# Effects of elevated $CO_2$ levels and N fertilization on biomass and C and N contents of rice: Insights from Tsukuba FACE

*Kentaro Hayashi[1], Takeshi Tokida[1], Miwa Arai[1], Hidemitsu Sakai[1], Yasuhiro Usui[2], Hirofumi Nakamura[3], Toshihiro Hasegawa[1]

1.National Institute for Agro-Environmental Sciences, 2.NARO Hokkaido Agricultural Research Center, 3.Taiyo Keiki

Rice is a staple crop in monsoon Asia, and its world production is the second largest next to that of maize. Rice paddies under submergence are an anthropogenic source of methane as a potent greenhouse gas. According to the fifth IPCC assessment report, rice paddies account for approximately 11% of the anthropogenic methane emissions. It is of great concerns how the increasing atmospheric $CO_2$ levels ($eCO_2$) affect rice production and rice paddy methane emissions in the near future. In many cases, nitrogen (N) fertilizers are applied to rice paddies, and the N cycle in rice paddy ecosystems is closely interacted with the carbon (C) cycle. To enhance the predictability of rice production and C and N cycles in rice paddy ecosystems in the future, effects of $eCO_2$ and different N availability on C and N cycles in rice paddy ecosystems and these mechanisms should be unraveled.
A free-air $CO_2$ enrichment (FACE) experiment in an open field enables to elucidate responses of actual ecosystems to $eCO_2$. The National Institute for Agro-Environmental Sciences, Japan, had operated a FACE facility (Tsukuba FACE) in Tsukubamirai City, Ibaraki Prefecture since 2010. Single cropping of paddy rice is conducted with the following agricultural practices; submersion in late April; fertilization and puddling in middle May; transplanting of rice seedlings in late May; continuous submergence until the drainage in middle to late August; harvesting in middle to late September; a fallow season with bare soil and rice residues until the next spring; and several tillage events with a mixing depth of approximately 15 cm during the fallow season. Four rectangular bays are used for experiments. A FACE plot is set in each bay, accompanied by an ambient plot. Each FACE plot is equipped with an octagonal ring with a diameter of 17 m for pure $CO_2$ release. The FACE equipment automatically regulates $CO_2$ release to achieve the average target $CO_2$ levels, 200 ppm above the ambient level. Treatments other than $CO_2$ are N fertilization (0N, no application; SN, 8 g N $m^{-2}$; HN, 12 g N $m^{-2}$), temperature (ambient, +2°C for floodwater), and rice cultivars.
Five-year data (2010–2014) of Koshihikari, a staple cultivar in this region, showed that the aboveground biomass of rice was increased by $eCO_2$ for all the N treatments (0N, +8%; SN, +10%, HN, +11%). The brown rice yield at SN and HN were also increased by $eCO_2$ (SN, +12%; HN, +11%), whereas that at 0N did not respond to $eCO_2$. Thus, the harvest index (the ratio of yield to aboveground biomass) of SN and HN were unchanged by $eCO_2$, but that of 0N was decreased by 5% under $eCO_2$. This result implies that the $CO_2$ fertilization effect does not reach to grains under low N availability. The seasonal methane emissions were increased by 5% (SN) under $eCO_2$. In the presentation, study results on the carbon and nitrogen contents and the allocation of biomass between shoot and root under $eCO_2$ and different N availability will be shown. It is expected that such the knowledge gives good insights to research on responses of C and N cycles in terrestrial ecosystems to $eCO_2$.
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