*, conforme observado também nesse estudo. O SH aumentou os parâmetros F_v/F_m , ETR e Φ_{PSII} em plantas de orquídeas sob danos oxidativo ocasionado pelo estresse por luminosidade (Fan et al., 2014). O mesmo foi evidenciado em plantas trigo submetidas ao DH e SH (Li et al., 2015).

Os resultados indicam que os valores de A e E foram mantidos, a princípio, por efeito estomático, conforme demonstram os dados da g_s (Figura 1- G, H e I). Inicialmente, isto parece ser um contrassenso, pois manter a *E* elevada sob condições de restrição hídrica, poderia levar estas plantas à morte por desidratação. Entretanto, o que se observou, foi que plantas sob DH e tratadas com o SZ na dosagem de 1.6 g/L ha⁻¹ e o FP na dosagem de 2,5 mL/L ha⁻¹ mantiveram valores elevados da hidratação dos seus tecidos, e, em alguns casos até melhores do que as plantas não estressadas conforme observado por meio dos valores do CRA e suculência foliar (Figura 3). Uma possível explicação para estes efeitos pode estar relacionada ao balanço osmótico das células destas plantas. Embora não tenham sido observados efeito dos compostos nos valores medidos do potencial hídrico, possivelmente ocorreu melhoria no metabolismo osmótico destas plantas. O SZ tem como característica aumentar o equilíbrio iônico em plantas, e desencadeia níveis mais elevados de clorofila e prolina durante o DH (Zafar et al., 2014). A aplicação de K^+ pode desencadear mecanismos de adaptação nas plantas através do aumento de prolina conforme observadas folhas de tomateiro (Marques et al., 2010). A ação do SH na manutenção da homeostase de íons foi relatada por Li et al., (2014) em plantas de Arabidopsis expostas ao estresse.

Plantas de soja submetidas somente ao déficit hídrico aumentaram substancialmente a taxa de extravasamento de eletrólitos. O DH promove aumento do dano oxidativo induzido por EROs, afetando os ácidos graxos poli-insaturados da membrana, perda de estabilidade e, portanto, vazamento de eletrólitos celulares (Ahmad

et al., 2010). Neste estudo o SZ na dosagem de 1.6 g/L ha⁻¹, o FP na dosagem de 2,5 mL/L ha⁻¹ e o SH na dosagem de 0,006 mL/L ha⁻¹ impediram a elevação da taxa de extravasamento de eletrólitos nas plantas de soja mesmo submetidas ao DH. Este efeito benéfico pode estar associado a dois fatores principais. O primeiro associado à manutenção de altos valores da assimilação de carbono no Ciclo de Calvin que funciona com principal dreno da energia absorvida pelos fotossistemas na etapa fotoquímica, conforme demonstrando pelos valores da A nas plantas sob déficit e tratadas com os compostos. O outro fator está diretamente ligado ao primeiro, que é a maior eficiência na absorção de energia, por causa da maior concentração de Cla, maior fluxo de elétrons (ETR) e maior dissipação de energia para processos fotossintéticos (Φ_{PSII}), e além disso, uma menor ETR/A. Ou seja, ocasionou manutenção da proporção de elétrons direcionados para a fixação do CO₂, diminuindo a dissipação de elétrons para atividade da oxigenase da RuBISCO e da reação de Mehler (Allen e Ort, 2001; Ribeiro et al., 2009). Os resultados sugerem que os compostos utilizados neste estudo contribuem para evitar que o excesso de energia seja dirigido para processos danosos, como por exemplo, formação de EROs que levam ao maior extravasamento de conteúdo celular conforme evidenciado pelo aumento da TLE de plantas sob déficit (Ahmad et al., 2010). Além disso, os compostos utilizados neste estudo podem estar associados ao aumento dos mecanismos de defesa enzimáticos e não enzimáticos contra espécies reativas de oxigênio. Em plantas de batata, Oyarburo et al., (2015) observou que o FP potencializa a resposta antioxidante, decorrentes da indução de enzimas como peroxidase (POX) e superóxido dismutase (SOD). Além disso, o potássio resulta em maior atividade de protease indicando papel protetor pela diminuição da oxidação de complexos proteicos (Ahanger et al., 2017). Em plantas de trigo verificou-se que o Zn aumenta o teor de antioxidantes, através do aumento da expressão de genes das enzimas SOD e catalase (CAT), e de genes do ciclo ascorbato-glutationa submetidas ao DH (Ma et al., 2017). Resultados semelhantes também foram relatados por Yavas e Unay (2016) e Sultana et al. (2016), em plantas de trigo submetidos ao DH, em que ocorreu aumento da atividade de SOD e CAT em função do Zn. Esses mesmos resultados de aumento das atividades de enzimas do sistema antioxidante foram verificados após a aplicação de SH, devido ao efeito sinalizador desse composto, diminuindo a formação de EROs em plantas de soja (Zhang et al., 2010) e trigo (Zhang et al., 2008) submetidas ao DH.

No presente estudo, constatou-se que as doses de 1.6 g/L ha⁻¹ de sulfato de zinco, 2,5 mL/L ha⁻¹ de fosfito de potássio e 0,006 mL/L ha⁻¹ de sulfeto de hidrogênio foram

eficazes ao impedir os efeitos deletérios do déficit hídrico nas plantas de soja, permitindo a manutenção das trocas gasosas e atividade fotoquímica com valores similares às plantas não submetidas ao estresse hídrico, além de evitar os danos nas membranas celulares. Os compostos utilizados neste estudo possuem potencial para proteção de espécies agrícolas de episódios de seca podendo reduzir, de modo significativo, os danos causados pela restrição hídrica. No entanto, os mecanismos metabólicos envolvidos neste processo, a intensidade e duração do estresse, o estádio de desenvolvimento da planta, entre outros fatores, ainda precisam ser investigados.

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Apêndice 1.

Resumo da análise de variância (ANOVA) para cada composto (sulfato de zinco, fosfito de potássio e sulfeto de hidrogênio,). Entre as capacidade máxima de retenção de água CMRA) doses de cada composto e suas interações, clorofila a/ (Cla), taxa fotossintética (A, µmol CO₂ m⁻² s⁻¹), condutância estomática (g_s , mol H₂O m⁻² s⁻¹) taxa transpiratória (E, mmol H₂O m⁻² s⁻¹), rendimento quântico potencial do fotossistema II (F_v/F_m), rendimento quântico efetivo de conversão fotoquímica de energia no FSII (Φ_{PSII}), taxa de transporte de elétrons (ETR), assimilação de CO₂ (*ETR/A* µmol e⁻ [µmol CO₂]), potencial hídrico (Ψ_w), conteúdo relativo de água (CRA), suculência foliar, taxa de extravasamento de eletrólitos (TLE), altura da planta, diâmetro do caule, massa seca da folhas e massa seca dos caules.

	Sulf	ato de z	inco	Fosfit	to de po	tássio	Sulfeto	de hidi	ogênio
Variáveis			CMRA			CMRA			CMRA
v arravers	CMRA	Doses	х	CMRA	Doses	х	CMRA	Doses	х
			Doses			Doses			Doses
Cla	ns	*	ns	*	*	ns	*	*	*
Α	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
gs	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
E	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
F_{ν}/F_m	*	ns	ns	*	*	*	*	ns	ns
ΦPSII	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
ETR	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
ETR/A	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
$\Psi_{\rm w}$	*	ns	ns	*	ns	ns	*	ns	ns
CRA	*	*	*	ns	*	*	ns	*	ns
Suculência foliar	*	ns	ns	*	*	*	*	ns	*
TLE (%)	ns	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Altura da planta	*	ns	ns	ns	*	ns	*	ns	ns
Diâmetro do caule	*	*	ns	*	*	ns	*	*	ns
Massa seca da folha	*	*	ns	*	ns	ns	*	ns	ns
Massa seca do caule	*	ns	*	*	ns	*	*	*	ns
Massa seca do caule	*	ns	*	*	ns	*	*	*	ns

ns, não significativo; * $P \le 0.05$.

4. CAPÍTULO II

POTENTIAL OF STRESS RELIEVING COMPOUNDS IN INCREASING DROUGHT TOLERANCE IN SOYBEAN PLANTS

(Normas de acordo com a revista Plant Physiology and Biochemistry)

ABSTRACT

Soybean (Glycine max (L.) Merrill) is the most widely grown oilseed in the world and is an important source of protein and oils in its seeds. Drought stress is a major constraint to the soybean yield. Finding alternative methods to mitigate the negative effects of water deficit is useful to maintain crop yield. The aim of this study was to evaluate the morphophysiological, biochemical and metabolic alterations of soybean plants, in two ontogenetic stages, exposed to water deficit and treated with zinc sulphate, potassium phosphite and hydrogen sulfide. In this study, two independents experiments were carried out in V4 and R1 development stages, being these which are considered critical stages for soybean productivity, with soybean plants of NS 7000 IPRO cultivar. The experiment consisted of the following treatments: Control WW (WW, 100% maximum water holding capacity [MWHC]) and water deficit (WD, 50% MWHC); potassium phosphite + WW; potassium phosphite + WD; hydrogen sulfide + WW; hydrogen sulfide + WD; zinc sulphate + WW; zinc sulphate + WD. Plants were measured and samples collected 8 days after the beginning of the water deficit treatment. The experimental design consisted of randomized blocks with 8 treatments, with five replicates. In this study, we found that the water deficit alone caused damage to soybean plants in both stages of development. Potassium phosphite, zinc sulphate and hydrogen sulfide maintained the photosynthetic parameters and cell membrane integrity. Importantly, the compounds application caused better accumulation of soluble metabolites control imposition of water stress. This to be realigned also with the increase of the antioxydant activity as verified by compounds application. This to be realigned also with the increase of the antioxidant activity as verified by compounds application. In the current study there were two tolerance mechanisms employed in response to compounds application to water stress: the first involved the upregulation of antioxidant enzyme activity; whereas the second involved accumulation of soluble sugars, free amino acids, and proline to facilitate osmotic adjustment. Both related to maintenance of the photosynthetic parameters and cell membrane integrity. This is the first report that suggests the potential agricultural use of these compounds to mitigate drought effects in soybean plants.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Water stress; *Glycine max*; potassium phosphite; zinc sulphate; hydrogen sulfide.

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Soybean (*Glycine max*) is cultivated worldwide due to its high abundance of proteins and oils in its seeds (Liao et al., 2008), which is used for several purposes, from food to biodiesel production (Sentelhas et al., 2015). Soybean yield is highly dependent on weather conditions, and as water represents 90% of plant weight, soybean requires around 800 mm/cycle of water to obtain high yields (Embrapa, 2008). As compared to other, such as crambe (Colodetti et al., 2012), sunflower (Oliveira et al., 2012) and sorghum (Amaral et al., 2003), soybean is one of the most sensitive crop to water deficiency, making drought the major constraint to soybean yield (Morando et al., 2014; Sentelhas et al., 2015; Dias et al., 2016). The water deficit has been described in soybean plants as acting in the stomatal conductance reduction (Ohashi, 2006), chlorophyll content (Hossain et al., 2014), proteins oxidation (Wang and Komatsu, 2017) and membrane lipids by increasing reactive oxygen species (Xing et al., 2016), in addition of decreasing net photosynthetic rate (Ohashi, 2006; Hossain et al., 2014; Chavarria et al., 2015). These physiological and biochemistry dysfunctions result in a reduction of biomass (Fioreze et al., 2011), grain quality and, consequently, in productivity (He et al., 2017).

The climatic changes entail low rainfall and poorly distributed, resulting in water deficit. Significant losses in soybean production, up to 82%, have already been recorded in Brazil (Silva Neto and Silva, 2010). In the Central-West region of Brazil, the largest national producer of soybeans, it was verified that rainfall recorded 40% losses in the 2014/2015 harvest (Villari and Bartcus, 2015). Argentina is the third largest soybean producer in the world and is facing one of the worst droughts in its history with loss of profitability up to 75% in 2018 (Pria and Maffezoli, 2018). Therefore, finding alternative methods to mitigate the negative effects of water deficit is useful to maintain crop yield. An innovative strategy within integrated crop management is the use of

biocompatible chemical compounds, classified as leaf fertilizers, that control in plants various biotic (Dalio, et al., 2014) and abiotic stresses, as light (Fan et al., 2014; Hu et al., 2015), UV (Oyarburo et al., 2015), aluminium (Dawood et al., 2012; Ali et al., 2015), salt (Mohammadi and Khoshgoftarmanesh, 2014) and drought (Zhang et al, 2010; Vazin et al., 2012; Li et al., 2015). Among these compounds, potassium phosphite (Oyarburo et al., 2015), zinc sulphate (Jeshni et al., 2017) and hydrogen sulfide (Li et al., 2015) are proposed to protect plants by activating their inherent defence mechanisms during exposure to abiotic stresses.

Potassium phosphite and phosphorus-based products, can contribute to increase the stability of photosynthetic machinery (Oyarburo et al., 2015), as well as enhance antioxidant system, mediated through activation of enzymes such as superoxide dismutase and ascorbate peroxidase (Dalio, et al., 2014). Zinc sulphate, the main zincbased leaf fertilizer, increases enzyme superoxide dismutase activity (Cu / Zn-SOD) and therefore prevents lipid peroxidation (Kirkby e Römheld, 2007). In addition, it contributes to ionic equilibrium increase, unleashing higher levels of total chlorophyll and proline (Monjezi and Hassanzadehdelouei, 2013; Zafar et al., 2014). In the water restriction condition, zinc sulphate maintains root and shoot growth (Mohammadi and Khoshgoftarmanesh, 2014) and increases number of grains and productivity of essential oils (Vazin, 2012; Jeshni et al., 2017). Hydrogen sulfide, in turn, improves photosynthetic capacity and stomatal conductance, through stomatal control through a network of signalling dependent abscisic acid (García-Mata and LaMattina, 2010). This compound may stimulate ATP synthesis by its ability to act as an electron donor (Hu et al., 2015). In addition to increasing root dry weight and water content in the plant, which is determinant for reduction of negative effect of the water deficit (Zhang et al., 2010).

Thus, the hypothesis is that the foliar fertilization will provide maintenance of the physiological and biochemical performance of soybean plants submitted to water deficit. Therefore, the aim to evaluate the morphophysiological, biochemical and metabolic alterations of soybean plants, in two ontogenetic stages, exposed to water deficit and treated with zinc sulphate, potassium phosphite and hydrogen sulfide.

4.2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

4.2.1. Plant material, experimental design and experimental conditions

This experiment was carried out in a climatized greenhouse at the Laboratory of Ecophysiology and Plant Productivity at the Goiano Federal Institute of Science and Technology, Rio Verde Campus, Goiás, Brazil. In this study, soybean plants of NS 7000 IPRO cultivar (Bayer, Rio Verde -GO) were used, wich is a cultivar of high technology and yield with high grain weight, indicated for the Central-western region of Brazil (Nidera, 2016). Two experiments independents were carried out in V4 and R1 development stages, being these stages considered as critical for soybean productivity. Nursery pots containing 3L of substrate to stage V4 and 8L the substrate to stage R1 were used. The substrate was prepared from a mixture of Red Latosol (LVdf) soil and sand in ratio 2:1, then was fertilized with nutrient solution according to soil chemical analysis and recommendation for Cerrado soils, containing urea, mono-ammonium phosphate, potassium chloride, magnesium sulfate, copper, zinc and boric acid (Sousa and Lobato, 1996). The substrate was corrected with dolomitic limestone PNRT 100, for 60% of base saturation. Initially, ten seeds were sown per pot, and after germination two two plants were kept per pot, corresponding to one experimental unit.

The water regime was implemented through the application of water replacement in the soil. Well-watered (WW) and water deficit (WD) conditions were maintained using 100% or 50% of the maximum water holding capacity (MWHC), respectively. Soil water control was maintained by the gravimetric method. Water stress was imposed simultaneously with the compounds application.

The used compounds were: potassium phosphite (PP) in 2.5 dose mL/L ha⁻¹ (GRAP PHILL, 30% P₂O₅, 20% K₂O); hydrogen sulfide (HS) (H₂S) in 0.006 dose mL/L ha⁻¹ (NaHS donor of H₂S, Sigma-Aldrich, Saint Louis, MO, USA); and zinc sulphate (ZS) in 16.5 dose g/L ha⁻¹ (ZnSO₄·7H₂O, Sigma-Aldrich, Saint Louis, MO, USA). The compounds application was carried out using a CO₂⁻ charger hand backpack sprayer (5 kgf cm⁻²) (Herbicat® Catanduva, Brazil) equipped with 4 Tee Jet nozzles (XRTeejet®, XR110/02-VP), which delivered 120 L ha⁻¹. Sprinkling was performed in the early morning directly over the plants by keeping the bar 4 m above the top of the plants. The compounds were applied in the morning with a wind speed of 2.3 km h⁻¹, an air humidity of 82% and an air temperature of 20° C, measured with Kestrel 4000 weather meter.

The experiment consisted of the following treatments: Control WW (wellhydrated WW, 100% MWHC); Control WD (water deficit WD, 50% MWHC); potassium phosphite + WW; potassium phosphite + WD; hydrogen sulfide + WW; hydrogen sulfide + WD; zinc sulphate + WW; zinc sulphate + WD. Plants were measured and samples collected 8 days after the beginning of the water deficit treatment. The experimental design consisted of randomized blocks with 8 treatments, with five replicates.

4.2.2. Biometric evaluations

At the day after the beginning of the water defict treatment, the plants were collected to obtain the following measurements: Plant height (cm), stem diameter (mm), number of branches, number of flowers and volume of root, performed by measuring the displacement of the water column in graduated cylinder. In addition to, the total dry matter (TDM), leaf dry matter (LDM), shoot dry matter (SDM), root dry weight (RDW) and root/shoot ratio were also measured. The different parts of the plants were separated into paper bags and placed in an oven with forced ventilation at 65° C for 72 hours to obtain a constant dry weight. The dried material was then weighed and the result expressed in grams per plant.

4.2.3. Water relations

Predawn leaf water potential (Ψ_w) was measured using a Scholander pressure chamber (model 3005-1412, Soilmoisture Equipment Corp., Goleta, CA, USA). Measurements of Ψ_w were made between 04:00 and 06:00 hrs.

Leaf (Ψ_s) osmotic potential was evaluated according to Pask et al. (2012) using a vapor pressure osmometer (model 5600, VAPRO, Wescor, Logan, Utah, USA). The osmotic potential values were obtained using the Van't Hoff's equation: $\Psi_s = -R \times T \times Cs$, where *R* is the universal gas constant (0.08205 L atm mol⁻¹ K⁻¹), *T* is the temperature ($T \, {}^{\circ}$ K = T ${}^{\circ}$ C + 273), and *Cs* the solute concentration (M), usually expressed in atmospheres and converted to MPa (0.987 \approx 1 atm = 0.1 MPa). Leaves were collected between 08:00 and 10:00 hrs.

The relative water content (RWC) was evaluated according to Barrs and Weatherley (1962), by obtaining the fresh mass (FM), turgid mass (TM) and dry mass (DM) of leaf discs, using the formula: RWC (%) = (FM-DM) / (TM-DM) x 100. Leaves were collected between 08:00 and 10:00 hrs.

4.2.4. Concentration of chloroplastidic pigments

The pigments concentration was determined by extraction with dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO) saturated with calcium carbonate (CaCO₃) via the method described by Ronen and Galun (1984). Three 5-mm diameter leaf discs were incubated in 5 mL of DMSO solution, and the pigments were extracted for 24 h in a 65 °C water bath. The spectrophotometric readings were later obtained at 480, 649.1, and 665.1 nm using a UV-VIS spectrophotometer (model Evolution 60S, Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc., MA, EUA). The chlorophyll *a* (Ca = $12.4.A_{665.1} - 3.62.A_{649.1}$) and chlorophyll *b* (Cb = $25.06.A_{649.1} - 6.50.A_{665.1}$) concentrations were calculated according to Wellburn (1997). The pigment concentrations were expressed µg cm². Leaves were collected between 08:00 and 10:00 hrs.

4.2.5. Gas exchange and Chlorophyll a fluorescence

Gas exchange from soybean was measured in fully expanded leaves to determine the net photosynthetic rate (A, µmol CO₂ m⁻² s⁻¹), stomatal conductance (g_s , mol H₂O m⁻² s⁻¹) and transpiration rate (E, mmol H₂O m⁻² s⁻¹). The intrinsic water use efficiency (WUEg) were calculated as the ratio of A and g_s . The measurements were performed between 08:00 and 10:00 a.m., under constant photosynthetically active radiation (PAR, 1000 µmol photons m⁻² s⁻¹), and at environmental atmospheric CO₂ concentration (C_a) (~430 µmol mol⁻¹), temperature (~25 °C) and relative air humidity (~65%), using an infrared gas analyzer (IRGA, model LI-6400xt, Licor, Lincoln, Nebraska, USA).

Variables of chlorophyll fluorescence were measured in the same leaf of the photosynthesis using a modulated portable fluorometer coupled to IRGA. For chlorophyll fluorescence, the first evaluations were conducted on dark-adapted leaves, so the reaction centers were fully opened (all oxidized primary acceptors) with minimum heat loss. Under this condition, it was possible to estimate the initial

fluorescence (F_0), maximum fluorescence (F_m), and potential quantum yield of photosystem II (PSII = [($F_0 - F_m$)/ F_m] according to Genty et al. (1989). After the light adaptation of leaves the chlorophyll fluorescence before saturation pulse (F) and the maximum fluorescence in light-adapted leaves (F_m') were evaluated, the minimal fluorescence in light-adapted leaves was calculated as $F_0' = F_0/[(F_m - F_0/F_m) + (F_0/F_m')]$ to estimate the effective quantum yield of PSII [Φ_{PSII} = ($F_m' - F$)/ F_m'] according to Genty et al. (1989). The Φ_{PSII} was also used to estimate the apparent electron transport rate, $ETR = \Phi_{PSII}$.PAR.A_{leaf}.0.5 (Bilger et al., 1995), where PAR was the photons flow (µmol m⁻² s⁻¹) on the leaves; A_{leaf} the amount corresponding to the fraction of incident light that is absorbed by the leaves; and 0.5 the excitation energy fraction directed to the PSII (Laisk and Loreto, 1996). The non-photochemical quenching coefficient [$NPQ = (F_m - F_m')/F_m'$] was calculated according to Bilger and Björkman (1990).

In addition to, a relative measure of electron transport to oxygen molecules (*ETR/A*) was calculated by the ratio of ETR and A (Ribeiro et al., 2009a).

4.2.6. Proline concentration

For free proline measurement, 0.2 g of fresh leaf material, previously macerated in liquid nitrogen, was homogenized in 4 mL of 80% ethanol, following the method of Bates et al. (1973), with some modifications. After centrifugation (6300 g, 10 min), an aliquot of 250 μ L of filtrate extract was mixed with 2 mL acid ninhydrin (4.8 g nihydrine, 120 mL glacial acetic acid, 80 mL 6M orthophosphoric acid in 200 mL) and 2 mL of glacial acetic acid in a test tube. The mixture was placed in a water bath for 1 h at 100°C. The reaction mixture was extracted with 4 mL toluene, and the chromophorecontaining toluene was analysed. The absorbance was measured at 515 nm in UV-VIS spectrophotometer, and by comparison with a proline standard curve (0 to 100 μ g mL⁻¹), expressed in μ mol g WF⁻¹. Leaves were collected between 08:00 and 10:00 hrs.

4.2.7. Metabolic profile

Extraction procedure

Approximately 40 mg of dried leaf material was weighed into a 2 ml screw-cap micro-tube. One milliliter of methanol/chloroform/water (12:5:3, v/v/v) was added and incubated at 75 °C for 30 min. The water fraction of the extraction mixture consisted of a 0.1% solution of internal standard. The mixture of 0.1% penta-erythritol and 0.1% 3-nitrotyrosine for GC analysis. After cooling, samples were centrifuged (11,400*g*) and 800 μ l of the supernatant removed and placed into a clean 2 ml round bottomed micro-tube. Further 200 μ l chloroform and 500 μ l of deionised water were added to facilitate the separation of phases. Samples were centrifuged and left to stand for 10 min to allow phase separation. Samples were then centrifuged at 11,400*g* for 3 min and 700 μ l of the upper phase (the water–methanol soluble fraction) transferred to a clean 2 ml micro-tube and stored at -20° C.

GC-MS of Carbohydrates, sugars and organic acids by GC-MS

For the carbohydrate analysis, gas chromatography (GC) techniques used by Merchant et al. (2006) were used. 50 uL of extract was dried down in a speedvac. Then 450uL of pyridine was added to each sample followed by 50 uL bis-trimethylsilyl-trifluroavetamide (BSTFA): trimethylchloroacetamide (TMCS) (10:1) for derivatisation to make up a final volume of 500uL for GC-MS analysis.

Samples were incubated for 35min at 75°C and analysed by GC-MS within 24h. The analyses were be carried out on an Agilent 6890 Gas Chromatograph with QQQ 7000 Mass selective detector. The sample was injected with a 20:1 split injection onto a HP-5 column (30 m, 0.25 mm ID, 0.25 μ film thickness) with helium carrier gas at 1 mL min¹ The temperature programme has an initial oven temperature sets at 60 C for 2 minutes increasing to 220°C at 10 °C min⁻¹ for 5 minutes then to 300 °C at 10 °C min⁻¹ for 5 minutes. Mass Hunter software was used for peak integration. A mixed standard was made from a stock solution containing ~500 ug.mL⁻¹ of each analyte. Appropriate aliquots were taken to make resulting standard concentrations of 0.5, 1, 5, 10, 20 and 50 ug/mL after derivatisation using the method described earlier. The dry weight of the sample was used for the calculation and the results expressed in conc in ug.g⁻¹ of dry wt.

Analysis of amino acid by LC-MS

LC-MS analysis of the underivatized extract was carried out on a 1290 Infinity LC system (Agilent, USA) coupled to a 6520 QTOF Mass selective detector (Agilent, USA). A 3.5 uL sample was injected into a Zorbax SB-C18 column (2.1 x 150 mm, 3.5 μ) and separation was achieved by gradient elution with water and methanol. The

QTOF was tuned to operate at the low mass range <1700 AMU and data acquisition was done in scan mode (60-1700 m/z) and ionization was positive ion mode. LC-MS results were identified based on their retention times relative to standards as well as their formula mass. Peaks were integrated and their relative quantities were calculated by the MassHunter software from Agilent. A mixed standard was made from a stock solution containing ~500 ug.mL⁻¹ of each analyte. This solution is kept frozen at -20 °C. Appropriate aliquots are taken to make resulting standard concentrations of 0.1, 0.2, 0.5, 1, 5, 10 and 20 ug.mL⁻¹ into 1 mL solution in MilliQ Water. The dry weight of the sample was used for the calculation and the results expressed in ug.g⁻¹ of dry wt.

4.2.8. Determination of Malondialdehyde (MDA)

The level of lipid peroxidation was measured by estimating MDA, a decomposition product of the peroxidized polyunsaturated fatty acid composition of the membrane lipid following the method of Heath and Packer (1968). Leaf samples (0.160 g) were homogenized in 2 ml 1% (w/v) trichloroacetic acid (TCA), and the homogenate was centrifuged at 12 000 g for 15 min at 4 °C. The supernatant (500 µL) was mixed with 2 ml of TBA reagent (0.5% [w/v] of TBA in 20% TCA). The reaction mixture was heated at 95 °C for 20 min in a water bath and then quickly cooled in an ice bath and centrifuged at 3000g for 4 min. The absorbance of the colored supernatant was monitored at 440, 532 and 600 nm using a UV-VIS spectrophotometer. The concentration of MDA was calculated using the molar extinction coefficient of 155 mM⁻¹ cm⁻¹ (Cakmak e Host 1991) according to the following equation: MDA (nmol ml⁻¹) = [(A532-A600) - (A440-A600)/ 155000] 10⁶. The concentration of MDA in leaves was expressed as nmol MDA g⁻¹ FW. Leaves were collected between 08:00 and 10:00 hrs.

4.2.9. Rate of electrolyte leakage (REL)

The membrane permeability was determined by the rate of electrolyte leakage (REL) in 15 0.2 cm⁻² leaf discs per replicate, which were immersed in 30 mL of deionized water in glass vials and allowed to stand for 24 hours. After this period, the free conductivity (FC μ S/cm) was measured using a Tecnal bench conductivity meter

(Tec- 4MP). The glass vials were later placed in an oven at 100°C for 1 hour, and the total conductivity (TC, μ S/cm) was measured according to the methodology described by Vasquez-Tello et al., (1999) and (Pimentel et al., 2002). The sensor was washed with deionized water between each reading to avoid errors in the results. The REL, reported as a percentage, was calculated using the following formula: REL = (FC)/(TC) × 100, where REL = the rate of electrolyte leakage, FC = the free conductivity and TC = the total conductivity.

4.2.10. Enzyme activities determination

Crude extract – To determine the activities of superoxide dismutase (SOD), catalase (CAT), ascorbate peroxidase (APX), and peroxidase activity (POX), 0.2 g of leaf tissue was ground into a fine powder in a mortar and pestle with liquid nitrogen. The fine powder was homogenized in an ice bath in 2 ml of a solution containing 50 mM potassium phosphate buffer, 0.1 mM Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA), 1 mM phenylmethylsulfonyl fluoride (PMSF), and 2% polyvinylpolypyrrolidone (PVPP). Potassium phosphate buffer pH was adjusted to 6.8 for analysis of enzymes. The homogenate was centrifuged at 12000 g for 15 min at 4°C, and the supernatant was used as a crude enzyme extract (Debona et al., 2012). The activities of the SOD, CAT, APX and POX enzymes were expressed on the basis of total protein, whose concentration was determined according to the method of Bradford (1976) using bovine serum albumin as the standard protein. Leaves were collected between 08:00 and 10:00 hrs.

Superoxide dismutase activity determination (SOD) (EC 1.15.1.1) – SOD activity was determined by measuring its ability to photochemically reduce p-nitrotetrazole blue (NTB) (Del Longo et al., 1993). The reaction was started by the addition of 10 μ l of the crude enzyme extract to 280 μ L of a mixture containing 50 mM potassium phosphate buffer (pH 7.8), 13 mM methionine, 0.075 mM NTB, 0.1 mM EDTA and 0.002 mM riboflavin. The reaction occurred at 25 °C under a 15-W lamp. After 15 min of light exposure, the light was interrupted, and the production of formazan blue, which resulted from the photoreduction of NTB, was monitored by the increase in absorbance at 560 nm in a VersaMax Tunable Microplate Reader (Giannopolitis and Ries, 1977). The reaction mixture for the control samples was kept in darkness for 15 min, and the absorbance measured at 560 nm. The values obtained were subtracted from the values obtained from the samples of the replications of each treatment exposed to light. One

unit of SOD was defined as the amount of enzyme necessary to inhibit NBT photoreduction by 50% (10), which was expressed in Uni $min^{-1} mg^{-1}$ protein (Beauchamp and Fridovich, 1971).

Determination of catalase activity (CAT) (EC 1.11.1.6) – The CAT activity was determined following the method of Havir and Mc Hale (1987). The reaction mixture consisted of 100 mM potassium phosphate buffer (pH 6.8) and 12.5 mM H₂O₂ in a volume of 990 μ L. The reaction was initiated by the addition of 10 μ l of the crude enzyme extract, and the CAT activity was determined by the rate of H₂O₂ decomposition at 240 nm in UV-VIS spectrophotometer for 1.5 min at 25 °C. An extinction coefficient of 36 M⁻¹ cm⁻¹ (Anderson et al., 1995) was used to calculate the CAT activity, which was expressed as min⁻¹ mg⁻¹ protein.

Determination of ascorbate peroxidase activity (APX) (EC 1.11.1.11) – The APX activity was determined according to the method of Nakano and Asada (1981). The reaction mixture consisted of 50 mM potassium phosphate buffer (pH 6.0), 1 mM H₂O₂, and 0.8 mM ascorbate in a volume of 1.95 ml. The reaction was started by the addition of 50 µl of the crude enzyme extract. The APX activity was measured by the rate of ascorbate oxidation at 290 nm using a UV-VIS spectrophotometer for 3 min at 25 °C. An extinction coefficient of 2.8 mM⁻¹ cm⁻¹ (Nakano and Asada, 1981) was used to calculate the APX activity, which was expressed as µmol min⁻¹ mg⁻¹ of protein.

Determination of peroxidase activity (POX) (EC 1.11.1.7) - The POX activity was determined the addition of 100 μ l of the crude enzyme extract a reaction mixture containing 25 mM potassium phosphate buffer (pH 6.8), 20 mM pyrogallol and 20 mM hydrogen peroxide in a volume of 2 mL (Kar and Mishra, 1976). The reaction was started after the addition of 15 μ l of the crude enzyme extract and the absorbance measured at 420 nm in UV-VIS spectrophotometer for 1 min at 25°C. An extinction coefficient of 2.47 mM⁻¹ cm⁻¹ (Chance and Maehley, 1955) was used to calculate the POX activity, which was expressed as μ mol min⁻¹ mg⁻¹ of protein.

4.2.11. Statistical analysis

The data from 8 treatments were submitted to analysis of variance (p < 0,05), and the means were compared by Scott Knott test, using the Analysis System Program Variance (SISVAR, version 5.4) (Ferreira, 2011).

4.3. RESULTS

4.3.1. Effect of water deficit on biometry of soybean plants

Water deficit did not cause significant effects on soybean plant height, stem diameter and number of branches, during the 8 day treatment in the V4 stage, the same was not shown in stage R1. However, the compounds application did not show any change even when submitted to the water deficit in the R1 stage (Table 01). The compounds promoted greater root growth in both stages, water deficit (Table 01). The application of WDPP and WDZS in the R1 stage promoted an increase in the number of flowers by 49% and 70%, respectively, compared to plants exposed to the isolated water deficit (Table 01).

Table 01. Plant height (cm), stem diameter (mm), number of branches, number of flowers and volume of root in soybean plants grown under 100% maximum water holding capacity (MWHC) (WW) and 50% MWHC (WD), after application of the different product, in both experiments (in V4 stage and R1 stage).

Treatments		Dlant haight	Stem	Number of	Number of	Volume of root
		F faint fielgin	diameter	branches	flowers	volume of foot
V4 sta	ige					
Cont	WW	33.4 ± 0.9	6.5 ± 0.07	3.9 ± 0.3	-	$47.9 \pm 2.1 \text{ A}$
Cont.	WD	29.8 ± 0.4	5.5 ± 0.08	2.3 ± 0.1	-	$25.0\pm4.7~C$
DD	WW	34.2 ± 1.6	6.6 ± 0.2	4.2 ± 0.1	-	$46.2\pm3.6~A$
ГГ	WD	34.1 ± 0.4	6.7 ± 0.3	3.5 ± 0.2	-	$40.0\pm1.4~B$
цс	WW	33.1 ± 0.5	6.3 ± 0.2	3.6 ± 0.3	-	$37.8\pm1.0\;B$
115	WD	34.5 ± 0.2	6.5 ± 0.08	3.2 ± 0.1	-	$33.1\pm1.8~B$
75	WW	34.3 ± 1.5	6.1 ± 0.2	3.3 ± 0.4	-	$48.3\pm1.1~A$
ZO	WD	33.2 ± 0.5	6.4 ± 0.1	3.3 ± 0.1	-	$38.2\pm1.8~B$
C.V. (%)	6.8	7.8	22.4		17.2
R1 sta	ige					
Cont	WW	$60.43\pm2.4~A$	$8.7\pm0.6\;A$	$7\pm0.8\ B$	$33.5\pm1.8\ B$	$79.8 \pm 3.1 \text{ A}$
Com.	WD	$43.91 \pm 1.0 \text{ C}$	$6.4\pm0.7\;B$	$5\pm0.8\ C$	$27.7\pm2.6\ B$	$33.7 \pm 6.6 \text{ C}$
DD	WW	$55.56\pm1.3\;A$	$8.5\pm0.2\;A$	$8\pm0.5~A$	$31.5\pm3.4\ B$	$72.6\pm4.6~A$
ГГ	WD	$52.59 \pm 1.4 \text{ B}$	$8.0\pm0.2\;A$	$7\pm0.8~B$	$41.5 \pm 2.2 \text{ A}$	$65.6\pm2.0~B$
цс	WW	$56.81\pm0.9~A$	$8.1\pm0.07~A$	$9 \pm 0.1 \text{ A}$	$33.8\pm2.4~B$	$82.5\pm4.8~A$
115	WD	$57.50\pm0.9\;A$	$8.4\pm0.5\;A$	$7 \pm 0.4 \text{ B}$	$33.7\pm3.9~B$	$59.9 \pm 3.1 \text{ B}$
75	WW	$59.00\pm2.1~A$	$8.7\pm0.4\;A$	$8 \pm 0.2 \; A$	$31.8\pm1.7\;B$	$75.1 \pm 2.1 \text{ A}$
പാ	WD	$52.17\pm0.7~B$	$7.9\pm0.4\;A$	$7 \pm 0.4 \text{ B}$	$47.2\pm4.9~A$	$57.2 \pm 2.1 \text{ B}$
C.V. (%)	6.0	7.1	7.3	19.0	15.2

Mean \pm SD (n = 5) followed by the same letter, in the column, did not differ significantly from each other as determined by Scott-Knott's test (p \geq 0.05).

WD significantly affected leaf dry matter, shoot dry matter and root dry matter in soybean plants at the V4 stage. The effect of water deficit on these variables were

reduced in the plants treated with the compounds (Table 02). Total dry matter and the root/shoot ratio showed no differences in V4 stage, regardless of water availability or application of the compounds (Table 02).

In the R1 stage, the total dry matter and root dry matter decreased in the plants subjected to water deficit, regardless of the compounds application. The application of WD+ZS maintained shoot dry matter values similar to control plants (or well-irrigated) (Table 02). The leaf dry matter in soybean plants was drastically affected by water deficit, at both stages of development, however this effect was mitigated by the application of the compounds (Table 02). The root/shoot ratio was not altered by the water deficit at the R1 stage (Table 02).

Table 02. Leaf dry matter (g) (LDM), shoot dry matter (g) (SDM), root dry matter (g) (RDM), root/shoot ratio (RDM/SDM) and total dry matter (TDM) in soybean plants grown under 100% maximum water holding capacity (MWHC) (WW) and 50% MWHC (WD), after application of the different product, in both experiments (in V4 stage and R1 stage).

Treatme	ents	LDM	SDM	RDW	RDM/SDM	TDM
V4 stag	ge					
Cont.	WW	$2.3\pm0.10\;A$	$4.04\pm0.3\;A$	$13.9\pm0.9\;A$	3.75 ± 0.2	16.5 ± 1.6
	WD	$1.0\pm0.06\ C$	$2.27\pm0.07~B$	$7.4\pm0.7\ C$	4.25 ± 0.5	9.8 ± 0.7
DD	WW	$1.8\pm0.09\;B$	$3.53\pm0.1\;A$	$13.2\pm0.6\;A$	3.42 ± 0.3	15.5 ± 1.3
PP	WD	$1.8\pm0.09\;B$	$3.56\pm0.1\;A$	$10.5\pm1.1~B$	3.36 ± 0.5	13.7 ± 1.1
це	WW	$2.1\pm0.10\ B$	$3.80\pm0.06\;A$	$10.2\pm0.4~B$	2.62 ± 0.1	14.2 ± 0.3
пз	WD	$2.6\pm0.05\;A$	$4.0\pm0.1\;A$	$12.2\pm1.3~A$	3.02 ± 0.3	16.4 ± 1.3
75	WW	$1.8\pm0.02\;B$	$3.65\pm0.1\;A$	$13.6\pm1.0\;A$	2.81 ± 0.4	17.8 ± 2.7
ΔS	WD	$1.9\pm0.02\;B$	$3.4\pm0.05\;A$	$9.6\pm0.7\ B$	2.83 ± 0.2	13.0 ± 0.7
C.V. (%	(0)	9.8	13.5	20.9	27.0	24.9
R1 stag	ge					
Cont	WW	$8.5\pm0.2\;A$	$13.8\pm0.3\;A$	$11.6\pm0.5~A$	0.85 ± 0.03	$25.4\pm0.7\;A$
Cont.	WD	$4.9\pm0.1\;C$	$8.6\pm0.1\ B$	$8.4\pm0.8~B$	0.98 ± 0.12	$17.1\pm0.8~B$
DD	WW	$7.6\pm0.2\;A$	$12.4\pm0.4\;A$	$11.3\pm0.8\;A$	0.91 ± 0.06	$23.7\pm0.8\;A$
ГГ	WD	$6.6\pm0.2\;B$	$10.6\pm0.3~B$	$9.9\pm0.2\ B$	0.93 ± 0.04	$20.5\pm0.5\;B$
цс	WW	$7.6\pm0.3\;A$	$12.5\pm0.4\;A$	$14.0\pm1.3~A$	1.11 ± 0.03	$25.5\pm2.1\;A$
115	WD	$6.6\pm0.2\;B$	$10.9\pm0.5~B$	$9.4\pm0.4\ B$	0.87 ± 0.02	$20.3\pm0.7\;B$
75	WW	$8.7\pm0.8\;A$	$12.8\pm1.1\;A$	$12.5\pm0.4~A$	0.93 ± 0.01	$24.9\pm1.5\;A$
LO	WD	$7.3\pm0.4\;A$	$11.6\pm0.5~A$	$10.0\pm1.7~\mathrm{B}$	0.89 ± 0.10	$21.6 \pm 1.5 \text{ B}$
C.V. (%	%)	14.0	13.0	18.4	22.7	14.2

Mean \pm SD (n = 5) followed by the same letter, in the column, did not differ significantly from each other as determined by Scott-Knott's test (p \geq 0.05).

4.3.2. Water relations parameters of soybean plants

Water deficit during the V4 and R1 stages induced a significant reduction of the water potential (Ψ_w) in soybean leaves independent of the compounds application. Plants at the R1 stage presented values lower than Ψ_w (± -0.72), compared to plants at the V4 stage (± -0.41) (Table 03).

Similar behaviour was observed in osmotic potential (Ψ_s) with mean reductions of 30% and 75% in the V4 and R1 stages, respectively, under the same conditions (Table 03). In contrast, the RWC was not affected by drought, at both stages of development (Table 03).

Table 03. Water potential (Ψ_w), osmotic potential (Ψ_s), relative water content (RWC), chlorophyll *a* (Chl*a*), chlorophyll *b* (Chl*b*) and ratio between Chl*a* and Chl*b* (Chl*a*/Chl*b*) in soybean plants grown under 100% maximum water holding capacity (MWHC) (WW) and 50% MWHC (WD), after application of the different product, in both experiments (in V4 stage and R1 stage).

Treatments		$\Psi_{\rm w}$	Ψ_{s}	RWC	Chla	Chlb	Chla/Chlb
V4 sta	ge						
Cont	WW	-0.28 ± 0.02 A	$-0.28 \pm 0.00 \text{ A}$	79.1 ± 0.8	$18.6 \pm 1.4 \text{ A}$	$5.63\pm0.8\;A$	$3.52\pm0.06~A$
Cont.	WD	$\textbf{-0.43} \pm 0.04 \; B$	$\textbf{-0.34} \pm \textbf{0.01} \ \textbf{B}$	79.5 ± 1.0	$14.9\pm0.8~B$	$3.79\pm0.6\ B$	$2.74\pm0.33~B$
DD	WW	$\textbf{-0.28} \pm 0.04~A$	$-0.21 \pm 0.00 \text{ A}$	76.5 ± 1.0	$19.4 \pm 0.1 \text{ A}$	$5.27\pm0.1~A$	$3.68\pm0.04\;A$
11	WD	$\textbf{-0.39} \pm 0.04 \text{ B}$	$-0.37\pm0.03~B$	78.8 ± 1.8	$20.7\pm0.9\;A$	$5.64\pm0.5\;A$	$3.68\pm0.00\;A$
Ч	WW	$-0.27\pm0.02~A$	$-0.32 \pm 0.01 \text{ A}$	79.4 ± 1.8	$19.8 \pm 1.0 \; A$	$5.20\pm0.9\;A$	$3.31\pm0.10~A$
115	WD	$\textbf{-0.40} \pm 0.02 \text{ B}$	$-0.36\pm0.02~B$	79.0 ± 1.3	$22.5\pm1.5~A$	$6.64 \pm 1.3 \; A$	$3.53\pm0.05\;A$
75	WW	$-0.28\pm0.02\;A$	-0.27 ± 0.02 A	79.6 ± 2.9	$22.3\pm0.6\;A$	$6.27\pm0.3~A$	$3.54\pm0.02\;A$
LO	WD	$-0.44\pm0.03~B$	$-0.34\pm0.03~B$	78.9 ± 0.7	$19.0\pm0.0\;A$	$5.71\pm0.2~A$	$3.57\pm0.09\;A$
C.V. (9	%)	18.8	16.1	5.7	13.4	15.3	10.6
R1 sta	ge						
Cont	WW	$\textbf{-0.29} \pm 0.01 \; A$	$\textbf{-0.34} \pm 0.05~A$	78.1 ± 2.9	$25.1\pm0.9\;A$	$7.3\pm0.2\;B$	$3.39\pm0.01\;A$
Com.	WD	$\textbf{-0.83} \pm \textbf{0.13} \text{ B}$	$-0.45\pm0.01~B$	77.9 ± 0.6	$16.9 \pm 0.7 \text{ C}$	$5.89\pm0.2\ B$	$2.38\pm0.08\ C$
DD	WW	$-0.34 \pm 0.02 \text{ A}$	-0.39 ± 0.02 A	75.2 ± 0.5	$27.0\pm0.2~A$	$8.02\pm0.09~A$	$3.35\pm0.07~A$
11	WD	-0.57 ± 0.13 A	$-0.48\pm0.03~B$	80.5 ± 2.2	$26.2\pm1.2~A$	$8.79\pm0.2\;A$	$3.02\pm0.11~B$
Ч	WW	$-0.36\pm0.02\;A$	$-0.34 \pm 0.01 \text{ A}$	76.6 ± 1.2	$21.8\pm0.8\;B$	$8.48\pm0.6\;A$	$3.08\pm0.03~B$
115	WD	$-0.83\pm0.13~B$	$-0.50\pm0.03~B$	85.0 ± 0.3	$22.3\pm0.6~B$	$7.86\pm0.5~A$	$3.32\pm0.04~A$
75	WW	$\textbf{-0.32} \pm 0.02 \; A$	$-0.37\pm0.04~A$	75.8 ± 1.6	$27.0\pm1.2\;A$	$9.67\pm0.4\;A$	$3.14\pm0.05~B$
பல	WD	$\textbf{-0.63} \pm 0.10 \text{ B}$	$-0.48\pm0.02~B$	77.3 ± 1.3	$26.5\pm1.0\;A$	$8.58\pm0.3\;A$	$3.17\pm0.02\ B$
C.V. (%)	42.6	17.5	5.7	10.0	11.2	5.03

Mean \pm SD (n = 5) followed by the same letter, in the column, did not differ

significantly from each other as determined by Scott-Knott's test ($p \ge 0.05$).

4.3.3. Effect of water deficit on photosynthetic parameters of plants

Water deficit induces a significant reduction of chlorophyll *a* (Chl*a*) and chlorophyll *b* (Chl*b*) contents (Table 03). Moreover, the application of PP, ZS and HS in V4 and R1 stages, maintained the Chl*a* and Chl*b* contents, even under conditions of water deficit (Table 03). The ratio between Chl*a* and Chl*b* (Chl*a*/Chl*b*) in V4-plants treated with the compounds were similar to the control (Table 03). In the R1 stage, the values of Chl*a*/Chl*b* were higher in plants with WDHS application, followed by the other compounds, compared to plants without application (Table 03).

The compounds application turn possible to maintain the net photosynthetic rate (*A*) in stage V4. However, soybean plants in V4 stage only subjected to water deficit significantly reduced the *A*, stomatal conductance (*gs*), transpiration rate (*E*) and a ratio between apparent electron transport rate and CO_2 assimilation (*ETR/A*). The application ZS, in R1 stage, allowed the maintenance of *A* with values similar to the control, therefore, plants submitted to the water deficit with PP and HS application, the values were lower than control plants, however, higher in 152% and 136%, respectively, in relation to the plants exposed only to the water deficit (Table 04).

Reductions in *gs* and *E* were evident in soybean plants both under water deficit and with and without compounds application in the R1 stage (Table 04). In this same stage, increases in water use efficiency (WUEg) (94.1) were observed in plants with WDHS, followed by other compounds. However, plants exposed to water deficit WUEg values were 39.0 (Table 04). Similar values were also observed for the control for an *ETR/A* in the R1 stage in soybean plants with applications of compounds subject to water deficit (Table 04).

Table 04. Net photosynthetic rate (μ mol CO₂ m⁻² s⁻¹) (*A*), stomatal conductance (mol H₂O m⁻² s⁻¹) (*gs*), transpiration rate (mmol H₂O m⁻² s⁻¹) (*E*), use efficiency (WUEg) and ratio between apparent electron transport rate and CO₂ assimilation [μ mol e⁻ (μ mol CO₂)⁻¹] (*ETR/A*) in soybean plants grown under 100% maximum water holding capacity (MWHC) (WW) and 50% MWHC (WD), after application of the different product, in both experiments (in V4 stage and R1 stage).

Treatm	ents	A gs		E WUEg		ETR/A
V4 sta	ge					
<u> </u>	WW	$14.3\pm0.5~A$	0.465 ± 0.02 A	5.8 ± 0.1 A	31.1 ± 1.9	$6.9 \pm 0.3 \text{ B}$
Com.	WD	7.4 ± 0.1 B	$0.219\pm0.02~\mathrm{B}$	3.5 ± 0.2 B	$8 29.7 \pm 1.6$	$10.3\pm0.5~A$
חח	WW	13.3 ± 0.09 A	0.421 ± 0.02 A	5.1 ± 0.2 A	32.2 ± 2.1	$6.9 \pm 0.1 \text{ B}$
PP	WD	$13.4\pm0.5\;A$	0.362 ± 0.01 A	4.7 ± 0.2 A	38.8 ± 1.7	$6.7 \pm 0.3 \text{ B}$
цс	WW	$14.3\pm0.1\;A$	0.441 ± 0.02 A	5.4 ± 0.2 A	33.1 ± 2.3	$6.7 \pm 0.3 \text{ B}$
пэ	WD	$13.2\pm0.6\ A$	$0.401 \pm 0.01 \text{ A}$	$5.0 \pm 0.1 A$	34.1 ± 0.7	$6.4\pm0.6\ B$
70	WW	$14.5\pm0.8\;A$	0.441 ± 0.03 A	$5.6 \pm 0.3 A$	33.9 ± 2.8	$6.7\pm0.2~B$
ZS	WD	$13.9\pm0.7\;A$	0.399 ± 0.04 A	5.1 ± 0.3 A	39.2 ± 3.6	$6.5\pm0.1~B$
C.V. (%)	9.7	15.5	11.6	15.2	6.3
R1 sta	ge					
Cont	WW	$15.2\pm0.3~A$	$0.326\pm0.01\;A$	$5.4\pm0.3\;A$	$55.9 \pm 3.9 \text{ C}$	$7.7\pm0.6\ B$
Cont.	WD	$3.8\pm0.8\;C$	$0.063\pm0.01~B$	$1.1 \pm 0.1 \text{ B}$	$39.0 \pm 1.7 \text{ C}$	$28.5\pm5.2\;A$
DD	WW	$14.4\pm0.1\;A$	$0.320\pm0.02\;A$	$5.5\pm0.4\;A$	$48.6 \pm 3.2 \text{ C}$	$6.9\pm0.09~B$
ГГ	WD	$9.6 \pm 1.6 \text{ B}$	$0.090\pm0.01~B$	$2.8\pm0.7~B$	$70.8\pm3.0~B$	$10.9\pm0.6\ B$
цс	WW	13.8 ±0.5 A	$0.320\pm0.02\;A$	$5.4\pm0.4\;A$	$44.1 \pm 5.2 \text{ C}$	$7.1 \pm 0.1 \text{ B}$
пэ	WD	$9.0\pm1.6\ B$	$0.090\pm0.01~B$	$1.8\pm0.4~B$	$94.1\pm10.4~A$	$9.2\pm0.6\ B$
75	WW	$14.6\pm0.4\;A$	$0.297\pm0.04~A$	$5.1\pm0.5\;A$	$56.9\pm1.9\ C$	$7.2 \pm 0.1 \text{ B}$
20	WD	$11.9\pm0.7\;A$	$0.148 \pm 0.01 \; B$	$2.7\pm0.1~B$	$77.1 \pm 1.5 \text{ B}$	$9.3\pm0.3\;B$
CV (%)	20.5	24.8	29.2	19.4	10.8

Mean \pm SD (n = 5) followed by the same letter, in the column, did not differ significantly from each other as determined by Scott-Knott's test (p \geq 0.05).

The potential quantum yield of PSII (F_v/F_m) showed not differences in stage V4 (Table 05), regardless of the compound or water availability. However, in the R1 stage, the isolated water deficit reduced the F_v/F_m (Table 05). Similar behaviour was observed for the effective quantum yield of PSII (Φ_{PSII}) and electron transport rate (ETR), which reduced only when exposed under the water deficit, and showed values similar to the control in plants treated with the compounds + WD (Table 05). The values of non-photochemical quenching coefficient (NPQ), significantly increased in soybean plants exposed to the water deficit at the R1 stage, regardless of the application of the compounds (Table 05).

Table 05. Potential quantum yield of PSII (F_v/F_m), effective quantum yield of PSII (Φ_{PSII}), electron transport rate (ETR), non-photochemical quenching coefficient (NPQ), in soybean plants grown under 100% maximum water holding capacity (MWHC) (WW) and 50% MWHC (WD), after application of the different product, in both experiments (in V4 stage and R1 stage).

Trootm	onto	E /E	Φ	ETD	NDO
Tleatin	ents	$\Gamma_{\rm V}/\Gamma_{\rm m}$	Ψ_{PSII}	EIK	NrQ
V4 stag	ge				
Cont	WW	0.94 ± 0.01	$0.235 \pm 0.003 \text{ A}$	$98.70 \pm 1.4 \text{ A}$	$0.795\pm0.10~B$
Cont.	WD	0.86 ± 0.01	$0.169\pm0.008~B$	$71.67\pm3.4~\mathrm{B}$	$1.299 \pm 0.11 \text{ A}$
סס	WW	0.89 ± 0.03	$0.230 \pm 0.006 \text{ A}$	$96.79\pm2.8~A$	$0.787\pm0.11~B$
PP	WD	0.90 ± 0.01	$0.217 \pm 0.007 \; A$	$89.87 \pm 3.4 \text{ A}$	$0.983\pm0.00~B$
UC	WW	0.92 ± 0.02	$0.228 \pm 0.004 \; A$	$96.09\pm1.9~A$	$0.710\pm0.04~B$
пз	WD	0.91 ± 0.02	$0.212\pm0.008~A$	$84.80\pm5.1~A$	$0.888\pm0.04~B$
75	WW	0.89 ± 0.01	$0.233 \pm 0.011 \text{ A}$	$98.22\pm4.7~A$	$0.645\pm0.06~B$
ZS	WD	0.91 ± 0.01	$0.217 \pm 0.008 \; A$	$91.39 \pm 3.7 \text{ A}$	$0.788\pm0.04~B$
C.V. (%	%)	5.6	9.7	10.5	21.7
R1 stag	ge				
Cont	WW	$0.94\pm0.02~A$	$0.247 \pm 0.004 \text{ A}$	$104.7 \pm 1.2 \text{ A}$	$0.911 \pm 0.08 \text{ C}$
Cont.	WD	$0.84\pm0.02~B$	$0.168 \pm 0.004 \text{ B}$	$72.2 \pm 2.2 \text{ C}$	$2.200\pm0.14~A$
סס	WW	$0.93\pm0.01~\mathrm{A}$	$0.233 \pm 0.007 \text{ A}$	$100 \pm 2.1 \text{ A}$	$0.893 \pm 0.07 \ C$
PP	WD	$0.90\pm0.02~A$	$0.251 \pm 0.010 \text{ A}$	$105.7\pm4.0~A$	$2.173 \pm 0.13 \text{ A}$
UC	WW	$0.94 \pm 0.01 \; A$	$0.231 \pm 0.008 \text{ A}$	$99.4 \pm 2.7 \text{ A}$	$1.155\pm0.10\ C$
нэ	WD	$0.96 \pm 0.003 \text{ A}$	$0.210 \pm 0.019 \; A$	$88.5\pm7.9~B$	$2.223\pm0.18~A$
75	WW	$0.91\pm0.02\;A$	$0.248 \pm 0.005 \text{ A}$	$105.2\pm1.6~A$	$0.997 \pm 0.01 \text{ C}$
ΔŊ	WD	$0.94\pm0.03~A$	$0.270 \pm 0.005 \text{ A}$	$113.6 \pm 2.0 \text{ A}$	$1.568\pm0.16\ B$
C.V. (%	⁄0)	4.2	9.7	9.48	19.7

Mean \pm SD (n = 5) followed by the same letter, in the column, did not differ significantly from each other as determined by Scott-Knott's test (p \geq 0.05).

4.3.4. Effect of water deficit on metabolomics profile and antioxidant metabolism of soybean plants

The amino acids proline, isoleucine, leucine, and tryptophan were higher in plants treated to water deficit in the V4 stage .For valine, there was an increase only in plants with WDHS and WDZS (Table 06). The amino acid tyrosine, phenylalanine, methionine, glutamic acid, glutamine, aspartic acid, threonine, serine, alanine and glycine did not know significative difference in V4 (stage data not shown). Plants treated with the compounds and exposed to water deficit, showed a significant increase in proline, methionine, phenylalanine and tryptophan levels in the R1 stage, which was not evident in soybean plants submitted only to water deficit. The application of WDHS increased serine levels (22%) and threonine (39.7%), in relation to plants exposed only to water deficit (Table 06). In contrast, plants with WDPP application had the highest

values of leucine in the R1 stage. The levels of glutamic acid were higher in plants submitted to water deficit and treated with HS and PP. Water deficit promoted a significant increase in the levels of alanine, valine, leucine isoleucine and tyrosine, regardless of the compounds application, in the R1 stage (Table 06). The amino acid glutamine, aspartic acid and glycine did not show significative difference in R1 stage (data not shown).

Only to D-pinitol and chiro-inositol showed an increase, of 26 and 13%, respectively, in plants in the V4 stage treated with the compounds + water deficit (Table 07). Aminobutyric acid, citric acid, fructose, glucose, sorbitol, myo-inositol and maltose were not altered in soybean plants, regardless of treatments and water availability (data not shown). The compounds application resulted in a significant increase of malic acid and D-pinitol when submitted to the water deficit in plants in the R1 stage (Table 07). The WDHS treatment caused a significant increase in chiro-inositol levels, in the R1 stage. Glucose and fructose increased in plants submitted to water deficit at the R1 stage, regardless of the application (Table 07). The other metabolites, aminobutyric acid, citric acid, sorbitol, chiro-inositol, myo-inositol, and maltose did not differ in soybean plants at the R1 stage, regardless of water availability and compound application (data not shown).

The water deficit did not increase the MDA and REL values, due to the application of the compounds, in both stages of development (Table 08). However, the content of MDA and REL increased by 58% and 102% in soybean plants at the V4 stage, and 79% and 157% in R1, respectively, in relation to well-hydrated plants, without application of the compounds.

Soybean plants in the V4 stage increased the activity of the enzymes superoxide dismutase (SOD), catalase (CAT), and ascorbate peroxidase (APX) when exposed to water deficit, regardless of the compounds application (Table 08). Peroxidase (POX) activity was increased only in plants treated with PP (57%), HS (39%) and ZS (56%) and exposed to water deficit in the V4 stage (Table 08). In R1 stage water stress induced an increase in the activity of APX and POX enzymes, regardless of the application of the compounds (Table 08). Plants exposed to water deficit showed an increase in the activity of SOD and CAT enzymes in relation to well-irrigated plants in the R1 stage. (Table 08).

	Co	ont.	P	Р	Н	S	ZS		C. V.
Variables	WW	WD	WW	WD	WW	WD	WW	WD	(%)
V4 stage									
Tryptophan	38.12 B	48.59 A	39.47 B	54.83 A	38.41 B	68.91 A	33.90 B	53.07 A	23.8
Leucine	20.34 B	23.24 A	21.11 B	26.85 A	16.34 B	24.73 A	17.89 B	25.55 A	17.6
Isoleucine	19.12 B	23.73 A	19.51 B	22.08 A	19.73 B	23.72 A	18.28 B	24.68 A	10.9
Valine	15.94 B	17.26 B	16.22 B	16.93 B	17.36 B	19.56 A	16.20 B	20.34 A	9.5
Proline	1.98 B	2.91 A	1.99 B	3.82 A	1.94 B	2.34 B	1.92 B	3.48 A	8.4
R1 stage									
Tryptophan	69.18 B	101.26 A	58.95 B	140.10 A	54.13 B	127.40 A	58.81 B	123.42 A	30.2
Tyrosine	23.93 B	43.59 A	26.39 B	56.00 A	28.90 B	52.45 A	25.33 B	47.96 A	19.6
Phenylalanine	45.58 B	58.60 B	51.73 B	83.49 A	48.76 B	96.69 A	50.46 B	77.57 A	22.7
Methionine	4.69 B	5.02 B	4.90 B	5.83 A	4.56 B	5.28 A	4.68 B	5.61 A	8.8
Glutamic acid	148.4 B	243.5 A	355.2 A	261.1 A	195.3 B	267.6 A	140.7 B	201.0 B	35.0
Leucine	19.58 C	42.18 B	19.86 C	62.73 A	19.35 C	50.20 B	18.22 C	46.48 B	20.9
Isoleucine	18.35 B	33.62 A	19.79 B	44.74 A	19.21 B	51.68 A	18.45 B	43.60 A	31.5
Threonine	9.98 C	11.86 C	10.98 C	13.08 B	10.58 C	16.58 A	11.08 C	13.52 B	12.3
Valine	16.31 B	23.98 A	18.96 B	29.18 A	18.48 B	26.27 A	18.15 B	25.77 A	11.1
Proline	2.8 C	3.8 B	2.8 C	4.4 A	3.4 B	5.1 A	3.7 B	4.6 A	38.8
Serine	18384.9 B	22683.5 B	20597.5 B	21328.5 B	19700.5 B	27890.1 A	21169.5 B	20944.9 B	10.8
Alanine	7670.7 B	12407.7 A	6536.1 B	13691.3 A	10254.9 B	18522.4 A	7211.6 B	15565.0 A	25.5
N.C.		0.11 1	1 41	1 •	1 1	1.1 / 1.	<u></u>	.1	

Table 06. Free amino acids in soybean plants grown under 100% maximum water holding capacity (MWHC) (WW) and 50% MWHC (WD), after application of the different product, in both experiments (in V4 stage and R1 stage).

Mean \pm SD (n = 5) followed by the same letter, in the column, did not differ significantly from each other as determined by Scott-Knott's test (p \geq 0.05).

Table 07. Carbohydrates and sugar alcohol in soybean plants grown under 100% maximum water holding capacity (MWHC) (WW) and 50% MWHC (WD), after application of the different product, in both experiments (in V4 stage and R1 stage).

	Co	ont.	Р	P	HS		Z	C. V.	
Variables	WW	WD	WW	WD	WW	WD	WW	WD	(%)
V4 stage									
D-pinitol Chiro	3151.0 B	3026.0 B	3416.3 B	3882.4 A	2983.5 B	4154.0 A	2757.0 B	3824.3 A	17.1
Inositol	921.8 B	913.8 B	931.2 B	1082.3 A	939.1 B	1058.5 A	882.4 B	1032.8 A	9.3
R1 stage									
Malic acid	1482.6 B	1919.7 B	1605.5 B	2396.5 A	1772.1 B	2794.4 A	1620.9 B	2501.3 A	12.0
Fructose	2604.0 B	4095.5 A	2557.4 B	3551.6 A	3197.5 B	4009.7 A	2973.1 B	3766.1 A	21.1
D-pinitol Chiro	2614.2 B	3546.3 B	2362.0 B	4530.8 A	2962.5 B	5044.7 A	2982.3 B	4828.6 A	28.6
Inositol	625.3 C	866.2 B	562.1 C	959.1 B	529.3 C	1361.5 A	586.8 C	900.2 B	19.5
Glucose	1517.2 B	3694.3 A	1296.8 B	2721.1 A	1425.1 B	2878.7 A	1605.3 B	2230.2 A	32.4

Mean \pm SD (n = 5) followed by the same letter, in the column, did not differ significantly from each other as determined by Scott-Knott's test (p \geq 0.05).

Table 08. The concentrations of the malondialdehyde (nmol g^{-1} FW) (MDA), rate of electrolyte leakage (%) (REL), superoxide dismutase (Unid min⁻¹ mg⁻¹ protein) (SOD), activity of catalase (mmol/min⁻¹ mg⁻¹ protein) (CAT), ascorbate peroxidase (µmol/min⁻¹ mg⁻¹ protein) (APX) and peroxidase (µmol/min⁻¹ mg⁻¹ protein) (POX) in soybean plants grown under 100% maximum water holding capacity (MWHC) (WW) and 50% MWHC (WD), after application of the different product, in both experiments (in V4 stage and R1 stage).

Treatr	nents	MDA	REL	SOD	CAT	APX	POX
V4 sta	nge						
Cant	WW	$28.4 \pm 1.3 \text{ B}$	$16.0\pm0.7~B$	$7.7\pm0.3~B$	$7.19\pm1.0\ B$	$3.03\pm0.5~B$	$11.98\pm0.3~B$
Cont.	WD	$45.1\pm7.3~A$	32.4 ± 1.5 A	$12.2\pm0.6~A$	$11.91\pm0.7~A$	$4.48\pm0.3\;A$	$9.43\pm0.3~B$
DD	WW	$26.9\pm1.4\ B$	$22.1\pm0.4~B$	$8.4\pm0.1~B$	$6.38\pm0.8\ B$	$3.16\pm0.1\;B$	$10.31\pm0.3~B$
rr	WD	$25.1\pm1.1~B$	$20.8 \pm 1.4 \text{ B}$	$13.2 \pm 1.4 \text{ A}$	$12.55\pm1.6~A$	$4.81\pm0.3\;A$	$14.81\pm0.8\;A$
ыс	WW	$26.6\pm1.1\;B$	$24.7\pm2.1~\mathrm{B}$	$9.1\pm0.2~B$	$7.93 \pm 1.4 \text{ B}$	$3.42\pm0.1~B$	$10.39\pm0.6\ B$
пэ	WD	$27.5\pm0.7~B$	$20.1\pm1.2~\mathrm{B}$	$14.3 \pm 1.3 \text{ A}$	$12.40\pm1.4~A$	$5.25\pm0.4\;A$	$13.14\pm0.5~A$
75	WW	$25.4\pm1.6\ B$	$21.5\pm2.3~B$	$9.9\pm0.8\;B$	$7.88\pm0.7\;B$	$2.92\pm0.3\;B$	$10.40\pm0.6~B$
ZS	WD	$29.2\pm0.3\;B$	$22.9\pm1.2~B$	$14.1\pm0.5\;A$	$13.33\pm0.9\;A$	$5.12\pm0.4\;A$	$14.73\pm1.1\;A$
C.V. (%)	26.1	15.1	17.9	30.2	21.4	15.4
R1 sta	nge						
Cont	WW	$39.5\pm2.2~B$	$20.3\pm1.2~\text{B}$	$8.3 \pm 1.3 \text{ C}$	$3.69\pm0.1\ C$	$3.63\pm0.1\;B$	$16.14\pm1.9~B$
Cont.	WD	$71.0\pm7.8\;A$	$52.2\pm9.0\;A$	$11.7\pm0.4~B$	$4.92\pm0.2\;B$	$4.95\pm0.2\;A$	$24.21\pm1.8~A$
DD	WW	$35.6\pm2.1~B$	$16.3\pm0.6\ B$	$9.0 \pm 0.1 \text{ C}$	$3.79\pm0.0\ C$	$3.79\pm0.0\ B$	$14.26\pm0.5~B$
11	WD	$38.6\pm0.7~B$	$13.7 \pm 1.5 \text{ B}$	$12.6\pm2.0~B$	$4.55\pm0.1~B$	$5.50\pm0.3\;A$	$25.53 \pm 2.7 \text{ A}$
цс	WW	$36.6\pm3.6\ B$	$14.6\pm1.2~B$	$8.4\pm0.4\ C$	$4.18\pm0.1\;C$	$4.19\pm0.1~B$	$14.30\pm1.2\ B$
115	WD	$38.2\pm1.3\ B$	$17.8\pm1.2~B$	$12.0\pm0.8~B$	$5.57\pm0.1~A$	$5.57\pm0.1\;A$	$23.74\pm1.2~A$
75	WW	$36.5\pm1.2\ B$	$22.5\pm1.3~B$	$6.9\pm1.1\ C$	$3.98\pm0.2\ C$	$3.92\pm0.2\;B$	$13.95\pm0.8~B$
പാ	WD	$39.6\pm0.9~B$	$20.6\pm1.4~B$	16.9 ± 2.4 A	$4.59\pm0.3~\text{B}$	$5.49\pm0.3\;A$	25.67 ± 1.5 A
C.V. (%)	21.1	38.2	13.7	12.2	13.5	22.1

Mean \pm SD (n = 5) followed by the same letter, in the column, did not differ significantly from each other as determined by Scott-Knott's test (p \geq 0.05)

4.4.4 DISCUSSION

Water deficit stress is the most devastating of environmental stresses, affecting up to 40% soybean yield in world (Le et al., 2012), inhibit plant growth and development (Ferrari, et al., 2015). However, the results of the present study, in both stage development, bring novel evidences that the application of potassium phosphite (PP), hydrogen sulfide (HS) and zinc sulphate (ZS) can mitigate the effects deleterious of water deficit, by maintaining the photosynthetic and biochemical metabolism of soybean plants.

As verified in the present study, soybean plants at the R1 development stage drastically reduced growth traits under stress. As the main field crop, soybean yield is highly affected by water stress, particularly when drought occurs during flowering, mainly due to the increase in the rate of flower abortions (Liu et al., 2014). The suggest that inhibition of plant growth should be because the increase of MDA, REL and chlorophyll degradation observed in soybean plants exposed to water stress, directly or indirectly, demonstrate damage occurring on the cell membrane, usually due to increased oxidative stress (Ahmadizadeh et al., 2011). However, the compounds application provides a way in alleviating the drought toxicity. The application of foliar fertilizers provides nutrients to be absorbed directly by the leaves, thus avoiding a possible deficiency and minimizing changes in metabolism in stress situations. Besides that, the compounds act directly in the maintenance and in biosynthesis of chlorophyll. The potassium act directly in the metabolism of nitrogen, even in drought conditions (Zahoor et al., 2017). Already the HS promotes the biogenesis of chloroplasts, increasing the number of lamellas of grana and, consequently, the biosynthesis of chlorophyll (Chen et al., 2011), as evidenced in soybean plants submitted to HS and water stress (Zhang et al., 2010). Zinc acts as a cofactor for chlorophyll biosynthesis, besides being a structural and catalytic component of proteins and enzymes (Ma et al., 2017). The ZS also allowed the maintenance of chlorophyll content in soybean plants submitted to water deficit, as observed in wheat plants (Karim et al., 2012) and maize (Moghadam et al., 2013).

Another characteristic is related to the increase of the root volume, which is a mechanism of damages mitigation caused by the drought, acting directly on the growth characteristics. As evidenced, the application of both compounds acted directly on the roots, this being a strategy of the plants to increase the contact surface of the soil in search of available water (He et al., 2017). This can be related to the fact that soybean plants submitted to water deficit and with application of the products maintain high stomatal conductance (gs) and transpiration rate (E) in V4 stage. According to Wei et al. (2013), wheat plants exposed to water deficit and supplemented with K⁺ allowed the maintenance of gs and E by increasing K⁺ concentration in the guard cells. The application of HS also promoted the maintenance of gs in barley plants exposed to aluminium stress (Dawood et al., 2012). According to the authors, the HS neutralizes the oxidative stress by the decrease of H₂O₂ and, consequently, it affects the ABA signalling pathway, allowing the maintenance of gs. The increase in gas exchange has

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already been reported by the addition of HS in plants of espinafre (Chen et al., 2011) and the application of ZS in wheat plants under drought conditions (Karim et al., 2012). Zinc induces a substantial increase in cytokine (CK) content and CK/ABA ratio (Puzina, 2004), reversing ABA-induced stomatal closure, allowing higher *gs* (Hu et al., 2013).

In addition, the compounds application, maintained the photosynthetic rate (A) in soybean plants subjected to drought in the V4 stage, as in R1, similar to the control. It is known that the water deficit initially causes the stomatal closure to minimize excessive water loss, which limits the input CO_2 for photosynthesis (Zargar et al., 2017). However, the soybean plants submitted to the application of the compounds showed a greater water use efficiency in the R1 stage, which represents a greater assimilation of CO_2 in relation to the stomatal closure and/or water loss by transpiration. This variable is defined as a yield, or carbon gain, relative to water used to fix that carbon (Gilbert et al., 2011). Associated with the photosynthetic parameters, the effective quantum yield of PSII, electron transport rate and the ratio between apparent electron transport rate and CO_2 assimilation (*ETR/A*) which analyzes biochemical damage (Silva et al, 2016) were maintained by the performance of the compounds in soybean plants exposed to the water deficit. The increase in ETR/A, observed only in the soybean plants exposed to the water deficit, represents an imbalance between the flow of electrons and the assimilation of CO₂ during photosynthesis, indicating the occurrence of alternative drains of electrons, such as photorespiration and Mehler's reaction (Allen and Ort, 2001; Medrano et al., 2002; Ribeiro et al., 2009a; 2009b; Silva et al., 2011). Thus, the applications of the compounds have enabled a greater photosynthetic efficiency in soybean plants even exposed to the water deficit. Zinc sulfate acts on the activity of the carbonic anhydrase enzyme, which contains zinc in its makeup, catalyzing the conversion of CO_2 into HCO_3^- and thus, indirectly, maintaining the constant CO_2 supply for RuBISCO (Tavallali et al., 2009). Increased photosynthetic rate were observed in wheat (Karim et al., 2012) and corn (Wei, et al., 2005) plants submitted to water deficit and ZS foliar application. The benefits of PP and HS treatments were attributed to increased *psbA* gene expression in abiotic stress situations (Oyarburo et al., 2015; Li et al., 2015). The higher expression of *psbA* transcripts allowed de novo synthesis of D1 protein, which in addition to enhancing phosphorylation, accelerates the PSII repair cycle (Li et al., 2015). In addition, the HS application regulates photosynthesis by increasing in RuBISCO activity and the enzymes of the regeneration phase in the Calvin cycle by the ferredoxin/thioredoxin system (Chen et al., 2011).

In our experiment, the A maintained was also associated with the osmotic balance of the cells, besaid the compounds application of the increased compatible osmolytes of the plants exposed to the water deficit at higher levels than in plants without application. The accumulation of compatible solutes, such as soluble carbohydrates, amino acids and organic acids, during the water deficit acts directly on the osmotic adjustment, through the detoxification of reactive oxygen species and intracellular pH regulation, to aid stress tolerance in plants (Silvente et al., 2012). D-pinitol in Leguminosae is present in concentrations equal to or in excess to that of more commonly considered primary and secondary metabolites (Dumschott et al., 2017), it is a common sugar alcohol described as an osmoprotectant (Silvente et al., 2012; Dumschott et al., 2017). It is known that Dpinitol can accumulate mainly in chloroplasts, attributing the positive effects on CO₂ assimilation of these plants even in the face of water deficit (Streeter et al., 2001). Plants treated with WDHS in R1 also showed a significant increase in chiro-inositol, an important sugar alcohol in osmotic adjustment (Subbarao et al., 2001; Liu and Grieve, 2009). Other sugars such as fructose and glucose were increased in response to the water deficit, regardless of the application of the compounds. However, studies have reported that the application of ZS increases the activity of sucrose synthase and acid inverts (Zhang et al., 2016), and potassium also increased the activity of invertases (Ibrahim et al., 2012), enzymes responsible for catalyzing the breakdown in sucrose to fructose and glucose and facilitate osmorregulators accumulation in plants.

Among the amino acids strictly related to the osmotic adjustment, proline stands out, which is largely accumulated in plants exposed to water stress (Silvente et al., 2012; Sun et al., 2016). Proline also acts as a molecular chaperone protein to fortify and regulate numerous enzymatic activities during drought stress (Xue et al., 2009). The application of foliar fertilizers such as potassium and ZS favoured proline accumulation in plants camomile (Jeshni, et al., 2017) and fennel (Rajabi, et al., 2017), respectively, when exposed to the water deficit. The increase in proline and glutamic acid levels in soybean plants exposed to water deficit, with and without the compounds application, suggests that these amino acids constitute an important mechanism of response to the water status maintenance of these plants, acting directly on the osmotic adjustment and maintenance of the photosynthetic parameters.

In addition to the accumulation of proline, increase of serine, evidenced in soybean plants treated with WDHS, indicates a photorespiratory flow as an electron drain due to the high activity of the Calvin cycle and low CO2 availability, as occurs under drought stress conditions (Templer et al., 2017). The branched-chain amino acid levels (BCAAs) valine, isoleucine, leucine and aromatic amino acids (phenylalanine, tryptophan and tyrosine) were also increased in both stages of development, in view of the compounds applications and submitted to water deficit. The amino acids methionine and threonine increased only in the R1 stage. Ford et al., (2011) also observed an increase in leucine levels and especially proteases (aminopeptidase and metacaspase) connected to this amino acid in wheat plants in response to drought. It is considered that these proteases play an important in leaves availability of ATP role in the metabolism of plants under water deficit (Wisniewski and Zagdanska, 2001), since they are involved in the activation of regulatory proteins and turnover of damaged proteins. BCAAs and other amino acids (methionine, threonine and tryptophan) act as both compatible solutes and as alternative electron donors for the mitochondrial electron transport chain, which are important during stress situations (Araújo et al., 2011; Obata, et al., 2015), because it will be the target of oxidation, being able provide a buffer between ROS and proteins (Bowne et al., 2012). That is, amino acids, besides acting as osmotically active solutes, take up important role against oxidative stress. Mitigation of such damage by the application of foliar fertilizers indicates that the compounds are acting in reversing the damage caused by producing reactive oxygen species, in addition to acting in the integrity of the membranes. Water stress promoted a significant increase in the activity of antioxidant enzymes (CAT, APX, POX and SOD), this increase was intensified by the compounds application. The antioxidant enzymes bind with lipid radicals and then stop the propagation of lipid oxidation (Dawood et al., 2012). The stresses trigger the oxidation of polyunsaturated fatty acids increasing the production of reactive oxygen species (ROS) and, by reducing the activity of NADH oxidases, potassium acts minimizing ROS production (Cakmak, 2005; Ahanger et al., 2015; Ahanger and Agarwal, 2017). As observed in this study, applying the HS increased the activity of the

enzymes of the antioxidant system, as reported in wheat plants (Shan et al., 2011; Li et al., 2015) and soybean (Zhang et al., 2010). Activation of the antioxidant system was also observed in plants exposed to ZS under conditions of water deficit, such as wheat (Yavas and Unay, 2016), fennel (Rajabi, et al., 2017) and corn (Moghadam et al., 2013). Thus, the results suggest that the compounds used in this study contribute to prevent the

excess energy is directed to processes damaging, additionally may be associated with the increase of the enzymatic defense mechanisms against reactive oxygen species.

In this study, we evaluated that the water deficit alone caused damage to soybean plants in both stages of development. The results presented in this study allow us to propose that potassium phosphite, zinc sulphate and hydrogen sulfide induces in plants a general signaling pathway whose produce responses that are useful to mitigate water deficit in both stages of development. These compounds maintained the photosynthetic parameters and cell membrane integrity. Importantly, the compounds application caused better accumulation of soluble metabolites under control imposition of water stress. This to be realigned also with the increase of the antioxidant activity as verified by compounds application. In the current study there were two tolerance mechanisms employed in response to compounds application to water stress: the first involved the upregulation of antioxidant enzyme activity; whereas the second involved accumulation of soluble sugars, free amino acids, and proline to facilitate osmotic adjustment. Both related to maintenance of the photosynthetic parameters and cell membrane integrity. This is the first report that suggests the potential agricultural use of these compounds to mitigate drought effects in soybean plants.

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5. CONCLUSÃO GERAL

Através dos resultados obtidos nesse estudo, constatou-se que as doses de 1.6 g/L ha⁻¹ de sulfato de zinco, 2,5 mL/L ha⁻¹ de fosfito de potássio e 0,006 mL/L ha⁻¹ de sulfeto de hidrogênio foram eficazes em impedir os efeitos deletérios do déficit hídrico nas plantas de soja. Esses compostos mantiveram os parâmetros fotossintéticos e a integridade da membrana celular, além de aumentar o perfil metabólico e a atividade antioxidante, tanto no estádio de desenvolvimento V4 como no estádio de desenvolvimento R1. Os compostos utilizados neste estudo possuem potencial para proteção de espécies agrícolas de episódios de seca podendo reduzir, de modo significativo, os danos causados pela restrição hídrica.