DIPHOSPHOPYRIDINE NUCLEOTIDE-NITRATE REDUCTASE

in Beta vulgaris L.

by

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We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard.

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

November, 1964
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ABSTRACT

A soluble DPNH-nitrate reductase (NRase) of the sugar beet has been purified and characterized. The occurrence of NO$_2^-$ as an end product and the insensitivity of the enzyme to oxygen indicate that the sugar beet NRase is of the nitrate assimilation type.

The enzyme was not associated with any cell particle and all NRase activity present in the homogenate of sugar beet leaves was recovered in the 20,000 x g supernatant.

A sixtyfold purification was accomplished by ammonium sulfate precipitation followed by adsorption on calcium phosphate gel. At room temperatures and higher the enzyme was heat labile, but was relatively stable at -15°C. Dialysis at 4°C did not result in an appreciable loss of activity. The optimum pH was 7.0.

The NRase was sensitive to heavy metal inhibitors but it was not possible to show that Mo was the specific prosthetic metal. It was demonstrated, however, that chemically reduced Mo could serve as an electron donor. Thus Mo may be a cofactor for the enzyme. The reversal of p-chloromercuribenzoate inhibition by the sulphydryl reagents glutathione and cysteine, coupled with strong inhibition by iodoacetate and cupric sulfate indicated the sulphydryl nature of the enzyme.

The partially purified NRase was stimulated to a considerably greater degree by FAD than by FMN. Rf values and cochromatography in different solvents showed that a substance liberated from the enzyme preparation by acid and heat was not
riboflavin or FMN but very probably was FAD. It is suggested that, in common with other assimilatory NRases of higher plants, the flavin nucleotide prosthetic group of sugar beet NRase is FAD.

The presence of two NRases in the sugar beet was indicated by the fact that the crude "enzyme" was stimulated to the same extent by the addition of DPNH or TPNH, that the ratio of activities resulting from the addition of the two pyridine nucleotides changed with the degree of purity of the enzyme, and that the enzyme finally obtained by calcium phosphate gel adsorption and elution was DPNH-specific. That purification was not complete was shown by the presence of DPNH-quinone reductase and DPNH-cytochrome c reductase activity in the NRase preparation.

A low NRase activity and a high nitrate content were measured in sugar beet leaves during growth in darkness. The reverse occurred in light. It is suggested that the diurnal variation in NRase activity may be the result of the fall of leaf tissue pH during darkness and its rise to approximate the enzyme's optimum pH in light.

The possible participation of the NRase in a flavin nucleotide-catalyzed enzymatic photoreduction of nitrate was indicated by the coupling of photoreduction of FAD with the reduction of nitrate by NRase.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is my pleasure to acknowledge the help I have received from Prof. D. J. Wort. During the period when this research was conducted he has been a constant source of encouragement and advice. In addition I wish to thank him for reviewing the manuscript critically.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ................................................................................................................. i
Acknowledgement ................................................................................................... iii
Table of Contents ..................................................................................................... iv
List of Figures........................................................................................................... viii
List of Tables .......................................................................................................... ix

HISTORICAL

I. DISCOVERY OF NITRATE REDUCTASE .............................................................. 1

II. CLASSIFICATION OF NITRATE REDUCTASE .................................................. 5

III. ASSIMILATORY NITRATE REDUCTASE ......................................................... 15
   1. Methods of Extraction ..................................................................................... 15
   2. Purification of Enzyme ................................................................................... 21
   3. Measurement of Activity ............................................................................... 24
   4. Stability of Enzyme ....................................................................................... 30
   5. Electron Donors ............................................................................................ 31
   6. FAD as Prosthetic Group .............................................................................. 33
   7. Sulfhydryl Property ....................................................................................... 35
   8. Molybdenum Constituent .............................................................................. 35
   9. Phosphate Stimulation ............................................................................... 38
  10. Inhibitors ...................................................................................................... 40
  11. Mechanism of Action ................................................................................... 41
  12. Localization of Enzyme ................................................................................. 43
  13. Adaptive Formation of Enzyme .................................................................... 44
  14. Effect of Plant Age on Enzyme Activity ....................................................... 46
  15. Nitrate Reductase Activity in Roots .............................................................. 47
  16. Light and Nitrate Reductase Activity ............................................................ 49
### EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

#### MATERIAL AND METHODS
- 1. Source of Enzyme  
- 2. Extraction of Enzyme  
- 3. Cofactors and Other Substances  
- 4. Preparation of Calcium Gel  
- 5. Preparation of Alumina Cr Gel  
- 6. Preparation of Electron Donors  
- 7. Determination of Protein  
- 8. Determination of Chlorophyll Content  
- 9. Determination of Nitrate Content  
- 10. Standard Nitrate Reductase Assay  
- 11. Determination of DPNH-Menadione Reductase Activity  
- 12. Determination of DPNH-Quinone Reductase Activity  
- 13. Determination of DPNH-Cytochrome c Reductase Activity  
- 14. Determination of DPNH-Diaphorase Activity  
- 15. Isolation and Identification of Enzyme Bound Flavin  
- 16. Fractionation of Cellular Components  
- 17. Photochemical Reduction of Flavin Nucleotides  

### EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

#### I. PURIFICATION OF ENZYME
- 1. First Ammonium Sulfate Fractionation  
- 2. Second Ammonium Sulfate Fractionation  
- 3. Calcium Phosphate Gel Adsorption  
- 4. Third Ammonium Sulfate Fractionation
TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd)

II. CHARACTERIZATION OF NITRATE REDUCTASE ........................................ 71
   1. Stability of Enzyme ................................................................. 71
   2. Time Course of Enzymatic Reaction .......................................... 74
   3. Enzyme Activities with Enzyme Concentration .............................. 74
   4. pH Optimum ............................................................................. 74
   5. Substrate Affinity ..................................................................... 74
   6. Specificity for Electron Donors .............................................. 79
   7. Effect of Temperature on Activity ........................................... 79
   8. FAD as Prosthetic Group .......................................................... 84
   9. Sulfhydryl Nature .................................................................... 86
  10. Dialysis of Enzyme ................................................................. 88
  11. Phosphate Stimulation .............................................................. 90
  12. Inhibition ................................................................................ 93
  13. Separation of DPNH-Nitrate Reductase from TPNH-Nitrate ............ 99
  14. Other Enzyme Activities in Enzyme Preparation ........................ 99
  15. Products and Stoichiometry .................................................... 100

III. EFFECT OF AGE OF PLANT ON ENZYME ACTIVITY .......................... 106

IV. DISTRIBUTION OF ENZYME IN SUGAR BEET PLANT .................... 107

V. SUB-CELLULAR LOCALIZATION OF ENZYME .................................... 108

VI. FLAVIN NUCLEOTIDE-CATALYZED ENZYMATIC PHOTOREDUCTION OF NITRATE ................................................................. 110
   1. Photoreduction of Flavin Nucleotides ..................................... 110
   2. Characterization of Flavin Nucleotide-Catalyzed Enzymatic Photoreduction of Nitrate .................................................... 110
TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd)

VII. DIURNAL CHANGES IN NITRATE CONTENT AND NITRATE REDUCTASE ACTIVITY IN SUGAR BEET LEAVES ................................. 114

VIII. OTHER METHODS OF ENZYME PURIFICATION .................. 117
      1. Extraction of Nitrate Reductase from Acetone Powder .... 117
      2. Removal of Nucleoprotein from the Enzyme Preparation ... 118
      3. Adsorption of Nitrate Reductase on Alumina C<sub>r</sub> Gel ... 119

DISCUSSION ........................................................................ 121

BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................................... 129
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Effect of protectant in the extraction medium on the level of sugar beet nitrate reductase activity</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Effect of time and storage on the activity of nitrate reductase</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Proportionality of enzyme activity with time</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Proportionality of enzyme activity with enzyme concentration</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Effect of pH on nitrate reductase activity</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Effect of nitrate concentration on nitrate reductase activity</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Effect of DPNH and TPNH on the activity of nitrate reductase</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Variation of activity with temperature</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Effect of FAD and FMN on the activity of nitrate reductase</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Time course of nitrate reductase reaction</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Photoreduction of FAD and FMN with EDTA</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Photoreduction of FAD and FMN with methionine</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Comparison of Assimilatory Nitrate Reductase and Respiratory Nitrate Reductase</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Summary of Methods of Extracting Assimilatory Nitrate Reductase</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Summary of Measurement of Assimilatory Nitrate Activity by Colorimetric Method</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Summary of Properties of Assimilatory Nitrate Reductase</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Adsorption of Nitrate Reductase by Calcium Phosphate Gel</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Summary of Purification of Sugar Beet Nitrate Reductase</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Effect of Various Hydrogen Donors on Nitrate Reductase</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Effect of Temperature on Nitrate Reductase Activity</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. Paper Chromatography of Nitrate Reductase Flavin</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. Inhibition of Nitrate Reductase by p-Chloromercuribenzoate and its Reversal by Sulfhydryl Compounds</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI. Influence of Dialysis Against Various Reagents on the Activity of Nitrate Reductase</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII. Activation of Nitrate Reductase by Phosphate</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII. The Substitution of Other Anions for Phosphate</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV. Effect of Heavy Metals on the Activity of Nitrate Reductase</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV. Effect of Various Metal-chelating Agents on the Activity of Nitrate Reductase</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
XVI. Effect of Non-specific Inhibitors on the Activity of Nitrate Reductase ........................................ 97
XVII. Effect of Phenolic Compounds on the Activity of Nitrate Reductase ........................................ 98
XVIII. Separation of DPNH-Nitrate Reductase from TPNH-Nitrate Reductase ........................................ 101
XIX. Other Enzymatic Activities Present in Partially Purified Nitrate Reductase .................................... 102
XX. Stoichiometry of Nitrate Reductase Reaction .......................................................... 104
XXI. Effect of Age of Plant on Nitrate Reductase Activity ......................................................... 106
XXII. Distribution of Nitrate Reductase Activity in Beta vulgaris .................................................... 107
XXIII. Sub-cellular Localization of Sugar Beet Nitrate Reductase .................................................. 109
XXIV. Characterization of Flavin Nucleotide-Catalyzed Enzymic Photoreduction of Nitrate ................. 113
XXV. Diurnal Change in Nitrate Content and Nitrate Reductase Activity in Sugar Beet Leaves .......... 116
XXVI. Extraction of Nitrate Reductase from Acetone Powder ....................................................... 118
XXVII. Removal of Nucleoprotein from Enzyme Preparation ..................................................... 119
XXVIII. Adsorption of Nitrate Reductase in Alumina C2 Gel .......................................................... 120
XXIX. Comparison of the Properties of Nitrate Reductase from Beta vulgaris and from Other Higher Plants... 126
I. DISCOVERY OF NITRATE REDUCTASE

By the processes of ammonification and nitrification the nitrogen of soil organic matter is converted to ammonia and finally to nitrate. Nitrate is the main source of nitrogen utilized by higher plants. The nitrogen of nitrate, with an oxidation number of +5, is in a highly oxidized state, but the nitrogen of the amino group and ammonia with an oxidation number of -3, is in a highly reduced state. The reduction of nitrogen is thus the first step in the synthesis of amino acids and other organic nitrogenous compounds when nitrate is the source of nitrogen. Although other nitrogen sources such as ammonia, nitrite and amino acids can be utilized by higher plants, nitrate usually supports better growth than these sources.

One of the earliest investigations, reported in 1903 by Pozjii Escot, demonstrated that the aqueous extracts of the stem of the burdock had the power to reduce nitrates to nitrites and ammonia. Kastle and Elvove (1904) also found that the reduction took place most rapidly at 40° to 50°C and that aldehyde was one of the most effective of various "accelerators" of the action.

Irving and Hankinson (1908) claimed to have found a nitrate reducing enzyme in *Elodea*, *Potamogeton*, and numerous members of *Gramineae*. They considered that the nitrate reduction required only the enzyme and a suitable carbohydrate.

Eckerson (1924) for the first time suggested that higher
plants contain an enzyme "reducase" responsible for the reduction of nitrate. The "reducase" activity was calculated from the rate of production of nitrite from nitrate. At the same time Anderson (1924) detected nitrite in the shoots of 25 of the 105 species examined. The nitrate-reducing substance, present in the foliar part of such plants as sunflower, artichoke, pea, radish, tomato, clover and wheat, was found to be thermolabile and oxidizable.

Wu and Loo reported in 1950 that an enzyme "reductase" had been detected in the roots and leaves of 11 higher plants, but not in the stem. This enzyme had an optimum pH of 5.2 and an optimum temperature of 52°C. The reduction of nitrate to nitrite \textit{in vitro} was a first order reaction. Reductase from soybean sprouts appeared to use lactate as an electron donor.

Delwiche (1952) found that cell-free extracts of roots and leaves of various plants could convert $\text{N}^{15}$-labeled nitrate and nitrite to ammonia. Optimum activity was obtained with a dialyzed preparation. Citrate or other Kreb's intermediates were able to stimulate the reaction. The system was inhibited by $\text{Cu}^{++}$, $\text{AsO}_4^-$, and iodoacetamide.

Nason and Evans (1953) and Evans and Nason (1953) successfully purified nitrate reductase (NRase) from \textit{Neurospora} and soybean leaves, respectively. It proved to be a metalloflavoprotein containing FAD, molybdenum and active sulfhydryl groups. DPNH$_2$ or TPNH$_2$ served as hydrogen donor.
NRase was later shown to occur in many plants:

**Higher Plants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plant</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>Tang and Wu (1957)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cauliflower</td>
<td>Candela, Fisher and Hewitt (1957)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat leaf</td>
<td>Anacker and Stoy (1958)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat embryo</td>
<td>Rijven (1958); Spender (1959)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomato roots</td>
<td>Vardyanathan and Street (1959)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn seedling</td>
<td>Hageman and Flesher (1960)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>Fukuzumi and Tamaki (1962)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable marrow</td>
<td>Cresswell, Hageman and Hewitt (1962)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomato leaf</td>
<td>Sanderson and Cocking (1964)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Green Algae**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Algae</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ankistrodesmus</em></td>
<td>Czyan (1963)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Anabaena</em></td>
<td>Hattori (1962)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chlorella</em></td>
<td>Syrett and Morris (1963)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shafter, Baker and Thompson (1961)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fungi**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fungi</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Neurospora</em></td>
<td>Nicholas and Scafin (1956)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kinsky and McElroy (1958)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hansenula</em></td>
<td>Silver (1956)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bacteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bacteria</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Achromobacter</em></td>
<td>Sadana and McElroy (1957)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>fischéri</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Azotobacter vinlandii** | Taniguchi and Ohmachi (1960)  
|                         | Becking (1962) |
| **Escherichia coli** | Nicholas and Nason (1955b)  
|                       | Taniguchi, Sato and Egami (1956)  
|                        | Farkas-Himsley and Artman (1957)  
|                        | Medina and Heredia (1958)  
|                        | Taniguchi and Itagaki (1959) |
| **Rhizobium japonica** | Evans (1954); Cheniae and Evans (1955, 1956, 1957, 1959, 1960); Lowe and Evans (1964) |
| **Rhodospirillum rubrum** | Kato (1963) |
| **Pseudomonas aeruginosa** | Fewson and Nicholas (1961) |
| **Pseudomonas denitrificans** | Vernon (1956) |
II. CLASSIFICATION OF NITRATE REDUCTASE

From the literature it is apparent that a variety of types of nitrate reduction occurs in the organisms which have been studied. The dissimilarity of electron transport sequences and of the end product of reduction indicate that the NRase which catalyzes nitrate reduction occurs in several different forms.

Several classifications have been proposed for the nitrate reduction types. Verhoeven (1956) suggested three types of nitrate reduction for microorganism: assimilation, incidental dissimilation and true dissimilation. Sato (1956) classified nitrate reducing microorganisms on the basis of the behaviour of their cytochromes toward nitrate. Egami et al. (1957) described three types of nitrate reduction in germinating seedlings of *Virginia sesquipedalis*, e.g. nitrate assimilation, nitrate respiration and nitrate fermentation.

The classification of nitrate reduction by Nason (1962) is widely used at the present. He divided nitrate reduction into two classes: 1) nitrate assimilation, or assimilatory nitrate reduction, in which nitrate is reduced to ammonia or the amino level with the products being used for the biosynthesis of nitrogen-containing cell constituents, for example, proteins and nucleic acids; 2) nitrate respiration, or dissimilatory nitrate reduction, in which nitrate is used as the terminal electron acceptor in place of oxygen, usually under anaerobic conditions. Nason's two types of NRase are discussed briefly.
1. Assimilatory NRase

Assimilatory NRase catalyzes the first step in the sequence of reduction by which nitrate is converted to the ammonia or amino acid level for the ultimate synthesis of protein, nucleic acids and other nitrogen-containing cell constituents. The enzyme obtained by Evans and Nason (1953) and Nason and Evans (1953) from *Neurospora* and soybean leaves is the typical assimilatory enzyme.

With purified NRase from *Neurospora*, Nicholas and Nason (1954) have shown that, during the enzymatic transfer of electrons from TPNH to nitrate, both FAD (or FMN) and molybdenum function as electron carriers. They proposed the following reduction sequence:

\[ \text{TPNH} \rightarrow \text{FAD (or FMN)} \rightarrow \text{Mo} \rightarrow \text{NO}_3^- \]

An assimilatory type of pyridine nucleotide-NRase similar to that described for *Neurospora* and soybean leaves, has been reported to occur in tissues of higher plants e.g. wheat leaves (Anacker and Stoy, 1958), wheat embryo (Spencer, 1959) and tomato leaves (Sanderson and Cocking, 1964), etc.

Nicholas and Nason (1955b) reported the presence of an assimilatory NRase in *E. coli*. The enzyme was DPNH-linked and required FAD and probably molybdenum as cofactors.

Silver (1957) purified and characterized a pyridine nucleotide-NRase in the extracts of the yeast, *Hansenula anomala*,
grown on a nitrate-containing medium. The enzyme was similar to that found in *Neurospora* and soybean leaves. The possibility that cytochromes play a direct part in nitrate reduction by *Hansenula* has been eliminated by direct spectrophotometric observations of living cells.

Taniguchi and Ohmachi (1960) described an inducible pyridine nucleotide NRase of sulfhydryl CO-insensitive metalloenzyme nature in the large particles from nitrate-grown Azotobacter cells. The activity was stimulated 1.5 to 2.0-fold by the addition of FAD or FMN. Except for its particulate nature, the enzyme strongly resembled that of *Neurospora* and higher plants and it was apparently of the assimilatory type. The following electron-transfer sequence was proposed:

```
Cytochrome → Cytochrome oxidase → O₂

system

↑

DPNH → FAD (or FMN) → Nitrate reductase (CO-sensitive heavy metal) → NO₃⁻

↑

Reduced nile blue
```

2. Respiratory NRase

According to Nason's classification, respiratory NRase catalyzes the first step in nitrate respiration by which nitrate is used as the terminal electron acceptor in place of
oxygen by microorganisms under anaerobic or partially anaerobic conditions. The end products of nitrate respiration may include nitrite, nitric oxide, nitrous oxide, molecular or other oxidation states of nitrogen. Most of the reduction products are not further utilized and for the most part are excreted into the growth medium.

The distinguishing characteristics of respiratory NRase is the participation of cytochrome in its electron transport sequence. Taniguchi et al. (1956) formulated the following scheme to visualize electron transport pathways in the particulate preparation of *E. coli*.

\[
\text{DPNH} \rightarrow \text{FAD} \rightarrow \text{Cytochrome } b_1 \rightarrow \text{Nitrate reductase} \rightarrow \text{reduced by methylene blue} \rightarrow \text{Nitrate} \rightarrow \text{reduced} \rightarrow \text{Oxidase} \rightarrow O_2
\]

The participation of cytochrome *b*₁ in the nitrate reducing mechanism in *E. coli* was based on the spectroscopic observation that the addition of nitrate to a cell-free extract of this organism (in the absence of oxygen) caused the characteristic bands of the
reduced cytochrome to fade, and that this anaerobic oxidation of cytochrome $b_1$ was prevented by cyanide. They were able to obtain more direct evidence for this with the aid of a specific inhibitor of cytochrome $b$ and $b_1$, 2-heptyl-4-hydroxyquinoline-N-oxide (HOQNO).

When formate was used as the hydrogen donor, the reduction of nitrate was strongly inhibited by this HOQNO. In this type of electron transfer system, NRase acts as a terminal enzyme, mediating the direct transfer of electrons to nitrate.

The finding of an unidentified soluble factor necessary to the DPNH- or formate-NRase system led Iida and Taniguchi (1959) to modify the sequence proposed by Taniguchi et al. (1956). This unidentified factor could not be replaced by FAD, menadione or ferrous ion. The marked inhibition of the terminal NRase by several metal-chelating agents suggested the presence of a metal component in the terminal step.
Itagaki and Taniguchi (1959) extracted a soluble DPNH-NRase from *E. coli* grown in synthetic medium under aerobic conditions. In contrast to the particulate preparation this soluble extract was unable to use formate as an electron donor. It was sensitive to HOQNO and stimulated by the addition of FAD to the dialyzed enzyme.

The ferrous ion could act as an electron donor for nitrate via cytochrome $b_1$. An unknown heavy metal participation in the terminal step was proposed because of the inhibition by cyanide and azide.

\[
\text{FAD} \xrightarrow{\begin{array}{c} \text{DPNH or \text{-}manadione, } \text{Fe}^{2+} \text{Cytochrome } b_1 \\ \text{FMN} \end{array}} \xrightarrow{\text{NRase} (\text{unknown heavy metal})} \xrightarrow{3} \text{reduced dyes}
\]

Medina and Heredia (1960) extracted a particulate *E. coli* NRase which required DPNH or TPNH as electron donor and vitamin $K_3$ as electron carrier. They suggested two mechanisms by which nitrate can be reduced to nitrite.
Under aerobic as well as anaerobic conditions, vitamin K₃ or its analogue can act as the electron carrier without the participation of flavins. Under anaerobic conditions nitrate reduction takes place through an electron-transport chain involving FAD and DPNH-oxidase chain.

Evans (1954) and Cheniae and Evans (1956, 1957, 1959, 1960) reported that a particulate DPNH-NRase had been extracted from *Rhizobium japonium* of soybean nodules. Their results indicated that this enzyme catalyzes the reduction of nitrate to nitrite with either DPNH or succinate as electron donor. When DPNH is used as a source of electrons for the system, the evidence indicates involvement of a vitamin K, or a related quinone, a cytochrome, an Antimycin A-sensitive site, two cyanide-sensitive sites, and NRase. When succinate is used as the electron donor for the system it is suggested that succinic dehydrogenase, a cytochrome, an Antimycin A-sensitive site, two cyanide sites, and NRase are involved in the electron transport to nitrate. Enzyme activity is probably correlated with the capacity to fix atmospheric nitrogen. The particulate enzyme exhibited properties similar to those of the nitrate respiration system from *E. coli* described by Taniguchi and Itagaski (1960).

Lowe and Evans (1964) developed a method for the preparation of a soluble NRase extract of *Rhizobium japonium* cells. This soluble enzyme was purified about elevenfold by ammonium sulfate
fractionation and chromatography on a calcium phosphate column. DPNH and succinate were completely ineffective donors for nitrate reduction with the soluble preparation. Reduced benzyl viologen was employed as the electron donor. Judging from the similarity of their substrate affinity and of pH optimum, the soluble NRase and the NRase portion of the particulate complex from *R. japonicum* cells are the same enzyme.

Sadana and McElroy (1957) extracted a nitrate reducing system from the salt-water luminous bacterium, *Achromobacter fisheri*, and suggested the following electron transport system:

$\text{DPNH} \rightarrow \text{TPNH} \rightarrow \text{FAD} \rightarrow \text{FMN} \rightarrow \text{Fe}^{3+} \rightarrow \text{Bacterial cytochrome} \rightarrow \text{O}_2$

$\downarrow \text{Reduced benzyl viologen} \rightarrow \text{Nitrate reductase} \rightarrow \text{NO}_3^-$

The nitrate-reducing system from this bacterium was solubilized by osmotic rupture and separated into two soluble fractions, a DPNH-cytochrome c reductase moiety with a requirement for FAD or FMN, and a terminal NRase. The enzyme could catalyze the reduction of nitrate by using reduced cytochrome or benzyl viologen. This enzyme is quite similar to the soluble respiratory NRase from *E. coli*.

Fewson and Nicholas (1961) purified and characterized
a particulate respiratory NRase from the denitrifying bacterium, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. Cytochrome c and molybdenum were required as functional components. The following sequence of electron transport was suggested:

\[ \text{DPNH} \rightarrow \text{FAD} \rightarrow \text{Cytochrome c} \rightarrow \text{Mo} \rightarrow \text{NO}_3^- \]
\[ \text{Cytochrome oxidase} \rightarrow \text{O}_2 \]

A summary comparison of the properties of assimilatory and respiratory NRase is given in Table I.
Table 1

Comparison of Assimilatory NRase with Respiratory NRase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Assimilatory Nitrate Reductase</th>
<th>Respiratory Nitrate Reductase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original Form</td>
<td>Soluble or particulate</td>
<td>Soluble or particulate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to oxygen</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Inhibited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enzyme-bound Components</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavin</td>
<td>FAD</td>
<td>FAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cytochrome</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Present (Cytochrome b₁ in <em>E. coli</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molybdenum</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Present (1 atom/molecule in <em>E. coli</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Component</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Iron (40 atoms/molecule in <em>E. coli</em>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Typical Electron Transfer Sequence | TPNH→FAD→Mo→NO₃⁻ | DPNH
|                                 |                                | FAD, (Menadione)(Fe²⁺) |
| Km for nitrate                  | 1.4 x 10⁻³ M (Neurospora)      | 5.1 x 10⁻⁴ M (*E. coli*)     |
| Physiological function          | Nitrate assimilation           | Nitrate respiration          |
III. ASSIMILATORY NITRATE REDUCTASE

As a background for the study of the assimilatory NRase of the sugar beet, a literature review of the extraction, purification and characterization of NRase of a variety of other plants is presented in the following section.

1. Methods of Extraction

Nason and Evans (1953) isolated NRase from Neurospora by the following procedure. After freezing at -15°C, Neurospora mycelia were ground in a Ten Broeck homogenizer in three times their weight of 0.1 M K$_2$HPO$_4$ buffer, pH 7.0, and centrifuged at 20,000 x g for 10 minutes at 4°C. About 85% of the total activity was obtained in the supernatant.

The enzyme from soybean leaves (Evans and Nason, 1953) was extracted by grinding the leaves in a Waring Blender in the presence of phosphate buffer, pH 9.0, and alumina powder. The mixture was further ground for three minutes in a Ten Broeck homogenizer at 0 - 4°C, then centrifuged at 20,000 x g for 10 minutes at 4°C. About 10% of the enzyme was lost by this procedure.

Nicholas and Nason (1955a) omitted the alumina powder and added cysteine and EDTA, each at a final concentration of 10$^{-4}$ M. This improved the stability and yield of the enzyme from soybean leaves by protecting it against inactivation by
heavy metals or oxidation of sulfhydryl groups.

Nicholas and Nason (1955b) isolated a soluble assimilatory NRase from *E. coli*. The frozen cells were homogenized in a cold mortar using an equal weight of alumina powder (Alcoa A-301). After grinding for 10 minutes, three times their weight of cold 0.1 M K$_2$HPO$_4$, pH 7.0, containing sodium versenate (10$^{-4}$ M final concentration) was slowly added and grinding continued for another 5 minutes. After centrifugation for 15 minutes at 4° C., the supernatant solution contained 75% of the enzyme activity of the homogenate.

Silver (1956) extracted from the yeast *Hansenula anomala* a soluble enzyme which was concerned with the assimilation of nitrate. The cells were suspended in sufficient 0.2 M phosphate buffer, pH 7.5, to make a thick cream. A 50-ml aliquot of the cream and 5 g of 200-mesh powdered pyrex were placed in a 9-KC Raythreon sonic oscillator and the cells disrupted for 40 minutes in the cold. Unbroken cells, large debris, and glass were removed by low speed centrifugation and the supernatant was subjected to 107,000 x g in a preparative Spinco centrifuge for 50 minutes. The supernatant contained 95 to 100% of the enzymatically active material of the whole homogenate.
Candela et al. (1957) extracted NRase from cauliflower by grinding fresh tissue for 15 minutes with neutral acid-washed silica sand and three times its weight of extractant at 0°C in a chilled mortar. The extracting reagent was 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 7.0, containing $10^{-4}$ M cysteine and ethylene diamine tetracetate (EDTA). The homogenate was filtered through muslin and the filtrate was centrifuged at 20,000 x g at 0°C.

Spencer (1959) separated wheat embryos from the endosperm after 48 hours germination on filter paper moistened with 10 mM potassium nitrate, and ground them in a cold mortar at 0 - 2°C with ten times their weight of 0.1 M $K_2HPO_4/KH_2PO_4$, pH 7.5, containing $10^{-3}$ M glutathione. The grindate was then centrifuged at 5000 x g for 20 minutes.

Hageman and Flesher (1960) extracted NRase from maize seedlings. The seedlings were cut into small pieces and ground in a Omnimixer at maximum speed for 2 minutes. The grinding medium was 0.1 M Tris- (hydroxymethyl)-amino-methane (Tris), 0.01 M cysteine and $3 \times 10^{-4}$ M EDTA at a pH of 7.3 to 7.8. Four ml of cold (2°C) grinding medium was added for each gram of tissue. The homogenate was pressed through cheesecloth and centrifuged for 15 minutes at 20,000 x g. The supernatant was decanted through glass wool and assayed.
Sanderson and Cocking (1964) ground tomato leaves in a cold mortar containing acid-washed sand. The grinding medium was 0.1 M Tris-HCl buffer containing $10^{-3}$ M cysteine at pH 7.5. The macerate was pressed through cheesecloth and the filtrate was centrifuged at 1750 x g for 20 minutes.

Table II summarizes the methods of extraction employed by numerous investigators.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Enzyme</th>
<th>Extraction Medium</th>
<th>ml medium/g tissue</th>
<th>Method of Extraction</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soybean leaves</td>
<td>0.1 M K$_2$HPO$_4$ (pH 9.0)</td>
<td>3:1</td>
<td>Add 2 wts. alumina, Waring Blender 2 min. at 0-4°C, Ten Broeck homogenation, centrifuged 20,000 x g. 10 min. at 4°C. 90% activity obtained.</td>
<td>Evans and Nason (1953)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurospora crassa</td>
<td>0.1 M K$_2$HPO$_4$ (pH 7.5)</td>
<td>3:1</td>
<td>Ten Broeck homogenation at 0-4°C, centrifuged at 20,000 x g. 85% activity obtained.</td>
<td>Evans and Nason (1953)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soybean leaves</td>
<td>0.1 M K$_2$HPO$_4$ (pH 9.0), 10$^{-2}$ M EDTA + 10$^{-4}$ M cysteine</td>
<td>3:1</td>
<td>As above, for soybean but omit alumina.</td>
<td>Nicholas and Nason (1955a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeast Hansenula anomala</td>
<td>0.2 M phosphate buffer (pH 7.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Raytheon sonic Oscillator for 40 min., centrifuged at 107,000 x g. 95-100% activity recovered.</td>
<td>Silver (1956)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cauliflower</td>
<td>0.1 M phosphate buffer (pH 7.0), 10$^{-4}$ M EDTA + 10$^{-4}$ cysteine</td>
<td>3:1</td>
<td>Ground in mortar at 0°C with sand. Centrifuged at 20,000 x g.</td>
<td>Candela et al. (1957)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. crassa</td>
<td>0.1 M K$_2$HPO$_4$ (pH 7.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Homogenized in Servall Omnimixer 0-4°C, centrifuged at 10,000 x g. 90% activity obtained.</td>
<td>Kinsky and McElroy (1958)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of Enzyme</td>
<td>Extraction Medium</td>
<td>Ml medium/ g tissue</td>
<td>Method of Extraction</td>
<td>Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat embryo</td>
<td>0.1 M phosphate buffer (pH 7.5) 10^{-3} M glutathione</td>
<td>10:1</td>
<td>Ground in chilled mortar, centrifuged at 5000 x g.</td>
<td>Spencer (1959)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat leaves</td>
<td>0.025 M K_2HPO_4 5 x 10^{-4} M EDTA</td>
<td>3:1</td>
<td>90 sec. in Blender, 3 min. in Potter-Elvehjem Macerator at 4°C</td>
<td>Anacker and Stoy (1958)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize leaves</td>
<td>0.1 M Tris buffer (pH 7.3 - 7.8) 3 x 10^{-4} M EDTA and 10^{-2} M cysteine</td>
<td>4:1</td>
<td>Ground in Omnimixer, centrifuged at 30,000 x g.</td>
<td>Hageman and Flesher (1960)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomato leaves</td>
<td>0.1 M Tris (pH 7.5) 10^{-3} M EDTA</td>
<td>4:1</td>
<td>Ground in chilled mortar, centrifuged at 1750 x g for 20 min. 80-100% activity recovered</td>
<td>Sanderson and Cocking (1964)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **Purification of Enzyme**

NRase enzyme purification has been accomplished by ammonium sulfate precipitation and calcium phosphate gel adsorption. Column chromatography and electrophoresis have also been used.

Nason and Evans (1953) purified *Neurospora* NRase by ammonium sulfate fractionation and calcium phosphate gel adsorption. All steps of purification procedure were carried out at 0-4°C. Centrifugation was performed at approximately 3000 x g. The various percentages of saturation were obtained by the addition of a saturated ammonium sulfate solution to the extract. The first fraction, obtained with 0-43% saturation, contained 50% of the initial activity with a twofold increase in purity. The second ammonium sulfate fractionation used 24-46% saturation. The activity of second fraction (24-46% saturation) represented 20% of the units in the crude starting material and a sevenfold purification. The second fraction was treated with calcium phosphate gel, aged 9 months. The gel-protein ratio was about 2:5. The precipitate was collected by centrifugation and washed twice with cold 0.1 M pyrophosphate buffer, pH 7.0. The pyrophosphate eluate showed about 10% of the total activity of the original crude extract, and an overall purification of 40 to 50 times. The third ammonium sulfate fractionation involved
0-60% saturation. This final fraction contained 10% of the units in the crude starting material and the purification was 60- to 70-fold.

Purification of NRase from soybean leaves (Evans and Nason, 1953) employed calcium phosphate gel adsorption followed by ammonium sulfate precipitation. Ninety-five ml of calcium phosphate gel (11 mg per ml) was added to 190 ml of crude extract. The enzyme was then eluted from the gel by 0.1 M pyrophosphate buffer at pH 7.0. This fraction contained 40% of the total activity. The purification was 24-fold. After two ammonium sulfate precipitations, the enzyme preparation contained 77% of the total activity and was purified 65-fold.

Charcoal (Darco G 60) has been used by Nicholas and Scawin (1956) to treat Neurospora NRase preparations which had already been fractionated by ammonium sulfate precipitation and calcium phosphate gel adsorption. When the enzyme preparation was treated with "Darco G 60" (30 mg/ml enzyme) and centrifuged at 3000 x g for 15 minutes, the enzymatic activity was present in supernatant. This fraction contained 0.8% of the initial activity and represented an overall purification of 84-fold.
Anacker and Stoy (1958) used a column of calcium phosphate to fractionate wheat leaf NRase. The adsorption column was 35 mm in diameter and contained 5 g of calcium phosphate in 30 ml. The enzyme was eluted from the column by increasing concentrations of $K_2HPO_4$ buffer, pH 7.0. The most active fraction was obtained by elution with the phosphate buffer at 0.05 M. Rechromatography and gradient elution with sodium pyrophosphate 0.001-0.1 M, pH 7.0, resulted in a 100-fold increase in activity. The enzyme was then precipitated by ammonium sulfate 0-35% saturation, with a further two-fold increase in specific activity. The preparation was not homogeneous in the ultracentrifuge, but the activity was associated with protein having a sedimentation of 19S and a molecular weight of 500,000-600,000.

Kinsky and McElroy (1958) demonstrated that nucleic acid in enzyme preparations from Neurospora could be successfully removed with protamine sulfate. In the subsequent ammonium sulfate precipitation, they obtained a highly purified enzyme, with specific activity about 10,000. They also reported that when this purified preparation of NRase was examined in the Perkin-Elmer electrophoresis apparatus, a minimum of three distinct peaks were discernible.
Spencer (1959) purified wheat embryo NRase with three ammonium sulfate precipitations (0-55, 28-40 and 29-35% saturation). The final fraction showed a sevenfold increase in specific activity with a recovery of 58% of the activity of the crude cell-free extract.

Sanderson and Cocking (1964) passed the crude enzyme preparation from tomato leaves through Sephadex column containing $10^{-3}$ M cysteine. From 80 to 100% of the enzyme was normally recovered in the 6 ml of eluate following the first 12 ml. The eluate represented twofold purification.

3. Measurements of Activity

Three methods have been used to assay NRase activity: colorimetric, manometric, and spectrophotometric.

**Colorimetric method:** This method is based on the diazotization of an aromatic amino compound by nitrite in acid solution and coupling with a suitable reagent to give an intensive red-purple color. This method for quantitative determination of nitrite was originally described by Snell and Snell (1949). The procedure is as follows: allow 5 minutes of incubation of reaction mixture; add 0.9 ml of $H_2O$ and 0.5 ml of 1% sulfanilamide in N HCl to stop the reaction; follow by 0.5 ml of 0.02% N-(1-naphthyl)-ethylene-diamine hydrochloride to develop the color. After 10 minutes,
read the density of the color in a colorimeter with a green (540 μm) filter.

Using this method, Evans and Nason (1953) found that there was a small non-enzymatic disappearance of nitrite if TPNH and nitrite were allowed to remain in contact with the acid sulfanilamide reagent for a few minutes before adding the solution of N-(1-naphthyl)-ethylene-diamine hydrochloride.

Medina and Nicolas (1957) reported that DPNH and TPNH reacted with the diazotised product of nitrite and sulphanilamide, in acid solution. It is supposed that DPNH in acid solution reduces diazotised sulfanilamide to a phenylhydrazide derivative which is not able to couple with the naphthyl reagent. This source of interference can be overcome by removal of residual DPNH and TPNH at the end of the reaction. Barium acetate and ethanol were used to precipitate the pyridine nucleotides.

Evans and Nason (1953) found that the NRase present in the reaction mixture also caused the disappearance of nitrite. 10^{-3} M hydroxylamine hydrochloride effectively inhibited the slight nitrite reductase action in soybean extracts but also caused a 12% inhibition of NRase. Silver and McElroy (1954) included cyanide at about 3 \times 10^{-5} M to inhibit the enzyme. Nicholas et al. (1954) also used cyanide of a low concentration (4 \times 10^{-5} M).

A variety of methods employing colorimetry are summarized in Table III.
### Table III
Summary of Measurements of Assimilatory NRase Activity by Colorimetric Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plant Material</th>
<th>Reaction Mixture</th>
<th>Time (min.)</th>
<th>Temp. (0°)</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soybean leaves</td>
<td>10 uM KNO₃, 55 uM phosphate buffer, pH 7.0, 1.3 μM FAD, 80 μM TPNH, 0.2 ml enzyme extract in 0.5 ml.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1 μM NO₂⁻/5 min.</td>
<td>Evans and Nason (1953)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. crassa</td>
<td>10 uM KNO₃, 52 uM pyrophosphate buffer, pH 7.0, 0.75 μM FAD, 80 μM TPNH, 0.05 ml enzyme extract in 0.5 ml.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23-28</td>
<td>1 μM NO₂⁻/5 min.</td>
<td>Nason and Evans (1953)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. crassa</td>
<td>10 uM KNO₃, 48 uM pyrophosphate buffer, pH 7.0, 50 μM FMN, 80 μM TPNH, 0.05 ml enzyme extract.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Room temp.</td>
<td>1 μM NO₂⁻/10 min.</td>
<td>Nicholas et al. (1954)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. crassa</td>
<td>10 uM KNO₂, 23 uM Tris buffer, pH 7.5, 0.02 ml boiled Tris-extract of pig heart, 0.02 ml acetone powder, 100 μM TPNH in 0.5 ml.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nicholas and Scawin (1956)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hansenula anomala</td>
<td>10 uM KNO₃, 0.05 ml boiled extract of pig liver, 0.01 - 0.05 ml enzyme extract, 0.2 M phosphate buffer, pH 7.5, in 0.5 ml.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Room temp.</td>
<td>1 μM NO₂⁻/10 min.</td>
<td>Silver (1956)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table III (cont'd)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plant Material</th>
<th>Reaction Mixture</th>
<th>Time (min.)</th>
<th>Temp. °C</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>N. crassa</strong></td>
<td>10 μM NaNO₃, 20-29 μM phosphate buffer, pH 7-7.5, 50 μM FAD, 100 μM TPNH, 0.1-1.0 ml enzyme extract in 0.5 ml.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Room temp</td>
<td>0.19 μM NO₂/30 min.</td>
<td>Kinsky and McElroy (1958)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wheat</strong></td>
<td>10 μM KNO₃, 100-250 μM phosphate buffer, pH 7.5, 0.5 μM FAD, 200 μM DPNH, 0.05-0.2 ml enzyme extract water to 0.5 ml.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1 μM NO₂/30 min.</td>
<td>Spencer (1959)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maize</strong></td>
<td>20 μM KNO₃, 100 μM phosphate buffer, pH 7.3, 0.68 μM DPNH, 0.2 ml enzyme extract water to 2.0 ml.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1 μM NO₂/hr./g fresh wt.</td>
<td>Hageman and Flesher (1960)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Azoto-</strong></td>
<td>30 μM KNO₃, 1.5 μM DPNH, 0.2-0.6 ml enzyme extract, 0.05M phosphate buffer to 3 ml in a Thunberg tube, use CuSO₄ to reduce interference of DPNH</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 μM NO₂/hr.</td>
<td>Taniguchi and Ohmachi (1960)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bacter vin -</strong></td>
<td><strong>landii</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tomato leaf</strong></td>
<td>10 μM KNO₃, 50 μM phosphate buffer, pH 7.3, 270 μM DPNH, 0.05-0.2 ml enzyme extract, water to 0.8 ml</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1 μM NO₂/20 min.</td>
<td>Sanderson and Cocking (1964)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Manometric method: Robinson (1954) described a method of manometric determination of NRase activity. It is based on the reaction of nitrite with sulfamic acid in sulfuric acid solution with subsequent liberation of molecular nitrogen in accordance with the following reaction:

\[
\text{NH}_2\text{SO}_3\text{H} + \text{HNO}_2 \rightarrow \text{H}_2\text{SO}_4 + \text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{N}_2
\]

Nitrite was determined manometrically using Warburg equipment. The vessels contained the NaNO\(_2\) in 2.0 ml 0.05 M phosphate buffer, pH 7.6, with 0.2 ml of the sulfamic acid solution in the side arm. After equilibration at 30°C the two solutions were mixed and nitrogen evolution was determined. The same procedure was used for the determination of NRase activity in the halophilic bacterium, Vibrio costicullos. Double-arm Warburg reaction vessels contained the cell suspension or cell-free extract in phosphate buffer, pH 7.6, with appropriate concentrations of NaCl. Sodium succinate (10 uM) as hydrogen donor and NaNO\(_3\) (5.0 uM) were pipetted into one side arm and the sulfamic acid solution into the other. After equilibration, the substrate and enzyme were combined, the reaction mixture was incubated for 30 min. in nitrogen, and the sulfamic acid solution was finally tipped into the reaction mixture.

The manometric method of Hewitt and Hallas (1959)
depended on nitrite reaction with azide in acid solution as follows:

\[
\text{NO}_2^- + \text{N}_3^- + 2\text{H}^+ \rightarrow \text{N}_2\text{O} + \text{N}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{O}
\]

In this method, one \( \mu \)M nitrite yielded 44.8 ul of gas. Using this method, Hewitt and Hallas obtained 82-86 ul of gas from 2 \( \mu \)M nitrite in a fluid volume of 4.5 ml at 27°C in an atmosphere of nitrogen.

**Spectrophotometric method:** Nason and Evans (1953) measured the changes in optical density at 340 mu associated with oxidation of TPNH or DPNH to follow the reaction in the NRase system of Neurospora. The assay system contained 0.83 \( \mu \)M TPNH, 0.3 \( \mu \)M FMN, 100 \( \mu \)M \( \text{KNO}_3 \), and 424 units of enzyme in 3.6 ml of 0.03 M pyrophosphate buffer. A change of optical density of 0.06 per minute, at 340 mu, was produced over a period of 15 minutes.

Evans and Nason (1953) observed a very rapid oxidation of TPNH in presence of the NRase system and a fairly rapid endogenous rate when all constituents, except \( \text{KNO}_3 \) were present. Since nitrite was formed in the complete system only, the oxidation of TPNH was caused by some factor other than nitrate.

Owing to the presence of TPNH or DPNH oxidase system in the partially purified enzyme, this method of assay is not sufficiently sensitive.
4. **Stability of Enzyme**

Most NRase preparations are relatively thermolabile and are easily denatured. The enzyme from *Neurospora*, obtained by Nason and Evans (1953) lost about 50% of its activity in 5 minutes at 40°C, and all of its activity at 50°C in 5 minutes. Dialysis of the enzyme against phosphate buffer, running tap water, or triply-distilled water resulted in a complete loss of activity within one hour, the shortest time interval tried. When the enzyme was exposed to washed cellophane dialyzing membrane (5.0 ml of enzyme, 0.5 gm of shredded membrane) for 2 minutes, 95% of the original activity was lost. Attempts to restore the activity by addition of boiled crude extract, ashed crude extract, glutathione, or inorganic ions such as MoO$_4^{2-}$, Fe$^{2+}$ etc. were unsuccessful.

The partially purified enzyme from soybean leaves obtained by Evans and Nason (1953) was very heat-sensitive. Twenty-eight, 46, 71 and 100% inactivation resulted from 5-minute exposures at 20°, 30°, 40° and 50°C respectively. The enzyme activity was reduced to 50 to 70% of its original activity during a storage period of one week at -15° C.

Spencer (1959) reported that wheat embryo NRase was inactivated 38, 96 and 100% by heating to 30°, 45°, and 60° C, respectively. Approximately 50% of the enzymatic activity was lost after storage for one week at -15° C.
It has been shown that in order to obtain maximal specific activity and good yields, the addition of protective agents such as cysteine, glutathione and EDTA to the extraction medium is necessary.

Nicholas and Nason (1955a) reported that the addition of cysteine and EDTA, each at final concentration of \(10^{-4}\) M, improved the stability and yield of the enzyme by protecting it against inactivation by heavy metals or oxidation of sulfhydryl groups. Extraction from cauliflower leaf by Hewitt et al. (1955) was carried out with \(10^{-4}\) M cysteine and EDTA. Spencer (1959) demonstrated that when the extracting medium included \(10^{-3}\) M glutathione a slight increase in activity resulted. Thus it is advantageous to maintain low concentrations of these protective agents during stages of fractionation.

5. **Electron Donors**

In a fungus such as *Neurospora* the NRase is essentially TPNH-specific (Nason and Evans 1953), but in many higher plants, e.g. soybean, barley cauliflower and vegetable marrow, DPNH and TPNH function equally well (Evans and Nason, 1953; Candella et al. 1957; Cresswell et al. (1962). The wheat embryo system (Spencer 1959) and maize leaf system (Hageman and Flesher, 1960) are DPNH-specific but the wheat leaf system functions with DPNH (Anacker and Stoy, 1958) or TPNH (Spencer, 1959). The activity
in corn roots was obtained with TPNH or DPNH in the work of Evans and Nason (1953). Nason and Evans (1953) indicated that succinate, cysteine, glutathione or ascorbic acid could not replace TPNH as electron donors for NRase from *Neurospora*. Vaidyanathan and Street (1959), however, obtained slow reduction of nitrate by a crude preparation from excised tomato roots when ascorbate and ferrous iron were present. Hageman *et al.* (1962) have shown that NRase obtained from vegetable marrow leaves can function with reduced benzyl viologen in place of pyridine nucleotide as the primary electron donor.

Nason and Evans (1953) presented evidence that energy for nitrate reduction can be derived from those substrates, for the most part intermediates of carbohydrate metabolism, which are oxidized by TPNH enzyme systems. Spencer (1959) used crystalline alcohol dehydroganase at pH 7.5 in the presence of ethanol and DPNH for assays on crude wheat embryo extract. Hageman *et al.* (1962) linked glucose-6-phosphate and its dehydrogenase and catalytic amounts of TPN to NRase obtained from vegetable marrow.

Evans and Nason (1953) were able to link soybean NRase with photoreduction of TPNH, through the mediation of chloroplast grana. Stoy (1956) has shown that photochemical reduction of riboflavin can be linked directly to NRase action without the addition of a pyridine nucleotide.
6. FAD as Prosthetic Group

The necessity of flavin as a prosthetic group of NRase was demonstrated by Evans and Nason (1953). Their report showed that the activity of the twice-precipitated soybean NRase was markedly stimulated by FAD, but very slightly by FMN. Tests with D-amino acid oxidase and fluorometric analyses indicated that enzyme solutions contained FAD and that 89 to 98% of the total flavin present in the enzyme extract was FAD. They concluded that the enzyme extract contained a maximum of $3.4 \times 10^{-5}$ uM FMN per ml. This or greater quantities of FMN were not sufficient to produce an appreciable stimulation of the activity of twice-precipitated enzyme in the standard assay procedure. A similar conclusion applied to Neurospora NRase obtained by Nason and Evans (1954).

Spencer (1859) showed that the activity of NRase of crude cell-free extracts of embryos from germinating wheat was doubled by the addition of FAD. After isolation of the enzyme by ammonium sulfate fractionation, addition of FAD caused a three-fold stimulation at a final concentration of $10^{-5}$ M. FMN was ineffective as the cofactor.

In the work of Hageman and Flesher (1960), no response to added flavins was obtained with the crude preparation of NRase from corn seedlings. It is probable that the flavin and protein were not easily dissociated as was also the case with the enzyme from E. coli (Nicholas and Nason, 1955b).

Table IV summarizes the nucleotide specificity of assimilatory NRases from several sources.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plant material</th>
<th>Original form</th>
<th>Pyridine nucleotide specificity</th>
<th>Flavin nucleotide specificity</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soybean leaves</td>
<td>Soluble</td>
<td>Non-specific</td>
<td>FAD</td>
<td>Evans and Nason (1953)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurospora</td>
<td>Soluble</td>
<td>TPNH-specific</td>
<td>FAD</td>
<td>Nason and Evans (1953)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. coli</td>
<td>Soluble</td>
<td>DPNH-specific</td>
<td>FAD</td>
<td>Nicholas and Nason (1954)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hansenula</td>
<td>Soluble</td>
<td>Non-specific</td>
<td>FAD</td>
<td>Silver (1956)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat leaves</td>
<td>Soluble</td>
<td>Non-specific</td>
<td>FAD</td>
<td>Anacker and Stoy (1958)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat embryo</td>
<td>Soluble</td>
<td>DPNH-specific</td>
<td>FAD</td>
<td>Spencer (1959)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azotobacter</td>
<td>Particulate</td>
<td>Non-specific</td>
<td>FAD</td>
<td>Taniguchi and Ohmachi (1960)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomato leaves</td>
<td>Soluble</td>
<td>DPNH-specific</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Sanderson and Cocking (1964)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. **Sulfhydryl Property**

The sulfhydryl nature of NRase was shown by p-chloromercuribenzoate inhibition and its reversal by sulfhydryl reagents such as glutathione and cysteine (Evans and Nason, 1953).

Studies of the possible role of sulfhydryl groups by Nicholas and Nason (1954) indicated that these groups are necessary for the enzymic transfer of electrons from TPNH to flavin. This was indicated by the complete inhibition of enzyme activity by the mercury reagent and its reversal by glutathione. Subsequent electron transport to nitrate, using EMNH₂ as the electron donor, is inhibited only 25% by p-chloromercuribenzoate. These experiments have shown the -SH groups of the protein are necessary largely for the enzymatic reduction of FMN by TPNH, probably by the binding of TPNH and unreduced flavin to the enzyme. That the sulfhydryl groups are probably not serving as electron carriers, was indicated by the fact that they do not serve as electron donors in this enzymatic system.

NRase has not been purified to the homogenous protein level, hence the number of sulfhydryl groups which are involved in enzyme function is not known.

8. **Molybdenum Constituent**

Nicholas and Nason (1954) presented the first evidence that molybdenum is the metal constituent of NRase in *Neurospora*. 
1) When *Neurospora* NRase was fractionated with ammonium sulfate, the highest activity occurred in the 24 to 40% ammonium sulfate fraction which also had the greatest molybdenum content. Increased enzyme activity in various protein fractions was accompanied by increased molybdenum content.

2) Dialysis of NRase against cyanide resulted in a decrease of molybdenum content and a deactivation of the enzyme. The addition of molybdenum trioxide or sodium molybdate reactivated the enzyme to 85% of the original value. Preincubation with other trace metals, including iron, zinc, manganese, nickle, cobalt, mercury, tungsten, uranium, vanadium, and boron, respectively, did not restore the activity of nitrate reductase.

In their study of the mechanism of the *Neurospora* NRase reaction, Nicholas and Nason (1954) found that the molybdenum-free enzyme had lost its ability to catalyze the reduction of nitrate to nitrite by either TPNH or reduced flavin. It still possessed the ability to catalyze the reduction of flavin by TPNH. They also indicated that dithionite-treated molybdate can reduce nitrate to nitrite anaerobically in the presence of NRase without the participation of TPNH or reduced flavin.

Evans and Hall (1955) presented direct evidence of association of molybdenum with nitrate reduction from soybean leaves. They germinated soybean seeds in a flat of sand,
Four days after the seeds were planted, the flats were treated with a solution containing 3.5 mc of Mo\(^{99}\) per gram. When the seedlings were 10 days old, leaves were harvested. The extracts were fractionated with ammonium sulfate precipitation and calcium phosphate adsorption. The activity of NRase from each fraction was assayed, using DPNH as the hydrogen donor. An aliquot from each fraction was ashed in a muffle furnace and counted for radioactivity with a Geiger-Muller counter. The results indicated that a close correlation between enzyme activity and radioactivity of the fraction of highest purity existed.

In order to obtain further evidence concerning the metal requirement of NRase, Evans and Hall (1955) dialyzed partially purified soybean NRase against phosphate buffer containing glutathione and KCN, followed by dialysis for 8 hours against a similar buffer solution containing glutathione but no KCN. They found that NRase activity was stimulated by the addition of molybdenum.

The most reduced valence state of Mo in the dithionite reduced solution of sodium molybdate was shown by paper chromatography to be +5, (Nicholas and Stevens, 1955). Mo\(^{+5}\) pentachloride, freed from the other valence states of Mo by column chromatography, acts as an effective electron donor for the enzymic reduction of nitrate. Nicholas and Stevens (1955) found that Mo\(^{4+}\) is stable in strong ethanol only, and that it
dismutes readily in the presence of a trace of water to give Mo$^{5+}$ and Mo$^{3+}$. It is most unlikely that Mo$^{4+}$ is involved in any physiological process. Mo$^{3+}$ reduced nitrate non-enzymatically. The rate of chemical reduction was approximately twice that of NRase action. Mo$^{3+}$ is oxidized instantaneously by Mo$^{6+}$. Reduction of nitrate by Mo$^{3+}$ in Neurospora is unlikely since Mo$^{3+}$ has not been detected in this organism. It would thus appear that one of the functions of Mo in the enzyme is to couple the flavin to nitrate by a one electron transport charge whereby Mo$^{5+}$ is oxidized Mo$^{6+}$.

Candela et al. (1955) reported that cauliflower grown without molybdenum possessed much lower total and specific NRase activity than the normal plants. Infiltration of molybdenum into leaves of deficient plants resulted in increased activity of the enzyme in 18 to 24 hours.

Nicholas and Nason (1954) reported that Fe$^{2+}$ or Fe$^{3+}$ treated with Na$_2$S$_2$O$_4$ failed to serve as an electron donor for the enzymatic reduction of nitrate in the presence or absence of molybdate. This fact rules out the role of iron as an electron carrier in the Neurospora NRase system.

9. Phosphate Stimulation

Phosphate stimulation of Neurospora NRase has been observed by Nicholas and Scawin (1956) and Kinsky and McElroy (1958). A similar action by phosphate on the wheat embryo NRase was reported by Spencer (1959).
Nicholas and Scawin (1956) fractionated Neurospora NRase by ammonium sulfate precipitation, calcium phosphate gel absorption, and carbon absorption. Maximal enzyme activity was obtained by the addition of 2.5 uM phosphate to 0.1 ml of the enzyme. The phosphate could be replaced by selenate, tellurate or arsenate, partially by sulfate or silicate, but not by pyrophosphate, adenosine triphosphate, borate, vanadate molybdate and tungstate. The investigators suggested that one of the roles of phosphate in NRase is to bind the Mo to the apoenzyme because the anions which can act as did phosphate have similar atomic radii to phosphate (2.76 Å), being within the range 2.4 to 2.8 Å. They also form complexes with molybdates.

Kinsky and McElroy (1958) observed that arsenate and tungstate, but not silicate, could substitute for phosphate in the case of Neurospora NRase. They also presented evidence that phosphate had no effect on the TPNH-to-flavin nucleotide reaction, whereas the second step, from flavin nucleotide, is definitely stimulated by phosphate. They suggested that molybdenum combines with phosphate, arsenate and tungstate, to form phosphomolybdo-, arsenomolybdo- and tungstomolybdo-complexes which presumably have oxidation-reduction potentials different from that of the molybdenum ion. This alternation of potential due to complexes may permit interaction with enzymatically or chemically reduced flavin nucleotide.
Spencer (1959) also reported that inorganic phosphate was essential for maximum enzymatic activity. The presence of $10^{-2}$ M potassium phosphate caused a 30% increase in the activity of wheat embryo NRase.

10. Inhibitors

NRase is very sensitive to metal-chelating agents. Evans and Nason (1953) demonstrated that KCN at a final concentration of $10^{-3}$ and $10^{-4}$ M inhibited the activity of soybean NRase 83 and 27% respectively; and NaN$_3$ at these concentrations inhibited 89 and 39% respectively. A concentration of $2 \times 10^{-4}$ M potassium ethyl xanthate inhibited the activity by 49%, and $10^{-4}$ M CuSO$_4$ inhibited it by 32%. There was no inhibition by $10^{-3}$ M NaF. Other metal-chelating agents such as 8-hydroxyquinoline, diethyldithiocarbamate, EDTA, a,a-dipyridyl and phenanthroline also inhibited at different rates. A complete lack of inhibition by 100% CO suggests the absence of cytochrome in the enzyme system.

Sufhydryl reagents, such as p-chloromercuribenzoate and heavy metals, strongly inhibited NRase. This inhibition could be reversed by the addition of glutathione.

Nicholas and Scawin (1956) showed that the Neurospora NRase was not inhibited by uncoupling reagents, e.g. dinitrophenol at $10^{-5}$ and $10^{-4}$ M, Aureomycin at $5 \times 10^{-4}$ M, or sodium arsenate at $10^{-2}$ M. Thus, there was no evidence for a
phosphorylation mechanism during nitrate reductase action.

Vanadate ion has been shown to be a powerful inhibitor of the enzyme from wheat embryo (Spencer, 1959). A final concentration of approximately $3 \times 10^{-5}$ M sodium orthovanadate caused 50% inhibition. This inhibition was not reversed by a 25-fold excess of sodium molybdate.

11. **Mechanism of Action**

In the classic paper "Mechanism of action of nitrate reductase from *Neurospora*," Nicholas and Nason (1954) suggested the following sequence of electron transfer for the enzyme:

$$\text{TPNH} \rightarrow \text{FAD (or FMN)} \rightarrow \text{Mo} \rightarrow \text{NO}_3^-$$

2, 3, 6-trichloroindophenol

The enzyme catalyzes the transfer of electrons from TPNH to nitrate via electron carriers FAD (or FMN) and molybdenum. When introduced into this system, 2,3,6-trichloroindophenol may act as an artificial carrier between flavin and molybdenum. Molybdenum is essential for the final step in electron donation to nitrate. If it is separated from the enzyme by dialysis against cyanide, neither TPNH nor FADH$_2$ can reduce nitrate to nitrite. Reduced molybdate prepared with either the reducing agent Na$_2$S$_2$O$_4$ and H$_2$ or palladium and H$_2$ can reduce nitrate to nitrite anaerobically in the presence of NRase. Iron, copper, vanadate or chromate when treated with
Na₂S₂O₄ and H₂ failed to substitute for dithionite-treated molybdate.

Fewson and Nicholas (1961), by measurement of electron spin resonance signals, confirmed the formation of Mo⁵⁺ during NRase action in *P. aeruginosa*. Valence changes which occurred were presumed to involve Mo⁵⁺ and Mo⁶⁺.

According to Kinsky and McElroy's (1958) suggestion, phosphate and other anions combine with molybdenum to form a complex. FAD or FMN may behave as one of the specific reducing agents capable of reducing only molybdenum complexes with phosphate, arsenate, tungstate and silicate.

In support of their suggestion for the electron transfer sequence of NRase, Nicholas and Nason (1954) were able to show that DPNH can be replaced by FADH₂. FADH₂ prepared enzymatically by the DPNH oxidizing system from *Clostridium kluveri*, could serve, under anaerobic conditions, as electron donor for the reduction of nitrate by *Neurospora* NRase. Chemically reduced flavins also were active as electron donors.

The following scheme is a summation of various contributions discussed above:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{DPNH (TPNH)} & \quad \text{FAD (FMN)} \quad \text{2Mo}^{5+} + 2H^+ \\
\text{H}^+ & \quad \text{2Mo}^{6+} \\
\text{DPNH} & \quad \text{FADH}_2 \quad \text{NO}_3^- \\
\text{(TPNH)} & \quad \text{(FMN)} \quad \text{NO}_2^- + H_2O \\
\end{align*}
\]

-SH dependent \quad \text{Phosphate stimulation}
12. **Localization of Enzyme**

With the exception of some bacterial enzymes reducing nitrate, all the assimilatory NRase studied thus far seem to be soluble.

Nason and Evans (1953) indicated that 85% or more of the NRase of the homogenate from *Neurospora* was present in the cell-free extract.

Spencer (1959) ground embryos from germinating wheat in 0.4 M sucrose containing 0.05 M potassium phosphate, pH 7.4 and $10^{-3}$ M glutathione. The grindate was centrifuged at low speed (x 100 g) to remove unbroken cells. The supernatant solution was further centrifuged at 105,000 x g in a Spinco ultracentrifuge for 30 minutes. He found that all the NRase present in the supernatant solution from the low speed centrifugation was recovered in the supernatant solution following high speed centrifugation. The enzyme was thus located in soluble, cytoplasmic fraction of the cell, rather than in the particulate fraction.

In studies of distribution of NRase in cell-free extracts of *Azotobacter vinelandii*, Taniguchi and Ohmachi (1960) found that 90% of NRase activity resided in large particles (2000 - 14,000 x g) regardless of the electron donors, and 10% in small particles (14,000 - 105,000 x g) and soluble supernatant. It is apparently a particulate assimilatory NRase.
The soluble or particulate nature of NRases from various sources is summarized in Table IV (page 34).

13. Adaptive Formation of Enzyme

Evans and Nason (1952) first reported that Neurospora NRase appeared to be adaptive since little or no activity could be detected in extracts of mycelia grown on an ammonium nitrogen medium in the absence of exogenous nitrate. In 1953, their studies of effects of different sources of nitrogen on the activity of Neurospora NRase indicated that the enzyme activity occurred only in mycelia grown in the presence of nitrate or nitrite and that no activity existed in mycelia grown with ammonia or alanine as a sole nitrogen source. They suggested that some of the nitrite was oxidized to nitrate which was responsible for the induction of the enzyme.

Tang and Wu (1957) obtained more direct evidence of the adaptive property of the enzyme in rice seedlings. They demonstrated that no NRase activity was present in 4- to 6-day old seedlings when grown in quartz sand with either 0.033 or 0.066 M phosphate buffer. This activity could be demonstrated in both etiolated and green seedlings when nitrate was added to culture solution, or when the grains were treated with nitrate solution before germination. Under optimal conditions such as pH 5.0, 30° C, and 6 mM nitrate, the NRase formation could be induced in 1 day, in 5 hours or even in 3
hours, in etiolated intact seedlings, intact green seedlings, and excised roots of those seedlings, respectively. When the seedlings were transferred back to a nitrate-free medium, de-adaptation occurred in about 2 days. Ammonium sulfate is ineffective in inducing the formation of NRase and is inhibitory in the presence of nitrate. Low oxygen tension of 1 to 5% does not significantly impede NRase formation as compared with 10% oxygen tension.

Hewitt and Afridi (1959) have found in numerous tests that formation of NRase activity can be rapidly induced in small fragments of leaf excised from cauliflower, white mustard and sunflower. Their results showed that when nitrate or molybdate, or both, were introduced by vacuum filtration into excised fragments of leaves of cauliflower, rapid production of enzyme activity occurred.

The introduction of molybdenum into leaves of plants deficient in Mo and grown with nitrate had a similar effect. Tissues of plants grown with ammonium sulfate but without molybdenum, responded little or not at all to either factor alone, but developed activity rapidly when both were present. Their results also indicated that some of the inhibitors of protein synthesis, such as 1,2-dichloro-4-(p-nitrobenzene-sulfonylamide)-5-nitrobenzene (DCDNS), actidione, and
polymyxin-b-sulfate, markedly inhibited the synthesis of NRase. They suggested that protein synthesis was necessary for development of enzyme activity and the process seemed analogous to enzyme induction in other systems.

The presence of ammonia in the nutrient medium may cause suppression of enzyme activity in some organism, e.g. in the fungus Scopulariopsis, even when nitrate is also given (Marton, 1956).

Kinsky (1961) studied induction and repression of nitrate reduction by Neurospora. He found that the nitrate-induced enzyme formation was completely inhibited by citrate and acetate, and that the rate of enzyme formation was dependent on the pH of the induction medium. Kinsky used "feed-back repression" to explain ammonia repression of NRase formation.

14. Effect of Plant age on Enzyme Activity

It is well known that the metabolic activity of tissues varies with their age, as well as with other physiological factors.

Evans and Nason (1953) reported that NRase appeared to be more active in the meristematic and young trifoliated leaves of 17-day-old soybean plants and suggested that the enzyme is concentrated in young, metabolically active tissue.

Candela et al. (1957) showed that the activity of cauliflower NRase was greatest in mature fully expanded
leaves, adjacent to the oldest two or three leaves remaining on the plant at the time. The net total activity in leaves of cauliflower was considerably less for plants aged 20 weeks than those aged 12 weeks sampled at the same time. The specific activity, however, was similar in both age groups due to the lower protein extracted from the older plants.

Spencer (1959) found a relative high activity of NRase in wheat embryo. It was observed that, on the basis of fresh weight, 2300 μM nitrate was produced per hour. A value of about 200 μM was obtained by Sanderson and Cocking (1964) for 33-old wheat leaves.

15. Nitrate Reductase Activity in Roots

Based on his finding that nitrate was present only in the finest parts of the roots of the apple tree, Thomas (1927) suggested that most of nitrate reduction takes place in root tissues of this plant.

The reduction of nitrate in excised roots and leaves of wheat led Burstrom (1946) to conclude that in the intact plant nitrate reduction occurs in both these organs.

Bonner (1952) indicated that in asparagus and narcissus nitrate reduction is ordinarily confined to the root, and that upward translocation of nitrate was observed only when it was supplied to the root in large amounts. In still other species such as tomato, tobacco, curcurbits and cereals the roots are
not particularly active in the reduction of nitrate but on the contrary, nitrate is translocated through the tissue of the entire plant with reduction taking place in the leaves as well as in the roots.

Evans and Nason (1953) reported the presence of NRase activity in extracts of roots of seven species of plants namely: potato, barley, muskmelon, wheat, tomato, corn and soybean. A relatively high rate of activity was found in the extract of tomato roots. When TPNH was used as hydrogen donor in the assay system, the activity of NRase in the roots of these plants was as high as in their leaves. The presence in roots of enzyme systems capable of reduced pyridine nucleotide production would make the reduction of nitrate possible.

Vaidyanathan and Street (1959) have shown that extracts from excised nitrate-grown roots did not reduce nitrate to nitrite in spite of addition of Mo, DPNH and FMN. However, the further addition of aldehyde-free ethanol, lactate, succinate or glutamate led to the formation of nitrite.

Sanderson and Cocking (1964) reported that the activity of NRase in the root extracts of such higher plants as tomato, barley, corn, kidney bean, potato, tobacco and wheat, was one-quarter of the activity in their leaf extracts. In order to demonstrate with certainty that this activity was due to enzymic activity endogenous to the roots, excised roots were grown in sterile nutrient solution culture. The results showed
clearly that tomato roots do contain NRase and that the level of activity is dependent on the level of nitrate supplied during culture.

16. **Light and Nitrate Reductase Activity**

Although the effect of light on the nitrate reduction in green plants had been observed by plant physiologists for over a century, the mechanism of the reaction is still unknown.

That photochemical processes may furnish the hydrogen donors, i.e. reduced pyridine nucleotides, for nitrate reduction was shown by Evans and Nason (1953). In their historical experiment, they showed that the combination of NRase and grana from soybean leaves could reduce nitrate to nitrite in light if catalytic amounts of TPN were added. The system was inactive in the dark unless TPN was replaced by TPNH in stoichiometric amounts. In this photochemical reduction, nitrate accepts the hydrogen of the reduced carrier formed during the photolysis of water. The following reactions were used to explain this mechanism.

\[
\begin{align*}
H_2O + TPN & \xrightarrow{\text{Light and grana}} \quad \frac{1}{2}O_2 + TPNH + H^+ \\
TPNH + H^+ + NO_3^- & \xrightarrow{\text{Nitrate reductase}} NO_2^- + TPN^+ + H_2O
\end{align*}
\]

Jagendorf (1956) showed that the highly purified chloroplasts are capable of reducing dyes, the usual Hill oxidants, such as ferricyanide and TPN, and that the reduction of TPN was coupled to spinach NRase using the system of Evans and Nason (1953).
However, chloroplasts do not reduce DPN under conditions where grana are perfectly capable of carrying out this photoreduction of TPN.

Recently, Ramirex et al. (1964) reported the findings of a new type of non-cyclic photosynthetic electron flow, in which flavin-nucleotides mediate the direct transfer of electrons from illuminated grana to nitrate with the aid of NRase. In their experiment, the photoevolution of oxygen had been suppressed by heating the grana at 55° C for 5 minutes and the electrons were supplied by the system of ascorbate-dichlorophenol-indophenol (DPIP). The reaction did not proceed in the dark and required FAD in addition to NRase. Manadione and ferredoxin were not capable of replacing the flavin nucleotide, but benzyl viologen was an effective electron carrier in the system. They suggested the following sequence of electron transfer in photosynthetic reduction of nitrate.

\[
\text{Reduced DPIP} \quad \text{Nitrate reductase} \\
\text{Water} \rightarrow \text{Chlor. I} \rightarrow \text{Chlor. II} \rightarrow \text{FAD or FMN} \rightarrow \text{Nitrate}
\]

\[
\text{(light)} \quad \text{(light)}
\]

A concept based upon competition between nitrate and carbon dioxide for reducing power has been proposed by Van Neil et al. (1953). They observed that in Chlorella at low light intensity the uptake of carbon dioxide, but not the production
of oxygen was decreased in the presence of nitrate.

Stoy's experiments gave another clue for the understanding of the photoreduction of nitrate. He first observed (1955) nitrate reduction by detached wheat leaves in the blue and violet parts of the spectrum and suggested involvement of a yellow pigment. He also observed that photosynthesis and nitrate assimilation paralleled each other in red and green light. Based on this, he suggested that riboflavin served as a light-absorbing catalyst and hydrogen carrier in biological photoreduction as described by Branner and Branner (1954). Stoy's experiment demonstrated that photoreduced riboflavin was actually a more efficient reducing agent than DPNH. EDTA was required for the riboflavin-coupled system and could not be replaced by cystein. The following reaction scheme was proposed.

\[
\text{hv} \quad \text{DPN} \rightarrow \text{DPNH} \rightarrow \text{FAD} \rightarrow \text{Mo} \rightarrow \text{NO}_3^-
\]

\[
\text{hv} \quad \text{Riboflavin} \rightarrow \text{Reduced flavin} \quad \text{(EDTA riboflavin)}
\]

No direct light activation of the flavin-containing nitrate reductase was observed.

Candela et al. (1957) found that when cauliflower plants were transferred to darkness, NRase activity in the extract decreased to nil after 5 to 6 days. It was found
that when normal light was restored there were rapid increases in the total and specific activities.

Hageman and Flesher (1960) demonstrated that when corn seedlings were placed in the dark, the NRase dropped to less than 10% of the original level of activity after 48 hours. NRase was not detectable in the extracts from corn seedlings after 90 hours of darkness. No increase in NRase was detectable within 2 hours after the plants were returned to full sunlight after 65 hours of darkness.

The extraction, purification and characterization of sugar beet NRase, described in this thesis, was undertaken as part of the overall study of sugar beet metabolism conducted at the University of British Columbia over a period of years and supported by research grants from the National Research Council of Canada and the British Columbia Sugar Refining Co., Vancouver, B. C. A knowledge of the properties of the enzyme was particularly desirable as an entry into the broader field of nitrogen metabolism of the beet as related to late season growth which results in a depletion of sucrose stored in the root.
1. **Source of Enzyme**

The crude enzyme was obtained from the blades of leaves of 40- to 60-day-old sugar beet (*Beta vulgaris* L.) plants. The seeds were supplied by the British Columbia Sugar Refining Co., Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The plants, grown in wooden flats filled with vermiculite, were supplied once every day with nutrient solution containing 0.005 M Ca(NO₃)₂, 0.0005 M KH₂PO₄, 0.002 M MgSO₄, 0.05 M KNO₃, 0.5 ppm Fe as iron chelate, 0.04 ppm of Cu as CuSO₄, 0.25 ppm of Mo as Na₂MoO₄, 2.0 ppm of B as H₃BO₃, 0.2 ppm of Zn as ZnSO₄ and 0.5 ppm of Mn as MnCl₂. The pH was adjusted to 6.5.

The plants were grown in a controlled environment room with the following conditions: photoperiod, 16 hrs.; temperature, day 21-26°C, night 18-22°C; relative humidity, day 62-70%, night 65-80%; light intensity 1800 foot candles at the top of the plants. Slimline cool white fluorescent tubes were supplemented by 60 watt incandescent lights.

2. **Extraction of Enzyme**

Crude cell-free extracts were prepared by grinding one weight of fresh leaf blades with four weights of cold 0.1 M K₂HPO₄ buffer (pH 7.8 approximately) containing 10⁻³ M of reduced glutathione, in a Waring Blender (at full speed) for
1 to 2 minutes, at 0 - 4°C. The homogenate was strained through four layers of cheesecloth and then centrifuged in a Servall centrifuge at 20,000 x g for 20 minutes at 0 to 4°C. The resulting green, cell-free supernatant solution (crude enzyme) which was shown to contain 100% of the NRase activity present in the whole homogenate, was used for purification.

3. Cofactors and Other Substances

DPNH (approximately 97.5% pure), TPNH (96% pure), FAD (80% pure) and FMN (100% pure) were obtained from the Sigma Chemical Company of St. Louis, Missouri. The concentrations of DPNH and TPNH were determined spectrophotometrically with 6.22 x 10⁶ sq. cm. x mole⁻¹ and 6.24 x 10⁶ sq. cm. x mole⁻¹ as the extinction coefficient at 340 μm respectively (Horecker and Kornberg, 1948). The concentration of flavin solutions was determined spectrophotometrically by the use of the extinction coefficient of 1.13 x 10⁷ sq. cm. x mole⁻¹ at 455 μm (Warburg and Christian, 1938). Benzyl viologen was obtained from Mann Research Laboratories of New York, N.Y. Methylene blue and the sodium salt of 2,6-dichlorophenol idophenol was obtained from Kodak Company of Rochester, N. Y. Phenazine methosulfate and all other substances were obtained from the Nutritional Biochemical Corporation of Cleveland, Ohio.
4. **Preparation of Calcium Phosphate Gel**

The tricalcium phosphate gel was prepared by the method of Keilin and Hartee (1938). One hundred fifty ml of CaCl$_2$ solution (88.5 g CaCl$_2$ per liter) was diluted to about 1600 ml with demineralized water and shaken with 150 ml trisodium phosphate solution (152 g Na$_3$PO$_4$·12H$_2$O per liter). The pH of the mixture was brought to 7.5 with acetic acid and allowed to stand for 10 minutes. The supernatant was decanted and the gel centrifuged. The gel was then washed three times with large volumes of distilled water to remove Cl$^-$ ions. After final centrifugation it was resuspended in 500 ml distilled water and the dry weight per ml of the suspension determined. Distilled water was added to bring the concentration to 20 mg per ml of suspension. After three months storage at 4°C the gel was centrifuged down and resuspended in the same volume of phosphate buffer, pH 7.5.

5. **Preparation of Alumina C$_r$ Gel**

Alumina C$_r$ gel was prepared by a modification of the method of Colowick (1955). A hot solution of 340 grams of aluminum sulfate in 500 ml of water was poured all at once into 3.25 liters of ammonium sulfate-ammonia water at 60°C. The latter reagent contained 100 g of ammonium sulfate and 215 ml of 20% ammonia. During the precipitation and for an additional 15 minutes, the mixture was stirred vigorously and the temperature was kept at 50°C. After the first voluminous
precipitate gradually became flocculent, the mixture was diluted to 10 liters with demineralized water and the supernatant fluid decanted as soon as the precipitate had settled out. The washing with demineralized water and decantation was repeated six times. To solubilize any remaining basic aluminum sulfate 40 ml of 20% ammonia was added during the fourth washing. After repeated washings, the gel was suspended in 200 ml distilled water and kept at 4° C for three months before using.

6. **Preparation of Electron Donors**

   Reduced flavins were obtained by the method of Nicholas and Nason (1954b). Two mg of sodium hydrosulfite was added to 0.1 to 0.5 μM FAD or FMN contained in 3 ml of 0.1 M pyrophosphate buffer, pH 7.5, in a Thunberg tube. Hydrogen gas was then bubbled through the solution for 2 minutes at 4° C, followed by evacuation. The dyes were reduced to their leuco form by the same procedure.

7. **Determination of Protein**

   The protein content of enzyme preparation was measured according to the method of Lowery *et al.* (1951). To 0.4 ml of the sample was added 2 ml of alkaline copper solution. This solution was prepared by the mixture of 50 ml of 2% Na₂CO₃ in 0.1 N NaOH and 1 ml of 0.5% CuSO₄·5H₂O in 1% sodium potassium tartrate. The contents were mixed. After 10 minutes 0.2 ml of 1 N Folin-Ciocalteau phenol reagent was added and the
contents mixed. Optical density readings at 500 μm were taken with a Beckman Model B Spectrophotometer. Protein content, as mg per ml, was obtained by comparison with a standard curve prepared by the use of crystallized bovine albumin.

8. Determination of Chlorophyll Content

Chlorophyll content was measured by the method described by Arnon (1949). 0.1 ml of crude enzyme extract was diluted to 20 ml with 80% acetone (20 ml of H₂O made to 100 ml with acetone), and filtered through Whatman No. 1 filter paper. The optical density was read against 80% acetone at 625 μm (1-cm light path) in a Beckman Model B Spectrophotometer. Chlorophyll solutions in acetone were protected from ambient light, O.D. x 5.8 gave mg of chlorophyll per ml of crude enzyme extract.

9. Determination of Nitrate Content

Nitrate content was estimated by the method of Woolley et al. (1960). Four ml of extract was diluted to 20 ml. To 1 ml of this diluted solution was added 9 ml of 20% acetic acid solution containing 0.2 ppm Cu as CuSO₄. By the use of a measuring scoop 0.8 g of an intimate mixture of 75 g of citric acid, 10 g manganous sulfate dihydrate, 4 g of sulfanilic acid, 2 g of zinc powder, and 2 g of 1-naphtylamine was added. The
sample was then shaken for about 15 seconds and was again shaken three minutes later. After three minutes more the sample was shaken for the third time and was centrifuged for three minutes at 1000 x g.

The supernatant solution was poured through a small loose plug of borosilicate glass wool, the light absorbance was measured at 520 μm, and the amount of nitrate was calculated from a standard curve.

10. **Standard Nitrate Reductase Assay**

The NRase was measured by a modification of the method described by Evans and Nason (1953). At zero time 0.05 - 0.2 ml of enzyme added to a reaction mixture containing 0.1 ml of 0.1 M KNO₃, 0.05 ml 2 x 10⁻⁵ M FAD, 0.05 ml 2 x 10⁻³ M DPNH, and 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 7.0, to give a volume of 0.5 ml. After 15 minutes incubation at 30⁰ C, 1 ml of H₂O and 1 ml of 1% W/V sulfanilamide reagent were added to stop the reaction. One ml of 0.22 % W/V N-(1-naphthyl)-ethylene diamine hydrochloride reagent was added and the contents mixed by inverting the tubes. The color was allowed to develop for 15 minutes. A Beckman Model B spectrophotometer was used to determine the O.D. of each sample and its blank (complete except for DPNH) at 540 μm. The enzyme exhibited no difference in activity when the assay was conducted under anaerobic or aerobic conditions. There was no chemical reduction of nitrate to nitrite by DPNH.
One unit of NRase is defined as that amount of enzyme which results in the formation of $10^{-3}$ mM of nitrite under the above conditions of the assay. Specific activity is expressed as units per mg of protein.

11. Determination of DPNH-Menadione Reductase Activity

DPNH-menadione reductase was determined by a modification of the procedure of Wosilait and Nason (1954). The reaction was started by the addition of enzyme to a mixture containing 0.3 mM menadione, 0.35 mM DPNH and 200 mM phosphate buffer, pH 8.3, to give a final volume of 3.0 ml. After the addition of the enzyme, the decrease in optical density at 340 nm was measured at 30 second intervals for the first three minutes. One unit of menadione reductase is defined as that amount of enzyme which results in a change in optical density of 0.001 per minute.

The non-enzymatic rate was also determined spectrophotometrically at 340 nm as above, except that the enzyme was omitted from the reaction mixture. The specific activity is expressed as units per mg of protein.

12. Determination of DPNH-Quinone Reductase Activity

DPNH-quinone reductase activity was determined by a modification of the procedure of Wosilait and Nason (1954). The reaction was started by the addition of enzyme to a mixture containing 0.45 mM of p-quinone solution, 0.35 mM DPNH and 200
uM phosphate buffer, pH 7.0, to give a final volume of 3.0 ml. After the addition of the enzyme, the decrease in optical density at 340 mu was measured at 30-second intervals for the first three minutes. One unit of quinone reductase is defined as that amount of enzyme which results in a change in optical density of 0.001 per minute. The non-enzymatic rate was also determined spectrophotometrically at 340 mu as above, except that the enzyme was omitted from the reaction mixture. The specific activity is expressed as units per mg of protein.

13. **Determination of DPNH-Cytochrome c Reductase Activity**

Activity of DPNH-cytochrome c reductase was determined by a modification of the procedure of Mahler et al. (1954). The reaction mixture contained 0.2 uM DPNH, 0.03 uM FMN, 0.1 uM of cytochrome c and 150 mM of Tris buffer, pH 7.5, in a final volume of 3 ml. The reaction was started by addition of enzyme and the optical density at 550 mu was followed with a Beckman Model B spectrophotometer. The unit of enzyme activity is defined as an optical density change of 1.00 per minute under the above conditions.

14. **Determination of DPNH-Diaphorase Activity**

DPNH-diaphorase activity was determined by a modification of the procedure of Avron and Jagendorf (1956). The reaction mixture contained 0.2 uM DPNH, 15 uM of Tris buffer, pH 8.0, and 0.3 uM 2, 6-dichlorophenol indophenol and 0.05 ml
of enzyme in a final volume of 3 ml. The reaction was started by the addition of the enzyme. The decrease in optical density at 620 μm was measured at 30-second intervals for three minutes. One unit is defined as that amount of enzyme which resulted in a net change in optical density of 1.00 per minute at 620 μm under the above conditions.

15. Isolation and Identification of Enzyme-bound Flavin

The flavin of NRase was released by the method described by Rao et al. (1962). Five ml of Fraction V enzyme was heated in a boiling water bath for 5 minutes, followed by cooling to 5°C and acidification with perchloric acid to a final concentration of about 10%. After centrifugation at 5000 x g for 10 minutes, the precipitate was discarded and the yellow supernatant fluid was adjusted to pH 7.8 with 6 N KOH. The potassium perchlorate was removed by centrifugation at 5000 x g for 10 minutes. The supernatant was condensed in the dark with a vacuum pump. Descending paper chromatography of flavins was performed on 20 x 40 cm sheets of Whatman No. 1 paper, with n-butanol-acetic acid-water (4:1:5, volume for volume) or 5% Na₂HPO₄ as the solvent system. The flavins were identified under an ultraviolet lamp.

16. Fractionation of Cellular Components

Fractionation of cellular components was carried out by the modification of the method of Pierpoint (1963). Five g of sugar beet leaf blades with midribs removed was cut into
small pieces and ground for 1 minute in a homogenizer with 20 ml of extraction medium. The latter consisted of 0.4 M sucrose, 0.2 M Tris, 0.01 M phosphate buffer, pH 7.5, 0.01 M EDTA and 0.02 M sodium nitrate, pH 7.5. The homogenate was strained through two layers of cheesecloth and the filtrate was centrifuged at 200 x g for two minutes to remove intact cells, cell wall and nuclei. The decanted supernatant solution was further centrifuged for 7 minutes at 1000 x g to give a sediment containing chlorophyllous materials. This is referred to as the "Chloroplast fraction". The supernatant was further centrifuged for 30 minutes at 10,000 x g to give a green "mitochondrial" fraction and a relatively clear supernatant. The mitochondria-free supernatant was centrifuged in a Spinco Model L preparative centrifuge for 30 minutes at 105,000 x g, to obtain microsomal and supernatant fractions. The temperature was kept at 0-4° C.

Each fraction, viz., nuclei, chloroplast, mitochondria and microsome, was washed with 5 ml of the extraction medium and the washings were added to the supernatant fraction. The washed particulate materials were suspended in 10 ml of 0.01 M potassium phosphate buffer at pH 7.5.

17. **Photochemical Reduction of Flavin Nucleotides**

The photochemical reactions described in this experiment were performed under anaerobic conditions. In order
that precise spectroscopic measurements could be made under anaerobic conditions, Thunberg tubes were modified in such a fashion that a pyrex absorption tube was joined to the Thunberg Tube. This allowed direct measurement of optical density to be made with a Bausch & Lamb spectrophotometer. Anaerobic conditions were obtained by means of evacuation with vacuum pump.

For intense illumination, a 375 watt Sylvania floodlight at distances of 10 to 15 cm was used. To filter out infrared waves, the light beam was passed through a blue light filter (Klett-Summerson Light Filter No. 42). The Thunberg tubes were immersed in a 30°C water bath during illumination.
I. PURIFICATION OF ENZYME

1. First Ammonium Sulfate Fractionation

The crude enzyme was divided into four portions by fractional precipitation with ammonium sulfate. The fractions were 0-30, 30-50, 50-70 and 70-90% of saturation, and supernatant. The activity was found in the 0-30 and 30-50 fractions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saturation of Ammonium Sulfate (%)</th>
<th>Activity of Enzyme (Units/ml)</th>
<th>Total Volume (ml)</th>
<th>Total Activity (Units)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-30</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-70</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-90</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In another experiment using 0-20, 20-45 and 45-90% saturations with ammonium sulfate the major activity was concentrated in the 0-20 and 20-45 fractions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saturation of Ammonium Sulfate</th>
<th>Activity of Enzyme (Units/ml)</th>
<th>Total Volume (ml)</th>
<th>Total Activity (Units)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-45</td>
<td>145.0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-90</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **Second Ammonium Sulfate Fractionation**

The first ammonium sulfate fraction (0-45% saturation) was divided into four portions by fractionation with ammonium sulfate. The fractions were 0-20, 20-30, and 30-40% saturation, and supernatant. The activity was found to be in the 20-30 and 30-40 fractions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saturation of Ammonium Sulfate (%)</th>
<th>Activity of Enzyme (Units/ml)</th>
<th>Total Volume (ml)</th>
<th>Total Activity (Units)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>189.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatant</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In another experiment using 0-22, 22-35, and 35-50% saturation with ammonium sulfate the major activity was found in the 22-35 fraction:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saturation of Ammonium Sulfate (%)</th>
<th>Activity of Enzyme (Units/ml)</th>
<th>Total Volume (ml)</th>
<th>Total Activity (Units)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-22</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-35</td>
<td>210.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-50</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatant</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. **Calcium Phosphate Gel Adsorption**

The fraction which was brought down between 22-35% saturation was adsorbed by calcium phosphate gel. To each 2.0 ml of the enzyme solution, various amounts of calcium phosphate suspension (10 mg dry weight per ml) and phosphate buffer (pH 7.0) were added. The total volume was 4.0 ml. The mixtures were kept in an ice bath and stirred with stirring rod for 5 minutes, after which they were centrifuged and enzyme activity and protein were determined on the supernatant. The results are given in Table V. It was found that 1.0 ml of calcium phosphate gel had adsorbed most of the enzyme present in the mixtures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enzyme Preparation</th>
<th>Calcium Phosphate (ml)</th>
<th>Phosphate Buffer (ml)</th>
<th>Total Volume (ml)</th>
<th>Enzyme Activity (units/ml)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Third Ammonium Sulfate Fractionation

The enzyme eluted from calcium phosphate gel by 0.1 M pyrophosphate buffer, pH 7.0, was divided into four portions by fractional precipitation with ammonium sulfate. The fractions were 0-25, 25-50, 50-90 and supernatant. The activity was found to be in the 0-25 and in the 25-50 fractions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saturation of Ammonium Sulfate (%)</th>
<th>Activity of Enzyme (units/ml)</th>
<th>Total Volume (ml)</th>
<th>Total Activity (units)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-25</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-50</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-90</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result of the above experiment, the method of purification adopted was as follows. Unless otherwise specified, all steps of the fractionation were carried out at 0-4°C. The precipitates were centrifuged at approximately 5000 x g at 0°C for 10 minutes.

Approximately 80 g of the leaves of 50-day-old sugar beet plants was ground in a Waring Blender with 320 ml of 0.1 M potassium phosphate buffer, at pH 7.8, containing $10^{-3}$ M reduced glutathione. The homogenate was centrifuged for 20 minutes at 20,000 x g. The clear, brownish yellow supernatant solution comprised the crude, cell-free extract (Fraction I).
To this Fraction I was added 100.80 g solid ammonium sulfate, the suspension was allowed to stand for 10 minutes, then was centrifuged for 10 minutes. This 0-45% ammonium sulfate precipitate is referred to as Fraction II. The precipitate was dissolved in 160 ml of cold 0.1 M potassium phosphate buffer, pH 7.0, containing $10^{-3}$ M reduced glutathione. To the solution of Fraction II was added 24.60 g solid ammonium sulfate, and after standing 10 minutes the precipitate was centrifuged down and discarded. The supernatant solution was treated with a further 14.6 g ammonium sulfate and again centrifuged. This precipitate, which is the 22-35% ammonium sulfate precipitate (Fraction III), was dissolved in 40 ml of 0.1 M potassium phosphate buffer, pH 7.0, containing $10^{-3}$ M reduced glutathione, and stored at $-17^\circ$ C.

After thawing, the Fraction III solution was diluted to 80 ml with potassium phosphate buffer and treated with 40 ml of calcium phosphate gel (10 mg dry weight per ml). After 15 minutes, the precipitate was collected by centrifugation, washed once with a 5 ml portion of cold 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 7.5, and eluted twice with 20 ml of cold 0.1 M pyrophosphate buffer, pH 7.0. The pyrophosphate eluate (Fraction IV) showed
about 17.3% of the total activity of the original crude extract and an overall purification of 20 times.

To Fraction IV (40 ml) 14 g of solid ammonium sulfate was added to give 50% saturation. After standing for 15 minutes at 0° C, the precipitate was collected by centrifugation and dissolved in 20 ml of cold 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 7.0, containing 10^{-3} M reduced glutathione. The enzyme activity on this final fraction (Fraction V) was 15% of the unit in the crude starting materials. The overall purification was 60-fold.
Table VI

Summary of Purification of Sugar Beet NRase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fraction</th>
<th>Total volume</th>
<th>Total protein</th>
<th>Total units</th>
<th>Specific activity</th>
<th>Percent recovery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Crude enzyme</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>1856</td>
<td>39,000</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. 0-45% Ammonium sulfate ppt.</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>26,400</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. 22-35% Ammonium sulfate ppt.</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Calcium phosphate gel eluate</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6,750</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. 0-50% ammonium sulfate ppt.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6,250</td>
<td>1250</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. CHARACTERIZATION OF NITRATE REDUCTASE

1. Stability of Enzyme

The effect of protectants during the extraction of the enzyme from sugar beet leaves is shown in Fig. 1. It indicates that in the presence of $10^{-3}$ M cysteine in the extraction medium, the activity of NRase is three times greater than in the media which contained no protectant and that glutathione is as effective as cysteine.

The data relative to loss of the enzyme activity during storage are presented in Fig. 2. The percentage residual activity of the enzyme when stored at the various temperatures has been plotted against time. In general, the enzyme was found to be extremely unstable, particularly at the higher temperatures. The higher the storage temperature, the faster the rate of inactivation. The extent of inactivation was also directly related to the length of storage time.

When the enzyme was stored in a frozen state (-15° C), a loss of only 10 to 20% of its activity was observed in three weeks, revealing that it was quite stable in the frozen state. Storage at 4° C resulted in a loss of 30 and 60% of its activity in 6 and 9 hours, respectively. At 25° C, the enzyme lost its activity almost completely in 6 hours.
Fig. 1. Effect of protectants in the extraction media on the level of nitrate reductase activity in sugar beet extracts.
Fig. 2. Stability of nitrate reductase (Fraction V) in phosphate buffer, pH 7.0, containing 10^{-3} M glutathione stored at various temperatures for different lengths of time.
2. **Time Course of Enzymatic Reaction**

A typical time-course of the nitrite formation from nitrate is shown in Fig. 3. In the presence of the complete system the rate of nitrate reduction is essentially constant within 25 minutes.

3. **Enzyme Activity and Enzyme Concentration**

Fig. 4 illustrates the relationship of the concentration of enzyme to the amount of nitrite formed. It can be seen that activity is linear for quantities of enzyme up to 80 units.

4. **pH Optimum**

The effect of pH on the activity of the enzyme is shown in Fig. 5. The enzyme catalyzed the reduction of nitrate over a wide pH range, 6.0 to 10.0, with a maximum activity at pH 7.0. The curve indicates that the enzyme has a very sharp optimum peak. Below pH 5.0 no enzyme activity could be detected.

5. **Substrate Affinity**

The effect of nitrate concentration upon the reaction velocity is shown in Fig. 6. The maximum rate was obtained at 10 uM per ml, and the amount necessary for the one-half maximal rate was approximately 0.5 uM per ml. The Michaelis
Fig. 3. Proportionality of enzyme activity with time. The standard assay procedure was used with 35 units of Fraction V enzyme.
Fig. 4. Proportionality of enzyme activity with enzyme concentration. The standard assay procedure was used with variation in volume of enzyme (Fraction V).
Fig. 5. Effect of pH on nitrate reductase activity.

The standard assay procedure was used, except for varying pH values. 42 units of enzyme (Fraction V) was used.
Fig. 6. Effect of nitrate concentration on nitrate reductase activity.
constant, obtained by the method of Lineweaver and Burk (1934), was \( K_m = 4.5 \times 10^{-4} \) M per liter.

6. **Specificity for Electron Donor**

Fig. 7 shows that the highly purified nitrate reductase from sugar beet leaves appeared to be specific for DPNH as a source of electron. TPNH was completely inactive as an electron donor. The \( K_m \) value for DPNH as estimated from the curve in Fig. 7 is \( 5.0 \times 10^{-5} \) M.

As shown in Table VII, reduced FAD, FMN, and molybdate were all effective electron donors for nitrate reductase. Among the artificial donors, pyocyanide and phenazine methosulfate, both one-electron donors with very low redox potential, give a low rate of enzymic activity. Reducing agents as glutathione and ascorbate were inactive as electron donors.

7. **Effect of Temperature on Activity**

In order to evaluate the activity of the enzyme at different temperatures, the reaction mixtures were incubated for 15 minutes at various temperatures. The results are shown in Table VIII. It is shown that at \( 0^\circ \) C there is no detectable enzymatic activity. From \( 10^\circ \) to \( 30^\circ \) C, enzymatic activity is proportional to the temperature increase. At \( 50^\circ \) C, 33% of the activity remained, at \( 60^\circ \) C only 4%. 
Fig. 7. Effect of reduced pyridine nucleotide concentration on nitrate reductase activity. The standard assay procedure was used with 42 units of Fraction V enzyme.
Table VII
The Effect of Various Hydrogen Donors on NRase Activity

Fraction V enzyme was used. The reaction mixtures were incubated anaerobically with the appropriate hydrogen donor in Thunberg tubes. The hydrogen donor was dissolved in 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 7.0.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hydrogen donor</th>
<th>Hydrogen donor final concentration</th>
<th>Relative activity (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DPNH</td>
<td>$2 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAD*</td>
<td>$2 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMN*</td>
<td>$2 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium molybdate*</td>
<td>$2 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benzyl viologen*</td>
<td>$2 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methylene blue</td>
<td>$2 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyocyanine*</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-3}$</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenazine methosulfate*</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-3}$</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mammalian cytochrome c*</td>
<td>$2 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glutathione</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-3}$</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium ascorbate</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-3}$</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Reduced by sodium hydrosulfite
Table VIII

Effect of Temperature on Activity of NRase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temperature (°C)</th>
<th>Nitrite formed (μM)</th>
<th>Relative activity (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.40</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>22.80</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>7.60</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig. 8. Variation of activity with temperature.
Figure 8 is an Arrhenius plot of the variation of the activity of the enzyme (Fraction V) with temperatures. Despite the fact that NRase is unstable at higher temperatures a linear relationship was obtained between 20° to 40° C because of the short duration of assay (15 minutes).

8. **FAD as Prosthetic Group**

The enzyme activity of Fraction I was not appreciably affected by the addition of FAD or FMN at a final concentration of $10^{-5}$ M. A very marked response to FAD, however, was demonstrated by Fraction V. The addition of FAD at a final concentration of $10^{-6}$ M caused a threefold stimulation. One half maximum reaction of the enzyme was obtained with FAD at approximately $1 \times 10^{-7}$ M and with FMN at about $5 \times 10^{-7}$ M. This greater effectiveness of FAD in activating the sugar beet nitrate reductase suggested that the prosthetic group of the enzyme is FAD.

The release and chromatography of the flavin from Fraction V by the method of Rao et al. (1962) resulted in a spot which showed a greenish fluorescence. The Rf values of this material and those of riboflavin, FMN, and FAD run in two solvent systems (Table IX) suggest that the substance released from Fraction V NRase is not riboflavin or FMN and that it may be FAD.
Fig. 9. Effect of flavin nucleotide concentration on nitrate reductase activity. Preincubated for 5 minutes at 4° C with all components of the reaction mixture except DPNH prior to the standard assay.
Nitrate reductase is not the only flavin-containing protein present in the enzyme preparation, hence precise identification of the prosthetic group must await further purification of the enzyme.

As shown in Table XV, the enzyme activity was strongly inhibited by atebrin and riboflavin, known flavoprotein inhibitors (Haas, 1944; Wright and Sabine, 1944; Helleman, Lindsay and Bovarmick, 1948), at a final concentration of $10^{-4}$ M. The inhibition by atebrin could be reversed by the addition of FAD.

### Table IX

**Paper Chromatography of Nitrate Reductase Flavin**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solvent System</th>
<th>Riboflavin</th>
<th>RF × 100</th>
<th>FMN</th>
<th>FAD</th>
<th>Compound from Fraction V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n-Butanol acetic acid water (4:1:5)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>sugar beet NRase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Na$_2$HPO$_4$ (5%)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. **Sulphydryl Nature**

Partially purified NRase of the sugar beet was found to be sharply inhibited by p-chloromercuribenzoate. This is
similar to the results obtained by Evans and Nason (1953) for NRase of soybean leaves. Table X summarizes the results of the experiment demonstrating the inhibition by p-chloromercuribenzoate and its reversal by cysteine and glutathione. Preincubation of the enzyme with concentrations of $10^{-3}$ M and $10^{-5}$ M p-chloromercuribenzoate resulted in 100 and 78% inhibition respectively.

Table X

Inhibition of NRase by p-chloromercuribenzoate and its Reversal by Sulfhydryl Compounds

Reaction mixture contained p-chloromercuribenzoate indicated, nitrate reductase (Fraction IV) and all constituents with the exception of the sulfhydryl compound and electron donor. The mixtures were preincubated for 10 minutes in ice bath. Cysteine hydrochloride or glutathione was added as indicated, followed by an equivalent amount of Na$_2$CO$_3$. When no sulfhydryl reagents were used, water was added to maintain equal volume. The mixtures were again incubated for 5 minutes at 4° C and then assayed for nitrite reductase activity in the usual manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reaction p-chloromercuribenzoate</th>
<th>Cysteine-HCl</th>
<th>Glutathione</th>
<th>Inhibition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Final Conc.(M)</td>
<td>Final Conc.(M)</td>
<td>Final Conc.(M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$10^{-3}$</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$10^{-5}$</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$10^{-3}$</td>
<td>$10^{-3}$</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$10^{-5}$</td>
<td>$10^{-3}$</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$10^{-3}$</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$10^{-3}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$10^{-5}$</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$10^{-3}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. **Dialysis of Enzyme**

Nicholas and Nason (1953) have indicated that the dialysis of Neurospora NRase against cyanide resulted in an inactivation of the enzyme and that the dialyzed enzyme was reactivated by molybdenum salts. This was taken to indicate that the metal constituents of this NRase was molybdenum.

In order to study the metal constituent of sugar beet nitrate reductase, the following experiments were carried out:

(a) **Dialysis of Nitrate Reductase**

As recommended by Nicholas and Nason (1953), some of the cellophane dialyzing tubes to be employed in the dialysis of the enzyme were first used to dialyze a 2% solution of egg albumin for 12 hours against a phosphate buffer, pH 7.0, and then were bathed for 12 hours in the various dialyzing solutions listed in Table XI. Three ml of the partially purified enzyme (Fraction III) was dialyzed against 500 ml of the dialyzing solution at 4°C. Table XI summarizes the results of the experiments.

Dialysis resulted in a higher activity of the enzyme. This could have been the consequence of the removal of ammonium sulfate or of an endogenous inhibitor from the preparation. Pre-treatment of the dialyzing tubes did not result in more effective dialysis. The presence of 10⁻³ M glutathione in the dialyzing solution resulted in a much greater activity of the enzyme at the end of 6 and 12 hours dialysis.
Table XI

Influence of Dialysis Against Various Reagents on the Activity of NRase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialysis</th>
<th>Period of dialysis (hrs)</th>
<th>Activity of enzyme*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiment A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No dialysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untreated tube. Dialysis against 0.1 M phosphate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treated tube.** Dialyzed against 0.1 M phosphate containing $10^{-3}$ M glutathione</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiment B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No dialysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treated tube.** Dialyzed against 0.1 M phosphate containing $10^{-3}$ M glutathione and $10^{-3}$ M cyanide</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Units of enzyme activity per 0.1 ml of Fraction III enzyme

** Tube bathed for 12 hours in solution listed and 3 ml of enzyme preparation subsequently dialyzed against 500 ml of the same solution at pH 7.0, at 4°C.
(b) Attempt to reactivate the Cyanide-dialyzed Enzyme

The partially purified enzyme (Fraction III) was dialyzed for 6 hours at 4°C against 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 7.0, containing $10^{-3}$ M glutathione and $10^{-3}$ M potassium cyanide. It was then redialyzed for 3 hours against 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 7.0, containing $10^{-3}$ M glutathione to remove KCN. Distilled water, which was used to prepare this buffer solution, had been treated to remove metals by the method of Nicholas (1952).

At the end of dialysis, various metals were added to the enzyme solution at a final concentration of 1 mM and it was preincubated at 4°C for 10 minutes before testing its activity. The following compounds were added to the reaction mixture:

FeSO$_4$, AgNO$_3$, Na$_2$Cr$_2$O$_7$, CoCl$_2$, NiSO$_4$, MnSO$_4$, FeCl$_3$, Na$_2$WO$_4$

ZnSO$_4$, Na$_2$MoO$_4$, MoO$_3$. It was found that the addition of these compounds failed to restore enzyme activity.

11. Phosphate Stimulation

In order to identify the requirement of phosphate in the reduction of nitrate, the NRase was extracted with 0.1 M Tris buffer, pH 7.8, and subjected to 0-45 and 22-35% ammonium sulfate fractionations. The final preparation was dissolved
in 0.1 M Tris buffer, pH 7.0, and dialyzed against 0.01 M Tris buffer, pH 7.0, for one hour at 4° C.

The effect of adding graded amounts of phosphate to 0.1 ml of the partially purified enzyme is shown in Table XII.

In the experiment, maximal activity was obtained at a level of approximately 1.0 uM phosphate. It is not certain whether the requirement for phosphate is absolute, a preparation dialyzed to reduce phosphate may contain enough to account for the residue activity.

The results in Table XIII show that the phosphate can be replaced partially by arsenate and selenate. Instead of stimulating, vanadate and silicate inhibited the enzyme activity.
### Table XII

Activation of NRase by Phosphate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phosphate final concentration (μM)</th>
<th>Nitrite formed (μM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>58.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>60.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table XIII

The Substitution of Other Anions for Phosphate in the Activation of NRase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Addition</th>
<th>Final concentration (μM)</th>
<th>Nitrite formed (μM)</th>
<th>Substitution (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potassium phosphate</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium sulfate</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium tungstate</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium arsenate</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATP</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium borate</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium selenate</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium orthovanadate</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium silicate</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium molybdate</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. Inhibition

(a) Inhibition by Heavy Metals

Sugar beet NRase activity was inhibited in the presence of heavy metals (Table XIV). The addition of cupric sulfate at $10^{-4}$ M resulted in an inhibition of $100\%$ in the rate of reaction. Sodium vanadate at $10^{-4}$ M also caused a complete inhibition. Other metal compounds such as sodium chromate, cobalt chloride, zinc sulfate and sodium asenate also strongly inhibited the activity of this enzyme.

(b) Inhibition by Metal-chelating Agents

Effects of various metal-chelating agents are summarized in Table XV. Sugar beet NRase is very sensitive to KCN and is inhibited approximately $60\%$ at $10^{-5}$ M final concentration. A number of other chelating agents at higher concentration inhibited the enzyme, indicating the presence of metal as an active constituent in the system. No inhibition was observed on addition of EDTA or sodium fluoride and only slight inhibition was obtained with thiourea.

(c) Inhibition by Amytal and Atebrin

Amytal, a well-known inhibitor of mitochondria electron transport, at $10^{-4}$ M final concentration caused approximately $50\%$ inhibition. Atebrin is a competitive inhibitor with respect to flavin in the assay system of nitrate reductase. Its inhibition could be reversed by the addition of FAD, as shown in Table XVI.
(d) Inhibition by Phenolic Compounds

Several quinones have previously been shown to serve as electron carriers for flavoprotein enzymes. Indeed, menadione was found to mediate anaerobic reduction of nitrate by *E. coli* respiratory NRase. However, the analogy between respiratory NRase and assimilatory NRase failed in this instance, since menadione is strikingly effective as an inhibitor of sugar beet NRase, an assimilatory enzyme. The enzyme was 50% inhibited by a menadione concentration of $10^{-4}$ M.

In view of the unexpected inhibition of sugar beet NRase by menadione, it appeared of interest to assay the effects of various phenolic compounds on NRase of this plant. Of particular interest were the findings with benzoquinone and pyrocatechol. As shown in Table XVII, the presence of $10^{-6}$ M p-benzoquinone or pyrocatechol resulted in 50% inhibition of nitrate reduction. Other phenolic compounds such as hydroxyquinine, 4-carboxycatechol, phloroglucinol and pyrogallol all inhibited the enzyme activity at different rates.
Table XIV
The Effect of Heavy Metals on the Activity of NRase

Reaction mixtures contained the compounds indicated, Fraction V enzyme, and all constituents of the standard assay mixture with the exception of DPNH. These were preincubated for 10 minutes at 4°C; then the standard assay was initiated by addition of the electron donor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additions*</th>
<th>Inhibition (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NiSO₄</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Na₂CrO₇</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FeSO₄</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoCl₂</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AgNO₃</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CuSO₄</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Na₂WO₄</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Na₂VO₄</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NaAsO₂</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZnSO₄</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MnSO₄</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* At a final concentration of 1 x 10⁻⁴ M.
Table XV

The Effect of Various Metal-chelating Agents on the Activity of NRase

Reaction mixture contained the inhibitors indicated, Fraction V, and all the constituents of the standard assay mixture with the exception of electron donor. These were preincubated for 10 minutes at 4°C; then the standard assay was initiated by the addition of DPNH.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Addition</th>
<th>Final concentration</th>
<th>Inhibition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(M)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potassium cyanide</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-3}$</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-5}$</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium azide</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-3}$</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-5}$</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiron</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiourea</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-3}$</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a, a-Dipyridyl</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-Hydroxyquinoline</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenylhydrazine</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o-Phenanthroline</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium diethyl-dithiocarbamate</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-3}$</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium citrate</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-3}$</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDTA</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-3}$</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium fluoride</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-3}$</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table XVI

The Effect of Non-specific Inhibitors on the Activity of NRase

Reaction mixtures contained the inhibitors indicated, Fraction V, and all constituents of the standard assay mixture with the exception of electron donor. These were preincubated for 10 minutes at 4° C; then the standard assay was initiated by addition of electron donor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Addition</th>
<th>Final concentration</th>
<th>Inhibition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethyl urethane</td>
<td>$10^{-4}$</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydroxylamine hydrochloride</td>
<td>$10^{-4}$</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium amytal</td>
<td>$10^{-4}$</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atebrin</td>
<td>$10^{-4}$</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atebrin</td>
<td>$10^{-5}$</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atebrin, FAD</td>
<td>$10^{-5}$, $10^{-4}$</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,4-Dinitrophenol</td>
<td>$10^{-4}$</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium sulfite</td>
<td>$10^{-4}$</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riboflavin</td>
<td>$10^{-4}$</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iodoacetate</td>
<td>$10^{-4}$</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table XVII

The Effect of Phenolic Compounds on the Activity of NRase

Reaction mixtures contained the phenolic compound indicated, Fraction V enzyme, and all constituents of the standard assay mixture with the exception of electron donor. These were pre-incubated for 10 minutes at $4^\circ$ C; then the standard assay was initiated by addition of DPNH.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Addition</th>
<th>Final concentration</th>
<th>Inhibition (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(M)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-Benzoquinone</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-5}$</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-6}$</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyrocatechol</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-5}$</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-6}$</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menadione</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-5}$</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydroxyquinone</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Carboxycatechol</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phloroglucinol</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyrogallol</td>
<td>$1 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. **Separation of DPNH-nitrate Reductase from TPNH-nitrate Reductase**

During the course of this investigation each fraction was examined for pyridine nucleotide specificity. It was found that Fraction I, II, and III enzyme preparation could use either DPNH or TPNH as electron donor. However, rates with DPNH were greater than with TPNH in the range of two to five times. When the enzyme was eluted from calcium phosphate gel and then precipitated by ammonium sulfate (0-50% saturation), only DPNH could be used as electron donor (Table XVIII).

The ratios of activity between DPNH and TPNH for the Fraction I, II, and III were 5.1, 2.4, and 3.7 respectively. Due to the fact that the ratios in the three fractions differed, it seems logical to postulate that more than one enzyme was involved.

14. **Other Enzymatic Activity Present in Partially Purified Enzyme**

The partially purified nitrate reductase preparations contain other enzymatic activity. This included DPNH-quinone reductase, DPNH-manadione reductase, DPNH-cytochrome c reductase and DPNH-diaphorase. Other pyridine nucleotide enzymes such as DPNH-glutathione reductase (Racker, 1955) and nitrite reductase (Roussos and Nason, 1960) are not present in the enzyme preparation Fraction V.

As indicated in Table XIX, the first two enzymes,
DPNH-quinone reductase and DPNH-menadione reductase, seem to have been purified together with nitrate reductase. Each step in the purification of NRase resulted in a purification of other enzymes, although the degree of purification in each case is less than that achieved for the NRase.

15. Products and Stoichiometry of Reaction

The stoichiometry of sugar beet NRase was determined by measuring the concomitant oxidation of DPNH and the formation of nitrite in reaction mixtures with exactly the same composition as those employed in the standard assay. DPNH oxidation was observed at various intervals during the reaction period by measuring the decrease in absorption, at 340 μm, of aliquots of reaction mixture maintained in spectrophotometric cuvettes. The extinction coefficient 6.22 × 10^6 sq. cm. x mole⁻¹ at 340 μm was used to compute DPNH oxidation after first subtracting the endogenous activity observed in the absence of nitrate. At the same time, other aliquots of the reaction mixtures were removed and assayed.

The time course of the sugar beet NRase is presented in Fig. 10. There was a very rapid decrease in absorption in the presence of the complete system, and a moderate endogenous rate when all constituents except nitrate were
Table XVIII

Separation of DPNH-NRase from TPNH-NRase

The standard assay, with the exception of the final concentration of electron donors being 1 μM, was used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fraction</th>
<th>Enzyme Activity</th>
<th>Ratio of Activity</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(units/mg protein)</td>
<td>DPNH/TPNH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Crude extract</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. 0-45% Ammonium sulfate ppt.</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. 22-35% Ammonium sulfate ppt.</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Calcium phosphate gel eluate</td>
<td>324.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. 0-50% Ammonium sulfate ppt.</td>
<td>975.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table XIX

Other Enzymatic Activities Present in the various NRase fractions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enzyme</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nitrate reductase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific activity</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purification</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quinone reductase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific activity</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>1245</td>
<td>3750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purification</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menadione reductase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific activity</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>1016</td>
<td>2530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purification</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cytochrome c reductase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific activity</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purification</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaphorase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific activity</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>5.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purification</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
present. The addition of the DPNH-regenerating system containing sodium lactate and yeast lactate dehydrogenase restored the absorption of DPNH to the original level. Thus, DPN\(^+\) was shown to be one of the products of sugar beet NRase. Table XX shows a mole for mole relationship between DPNH oxidation and nitrite formation. These results are in agreement with the conclusion that nitrate reduction by this system proceeds according to the following equation:

\[
\text{NO}_3^- + \text{DPNH} + H^+ \rightarrow \text{NO}_2^- + \text{DPN}^+ + H_2O
\]
Table XX

Stoichiometry of NRase Reaction

The enzymatic rate of DPNH oxidation was calculated from Curves A and B of Fig. 10. Nitrite formed was determined in 0.5 ml aliquots of the complete reaction mixture under the condition of standard assay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of incubation (min.)</th>
<th>DPNH Oxidation (µ moles/ml)</th>
<th>Nitrite formed (µ moles/ml)</th>
<th>Ratio of DPNH oxidized to Nitrite formed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>78.7</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>85.2</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig. 10. Time course of nitrate reductase activity as followed by the oxidation of DPNH. Reaction mixtures contained the following in a final volume of 3.0 ml: Curve A represents the complete reaction mixture containing 220 units of the enzyme (Fraction V), 60 μM KNO₃, 0.6 μM DPNH, 60 μM FAD and 600 μM phosphate buffer at pH 7.0; curve B represents the same as Curve A, except that KNO₃ was omitted. Curve C represents the same as curve A, except that the enzyme was omitted. After 18 minutes, the complete reaction mixture was poured into a small beaker containing 2.5 ml of 0.1 M glycine buffer, pH 10.2, 0.3 ml of 15% sodium D L-lactate and 0.2 ml of lactic dehydrogenase and the reaction mixture read again at 340 μm. Subsequently indicated A 340 reading represents the original readings x 2.
III. EFFECT OF AGE OF PLANT ON NITRATE REDUCTASE ACTIVITY

The effect of age of plant on the level of extractable NRase is shown in Table XXI. The results indicate that the crude extract from the leaf of two-weeks old sugar beet seedlings contained a very low enzyme activity. The level of enzyme activity increased rapidly between four and six weeks of growing. During this time a concomitant increase in leaf area was observed. The activity became constant from the age of 8 weeks.

Table XXI

Effect of Age of Plant on NRase Activity in the Crude Extract of Sugar Beet Leaves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Plant (weeks)</th>
<th>Enzyme Activity (units/g f.wt.)</th>
<th>Protein Content (mg/g f.wt.)</th>
<th>Specific Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV. DISTRIBUTION OF NITRATE REDUCTASE IN THE SUGAR BEET PLANT

The distribution of nitrate and NRase activity in the sugar beet plant is given in Table XXII. In general, the concentration of nitrate in the petiole was five to ten times higher than that in the lamina. A very low content of nitrate was found in the roots.

Table XXII also shows that the activity of NRase of the lamina was roughly triple that of the petiole. No appreciable enzyme activity could be detected in the extracts of roots.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Dry wt.</th>
<th>Chlorophyll</th>
<th>Nitrate</th>
<th>Protein</th>
<th>NRase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mg/g fresh wt.</td>
<td>ug/mg dry wt.</td>
<td>ug NO₃⁻ N/mg dry wt.</td>
<td>ug/mg dry wt.</td>
<td>units/mg dry wt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamina</td>
<td>98.5</td>
<td>9.71</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>167.51</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petiole</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>16.44</td>
<td>63.15</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Root</td>
<td>185.0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>29.12</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table XXII

Distribution of NRase Activity in Beta vulgaris Seedlings
V. SUB-CELLULAR LOCALIZATION OF SUGAR BEET NITRATE REDUCTASE

The sub-cellular distribution of NRase from sugar beet leaves (lamina) is summarized in Table XXIII.

An average of 60% of the total NRase was recovered after fractionation. Nearly 90% of the recovered enzyme activity was found in the microsome-free supernatant. Only a slight enzymatic activity resided in chloroplast and in mitochondrial fractions.

Chlorophyll was present in all cellular fractions. A concomitant release of NRase from ruptured chloroplasts could have occurred if the enzyme were indeed present within the chloroplast. The method of Stocking (1959) which employed a non-aqueous medium was used to clarify this point.

Following Stocking's procedure, 5 g of sugar beet leaves was removed and placed in a cellophane bag. This was stored at -15° C for 30 minutes. The midveins and the major lateral veins were then removed from the sugar beet leaves and discarded. The material was then ground in a homogenizer for 2 minutes with a cold hexane-carbon tetrachloride mixture of specific gravity 1.3, using 20 ml of hexane-CCl₄ per gram of tissue.

This suspension was filtered through a pad of glass wool and cheesecloth and centrifuged for 15 minutes at 12,000 x g. The green pellet, which accumulated near the surface
of the liquid, was collected. The green pellet was dissolved in 100 ml of hexane, stirred with a glass rod, and centrifuged for 5 minutes at 1000 x g. The sediment obtained from this centrifugation was dissolved in 10 ml of 0.01 M phosphate buffer containing $10^{-3}$ M glutathione. After standing at a temperature of -4° C for 10 minutes, the suspension was centrifuged for 10 minutes at 1000 x g. The supernatant was collected and tested for NRase activity. No enzymatic activity could be detected in the extract of chloroplasts.

Table XXIII

Sub-Cellular Localization of Sugar Beet NRase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gravity (xg)</th>
<th>Time (min.)</th>
<th>Fraction</th>
<th>Total chlorophyll (mg)</th>
<th>Total protein (mg)</th>
<th>Total NRase (unit)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>homogenate*</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>265.00</td>
<td>1240</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cellular debris and nuclei</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>10.43</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Chloroplasts</td>
<td>8.12</td>
<td>79.26</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Mitochondria</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105,000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>&quot;Microsome&quot;</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>15.80</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatant</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>114.75</td>
<td>839</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Starting material: 5 g of sugar beet lamina
** No detectable enzyme activity
VI. FLAVIN NUCLEOTIDE-CATALYZED ENZYMATIC PHOTOREDUCTION OF NITRATE

1. Photoreduction of Flavin Nucleotides

The time course of both FAD and FMN photoreduction under anaerobic conditions is presented in Fig. 11 and Fig. 12. From the data given it is noted that the FMN was photoreduced at a moderate rate in the absence of EDTA or methionine but that the addition of these activators markedly stimulated the rate of photoreduction of flavin nucleotide. Similarly, the presence of EDTA or methionine was required before any photoreduction of FAD was observed.

2. Characterization of Flavin Nucleotide-Catalyzed Enzymatic Photoreduction of Nitrate

Table XXIV shows that flavin nucleotide-catalyzed enzymic photoreduction of nitrate can couple with the flavin nucleotide photochemical reduction in which EDTA acts as an electron donor in an anaerobic photochemical reduction of flavin nucleotides. The reaction did not proceed in the dark and in the absence of nitrate or sugar beet NRase. FAD could be replaced by FMN at the same concentration. In the absence of EDTA or under aerobic condition, a slight photoreduction was observed. The highest activity was obtained by the addition of DPNH.
Fig. 11. Photoreduction of FAD and FMN with EDTA under anaerobic conditions. The reaction mixture consisted of 40 uM phosphate buffer, pH 7.5, 0.1 uM FAD of FMN, and 7.5 uM EDTA in a final volume of 2.0 ml. The procedure for obtaining anaerobicity and the adapted Thunberg tubes used are described in "Materials and Methods".
methionine under anaerobic conditions. The reaction mixture consisted of 40 uM phosphate buffer, pH 7.5, 0.1 uM FAD or FMN, and 7.5 uM methionine in a final volume of 2.0 ml. The procedure for obtaining anaerobicity and the adapted Thunberg tubes used are described in "Materials and Methods".

Fig. 12. Photoreduction of FAD and FMN with methionine under anaerobic conditions.
Table XXIV

Characterization of Flavin Nucleotide-Catalyzed Enzymic Photoreduction of Nitrate

The complete reaction mixture consisted of 0.2 ml 0.1 M KNO$_3$, 0.3 ml $10^{-4}$ M FAD (FMN), 0.3 ml sugar beet NRase (Fraction IV), and 1.7 ml 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 7.5, containing $10^{-2}$ M EDTA (or methionine) in a final volume of 2.5 ml. The adapted Thunberg tubes and the procedure for obtaining anaerobicity are described under "Methods". Light intensity 375 foot candles, blue filter, temperature 30° C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>Nitrite Formed (µM)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRase omitted</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrate omitted</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDTA omitted, methionine added</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAD omitted</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAD omitted, FMN added</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAD omitted, Riboflavin added</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete, aerobic</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete, dark</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete, DPNH (1 mM) added</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VII. DIURNAL CHANGES IN NITRATE CONTENT AND NITRATE REDUCTASE ACTIVITY IN SUGAR BEET LEAVES

It was found that the sugar beet leaves harvested at the end of the dark period always contained a lower NRase activity than those harvested at the end of the light period. In order to determine the effect of the light and dark on the activity of NRase and the content of nitrate, the following experiment was carried out.

The plants were grown in a controlled room at a day (12 hours) temperature of 22-25° C and a night (12 Hours) temperature of 20-22° C. The relative humidity was kept 62-70% at day and 65-80% at night. Illumination was by slimline fluorescent tubes supplemented with 60 watt incandescent bulbs in order to give a light intensity of 1800 foot candles at the top of the plants.

When the plants were 50 days old, the lamina portion of the leaves were removed at 3, 6 and 12 hour intervals in light and in darkness. Twenty-five g of lamina from each harvest was used for the determination of nitrate content and NRase activity. The remainder (60 - 80g) after weighing, was dried in an oven at 75° to 80° C for 24 hours and the dry weight determined.
The results (Table XXV) indicated that NRase activity of sugar beet lamina varied diurnally with a minimum at end of dark period and maximum at end of light period. Maximum activity was almost three times minimum. The same degree of variation persisted when the activity was calculated on the basis of dry weight.

There was also a rhythm in nitrate content, which was contrary to that of the NRase activity, being highest at the end of the dark and lowest at the end of the light period.

When equal volumes of the homogenate from material collected at the end of the light and dark period were mixed, it was found that enzymatic activity of the mixed homogenate was close to the arithmetic mean of the individual activity of the two samples. This indicated that an accumulation of an inhibitor in the leaves had not occurred during the dark period.

The acidity of the juice of sugar beet leaves was followed during a 24-hour period. The acidity was higher at the end of the dark period (pH 5.7-6.0) and lower at the end of the light period (pH 6.5-6.7).
Table XXV

Dirurnal Change in Nitrate Content and NRase Activity in Sugar Beet Leaves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of collection of sample</th>
<th>Dry Wt. mg/g fresh wt.</th>
<th>Nitrate Content ug NO$_3^-$N/g fresh wt.</th>
<th>ug NO$_3^-$N/mg dry wt.</th>
<th>NRase units per gram fresh wt.</th>
<th>dry wt.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 hours</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 hours</td>
<td>98.5</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 hours</td>
<td>103.4</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 hours</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 hours</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 hours</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>8.26</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VIII. OTHER METHODS OF ENZYME PURIFICATION

1. Extraction of NRase from Acetone Powder

Acetone-dried powders were prepared by the method described by Nason (1955) for soluble enzyme from higher plants. All steps in the following procedure were carried out at -10° C.

Twenty grams of sugar beet leaves was placed in a Waring Blender with 200 ml of acetone and blended for one minute. The resulting slurry was filtered through a Buchner funnel and washed with an excess of acetone. The residue was spread out on filter paper, allowed to dry and was stored in an evacuated flask.

A crude extract of this leaf acetone powder was prepared by stirring the powder with 100 ml of 0.1 M K₂HPO₄ containing 10⁻³ M glutathione for 5 minutes at 0° C. A subsequent centrifugation was carried out at 4° C at a force of 20,000 x g for 15 minutes.

The results are given in Table XXVI. They indicate that the enzyme extracted from acetone powder had a low specific activity.
Table XXVI

Extraction of NRase from Acetone Powder

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiment No.</th>
<th>Total Activity</th>
<th>Total Protein</th>
<th>Specific Activity Units/mg protein</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1526</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Removal of Nucleoprotein from Enzyme Preparation**

The 0-45% ammonium sulfate precipitate was dialyzed against 0.01 M phosphate buffer, pH 7.0, containing $10^{-3}$ M glutathione for one hour at 4°C. To the dialyzed enzyme preparation a 0.2% aqueous solution of protamine sulfate, pH 4.5, was slowly added until no further precipitation occurred. The precipitate was collected by centrifugation at 5000 x g for 10 minutes at 0°C and discarded. Enzyme activity and protein content of supernatant was determined by the usual methods. The results are given in Table XXVII. They show that the removal of nucleoprotein increased the specific activity of the enzyme slightly.
Table XXVII

Removal of Nucleoprotein from Enzyme Preparation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fraction</th>
<th>Total Volume</th>
<th>Total Activity</th>
<th>Total Protein</th>
<th>Specific Activity</th>
<th>Recovery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ml)</td>
<td>(units)</td>
<td>(mg)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-45%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammonium Sulfate ppt.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5200</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protamine Supernatant</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3650</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Absorption of NRase on Alumina C₉₉₉ Gel

Thirty ml of dialyzed 0-45% ammonium sulfate precipitated enzyme was treated with 6 ml of alumina C gamma (C₉₉₉) gel (15 mg dry weight per ml) and stirred intermittently for 15 minutes at 0°C. The supernatant and gel precipitate was washed by resuspending it in 5 ml of 0.01 M potassium phosphate buffer pH 7.0, containing 10⁻³ M glutathione. After 5 minutes the precipitate was centrifuged down and washed in 0.5 M potassium phosphate buffer, pH 7.0, containing 10⁻³ M glutathione. The supernatant solution obtained by centrifugation after each of two washings is referred to as Supernatant 2 and Supernatant 3, respectively. The enzyme activity and protein content were determined by the usual methods. The results are given in Table XXVIII.
### Table XXVIII

Absorption of NRase on Alumina C\textsubscript{r} Gel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fractions</th>
<th>Volume (ml)</th>
<th>Total activity (Units)</th>
<th>Total protein (mg)</th>
<th>Specific activity</th>
<th>Recovery (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-45% Ammonium Sulfate ppt.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2750</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatant I</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatant 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatant 3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DISCUSSION

Experimental results reported here provide evidence that a soluble sulfhydryl NRase with a metalloflavoprotein nature is present in sugar beet leaves.

Almost all NRase activity of the homogenate of the leaves was recovered in the 20,000 x g supernatant. Fractionation by different speeds in 0.1 M sucrose-phosphate buffer containing 10^{-3} M glutathione showed that no particulate portion contained significant enzymatic activity. This intracellular distribution of sugar beet NRase is similar to that of the assimilatory NRases of most higher plants (Table IV).

The NRase was sharply inhibited by p-chloromercuribenzoate. The inhibition could be reversed by sulfhydryl reagents such as glutathione and cysteine. Inhibition also resulted from the use of the alkylating reagent iodoacetate and the oxidizing reagent cupric sulfate. These results indicate that the NRase is a sulfhydryl enzyme which loses its catalytic activity when some or all of its -SH groups undergo chemical modification.

The experiments demonstrating that chemically reduced molybdenum can serve as an electron donor suggested that enzyme systems which yield reduced molybdate may be capable of replacing pyridine nucleotide as the electron donor in the NRase sequence. It was not possible to establish that Mo was the metal prosthetic group as did Nicholas and Nason (1954) for Neurospora NRase.
Three lines of evidence suggest that FAD is the flavin nucleotide prosthetic group of the enzyme - the marked response of the partially purified enzyme to FAD addition, the low $K_m$ for FAD compared with that for FMN, and the isolation and tentative identification of the enzyme-bound flavin as FAD. Because of the presence of some other flavoprotein enzymes, such as quinone reductase, in the enzyme preparation positive identification of the enzyme-bound flavin nucleotide will require further purification of the NRase. Table IV indicates the FAD specificity of the assimilatory NRases from several plant species.

The optimum pH of the sugar beet leaf enzyme Fraction V is 7.0 which is identical with that of the NRase from Neurospora (Nason and Evans, 1953). In contrast the pH optimum for crude NRase (Fraction I) was about 8.0. Apparently some physical changes took place during the purification procedure.

The inhibition by cyanide, azide, dipyridyl, vanadate and cupric sulfate, shown to occur with sugar beet NRase, has also been reported for the NRase of soybean leaves (Evans and Nason, 1953; Nicholas and Nason, 1955) and wheat embryo (Spencer, 1959).

The end products, nitrite and DPN$^+$, are also the same as those of other assimilatory NRases and indicate its role as an Assimilatory NRase rather than its involvement in nitrate respiration.
It is likely that the mechanism of electron transfer is similar to that established for the enzyme in *Neurospora* and soybean leaves:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{DPNH} + \text{H}^+ &\rightarrow \text{DPN}^+ \quad \text{FAD} \rightarrow \text{FADH}_2 \\
\text{NO}_3^- &\rightarrow \text{NO}_2^- + \text{H}_2\text{O}
\end{align*}
\]

It is evident that the final step of the system involved a one-equivalent donor Mo\(^{5+}\) and a two-equivalent acceptor N\(^{5+}\). This type of electron transfer is uncommon. Generally speaking, metal is necessary for the reaction with those acceptors which require only one equivalent of hydrogen for their reduction and is not necessary for those requiring two-equivalents (Mahler and Glenn, 1956). The reduction of nitrate to nitrite requires two equivalents, and yet the reduction invariably needs molybdenum.

The question whether the reduction of nitrate may proceed in two one-equivalent steps, or nitrate as an acceptor may require activation by complexing with the metal molybdenum, is still not established since an additional mechanism must be postulated to explain this special reaction.

In its pyridine nucleotide specificity purified NRase of the sugar beet is similar to the assimilatory NRase from *Escherichia coli* (Nicholas and Nason, 1955b), wheat embryo (Spencer, 1959), tomato leaves (Sanderson and Cocking, 1964),
in that it is specifically linked to DPNH. The enzyme from Neurospora (Nason and Evans, 1954) is TPNH-specific. Impure NRase of the sugar beet resembles that from soybean leaves (Evans and Nason, 1953), yeast (Silver, 1956), wheat leaves (Anacker and Stoy, 1958), and the bacterium Azotobacter vinelandii (Taniguchi and Ohmachi, 1960) which can be linked to either DPNH or TPNH with equal effectiveness.

Spencer (1959) suggested that in higher plants DPNH-specificity might be a characteristic of the NRase of the embryo. He found that germinating soybean seeds appear to contain only a DPNH-specific NRase while older tissue of soybean (Evans and Nason, 1953) and wheat (Spencer, 1959) contain the non-specific NRase.

From the evidence presented above it is possible that two types of NRase occur in sugar beet leaves. One enzyme is specifically linked to DPNH and the other to TPNH. During the course of purification of the crude "enzyme" the two enzymes can be separated. It is also possible that the leaves of sugar beet may contain a DPNH-specific NRase and an enzyme which catalyzes a reaction between TPNH and endogenous DPN to produce DPNH and TPN. Keister et al. (1960) described such an enzyme in spinach, pyridine nucleotide transhydrogenase, which catalyzes the following reaction:

\[ \text{TPNH} + \text{DPN} \rightarrow \text{DPNH} + \text{TPN}^+ \]
Shin *et al.* (1963) obtained a crystalline ferredoxin-TPN reductase from spinach chloroplasts, which catalyzed the transfer of the hydrogen from TPNH to a number of hydrogen or electron acceptors such as DPN, menadione and FAD.

A comparison of some of the properties of the NRase from sugar beet leaves with that from soybean, cauliflower, wheat, and tomato, is given in Table XXIX.

The partially purified sugar beet NRase preparation contained a number of other enzymatic activities. These included DPNH-cytochrome c reductase, DPN-diaphorase, DPNH-menadione reductase, and DPNH-quinone reductase. The latter three enzymes have been designated "quinone reductases" which are characterized by their ability to transfer hydrogen from reduced pyridine nucleotide to suitable quinones (Martius, 1963).

Although the possible relationship between the DPNH-NRase and quinone reductase activities present in purified sugar beet NRase is obscure it is apparent that they are not identical. Unlike the NRase quinone reductases are not inhibited by metal-chelating agents such as cyanide, azide and o-phenothioline, indicating the absence of metal in the enzymatic system, and they are insensitive to sulfhydryl agents, such as p-chloromercuribenzoate and iodoacetate (Martius, 1963).

The experiments described above have revealed that in the presence of EDTA flavin nucleotides can effect the transfer
Table XXIX

Comparison of Properties of Assimilatory NRase from *Beta vulgaris*

and Other Higher Plants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of enzyme</th>
<th>pH</th>
<th>Flavin and Km</th>
<th>Enzyme specificity</th>
<th>Substrate and Km</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar beet leaves</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>FAD: 1 x 10^{-7} M, FMN: 5 x 10^{-7} M</td>
<td>DPNH-specific</td>
<td>4.5 x 10^{-4} M</td>
<td>Evans and Nason (1953)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soybean leaves</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>FAD: 1 x 10^{-7} M, FMN: 3.7 x 10^{-6} M</td>
<td>Non-specific</td>
<td>7.5 x 10^{-3} M</td>
<td>Evans and Nason (1953)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat leaves</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>FAD: 2 x FMN</td>
<td>DPNH-TPNH</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Anacker and Stoy (1958)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat embryo</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>FAD: 1 x 10^{-7} M</td>
<td>DPNH-specific</td>
<td>3.8 x 10^{-4} M</td>
<td>Spencer (1959)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomato leaves</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>DPNH-specific</td>
<td>4 x 10^{-4} M</td>
<td>Sanderson and Cocking (1964)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of electrons from some reducing agent to nitrate with the aid of NRase. In this system flavin nucleotides may act as light-absorbing catalysts. The participation of NRase and flavin nucleotides in a new type of non-cyclic photosynthetic electron flow has been described by Ramirex et al. (1964). They suggest that pyridine nucleotide NRase may be in fact a mixture of TPN-reductase and NRase.

The flavin nucleotide-catalyzed enzymatic photochemical reduction of nitrate may be represented by the following:

\[
\text{Photoreduction} \quad \begin{array}{c}
\text{DPNH} \\
\text{Reduced Flavin Nucleotide}
\end{array} \quad \text{Nitrate Reductase} \quad \begin{array}{c}
\text{DPN} \\
\text{Mo} \\
\text{NO}_3^-
\end{array}
\]

\[
\text{AH}_2 = \text{Reducing agent}
\]

Just what physiological significance this reaction may have in plant tissue remains to be shown. Certainly it seems that flavin nucleotides should not be ignored when considering photochemical reactions. The overall abundance of flavin nucleotides in the plant tissue and the presence of natural reducing agents which could serve to control these reactions, speak strongly in favor of the theory that flavin nucleotides, enzyme-bound flavins, play some role in light activated reactions.
It was found that sugar beet leaf NRase activity was high during the light period and low during darkness. A similar variation has been found to occur in maize (Hagemen and Fletcher, 1960) and tomato (Sanderson and Cocking, 1964). The former investigators suggested two possible reasons for the loss of activity during darkness - the accumulation of an inhibitory nitrogenous metabolite and the oxidation of the active sulfhydryl groups. However the occurrence of either was not proven. In the experiments with sugar beet NRase the accumulation of an inhibitor in the leaves during the dark period was not detected.

In common with the observations of Clevenger (1919), Ingalls and Shrive (1931), Bennet-Clark (1953) and others, who used various species of plants, it was found that growth in darkness and in light was associated with relatively low and high pH values of the expressed leaf sap. The sharp optimum of sugar beet NRase (pH 7.0) and its sensitivity to pH change coupled with the fall in leaf pH values in the dark (pH 5.7 - 6.0) and their rise in the light (pH 6.5 - 6.7) suggest a causal relationship between this rhythm in hydrogen ion concentration and the diurnal alternation in activity of NRase.
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