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Mathematical Model of Harmful Substance Amount in Soil

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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KEY WORDS

Degradation of substances, soil, mathematical model

ABSTRACT

There are brought into soil various chemical substances as a result of human activity with a positive or negative impact on the soil characteristics. Concentration of the added substances is changing over time and it is important due to many reasons to know the relation between the substance concentration and the time. One of important factors with an impact on the substance concentration in the soil is the natural degradation of materials. That is why there is presented in this paper a mathematical model of substance degradation process during a simple and repeated application of the given substance.

1. Introduction

Human activity is resulting in bringing of various chemical substances into the soil, namely intentionally or randomly, such as herbicides, pesticides and oil materials. These materials have also negative impacts on the environment or on the human health directly. Therefore it is important to know the time changes of substance concentration in the contaminated soil. We will investigate a thin layer of soil on the assumption that the substance concentration in the whole layer is homogenous immediately after application of the chemical substance into this layer or after contamination of this layer by a chemical matter. Another condition is that the concentration of the substance in the soil will be changing only due to the natural degradation of this substance and all other impacts on change of the concentration will be neglected. We want to find out a mathematical model describing the time behaviour of the substance concentration in the soil in the case of a simple application of the substance, as well as during a repeated application. The term "application of substance" means not only the intended

application of matter into the soil, but also a random and unintended contamination of soil by the chemical substance.

2. Model of Substance Degradation in the Case of Simple Application

Let in the time $t = 0$ was implemented into the soil such amount of chemical substance that its concentration in the soil is the C_0 , thus:

$$C(0) = C_0; \quad (1)$$

whereas the $C(t)$ is the substance concentration in the time t . If we are supposing that reduction of the substance concentration due to natural degradation is proportional directly to the concentration and so the change of concentration ΔC during the time interval Δt is:

$$\Delta C = -kC\Delta t.$$

From the last equation follows the differential equation

$$\frac{dC}{dt} = -kC, \quad (2)$$

where the constant k , $k \in R$, $k > 0$, is a parameter of substance degradation velocity. Solution of the linear differential equation of the 1st order (2), which fulfils the initial condition (1), is

$$C(t) = C_0 \cdot e^{-kt}. \quad (3)$$

The next relation defines the time behaviour of the concentration:

$$C(t) \begin{cases} 0 & \text{for } t < 0 \\ C_0 \cdot e^{-kt} & \text{for } t \geq 0, \end{cases} \quad (4)$$

Fig. 1: Time behaviour of concentration.

If there is known the halftime of substance degradation DT_{50} , i.e. the time interval, which is necessary for reduction of 50% of the substance amount due to the natural degradation, so the relation (4) can be written in the form

$$C(t) \begin{cases} 0 & \text{for } t < 0 \\ C_0 \cdot e^{-\frac{\ln 2}{DT_{50}} t} & \text{for } t \geq 0, \end{cases} \quad (5)$$

because

$$k = \frac{\ln 2}{DT_{50}}.$$

Sometimes it is necessary to calculate the time point t_{cr} with the defined critical concentration level C_{cr} , $0 < C_{cr} \leq C_0$. Such situation is typical, for example, if we want to determine time of the reduced contamination under the given level or if there are applied chemical protective substances and their concentration mustn't be reduced under a certain value and it is necessary to determine the time for a next repeated application. According to the relation (5) we obtain:

$$t_{cr} = \frac{DT_{50}}{\ln 2} \ln \frac{C_0}{C_{cr}}.$$

We note that if the mentioned amount of substance is applied not in the time $t = 0$, but in the time point $t = \tau$, $\tau > 0$, so for the time behaviour of the concentration is valid (see Fig. 2)

$$C(t) \begin{cases} 0 & \text{for } t < \tau \\ C_0 \cdot e^{-k \cdot (t - \tau)} & \text{for } t \geq \tau. \end{cases} \quad (6)$$

Fig. 2: Concentration at shifted application.

3. Model of Substance Degradation in the Case of Repeated Application

We are supposing that there was applied the substance repeatedly in the time points $T_0, T_1, T_2, \dots, T_{n-1}$, $0 = T_0 < T_1 < T_2 < \dots < T_{n-1}$, in this way that during the i -th application, i.e. during application in the time T_{i-1} , was applied into the soil such amount of substance, which is able to create in the pure soil the concentration level C_{i-1} , $i=1; 2; \dots; n$. In this case there can be used relations (4) and (6) repeatedly and according to this method it is possible to demonstrate that for the time behaviour of the concentration is valid:

$$C(t) = \begin{cases} 0, & t \in (-\infty; 0), \\ C_0 \cdot e^{-kt} & t \in \langle 0; T_1 \rangle, \\ \vdots \\ \sum_{j=0}^{i-1} C_j \cdot e^{-k(t-T_j)}, & t \in (T_{i-1}; T_i) \\ \vdots \\ \sum_{j=0}^{n-1} C_j \cdot e^{-k(t-T_j)}, & t \in \langle T_{n-1}; \infty \rangle, \end{cases} \quad (7)$$

$$C(t) = \begin{cases} 0, & t \in (-\infty; 0), \\ e^{-kt} \cdot C_0 & t \in \langle 0; T_1 \rangle, \\ \vdots \\ e^{-kt} \cdot \sum_{j=0}^{i-1} C_j \cdot e^{kT_j}, & t \in (T_{i-1}; T_i) \\ \vdots \\ e^{-kt} \sum_{j=0}^{n-1} C_j \cdot e^{kT_j}, & t \in \langle T_{n-1}; \infty \rangle, \end{cases} \quad (8)$$

The Fig. 3 illustrates the time behaviour of concentration.

Fig. 3: Concentration at repeated application.

In the same way like it was performed for the simple application, we are able also in this case to determine the time point of critical concentration C_{cr} . We are thinking about intervals $I_1, I_2, \dots, I_n$, kde $I_i = \langle T_{i-1}; T_i \rangle$ for $i=1; 2; \dots; n-1$ and $I_n = \langle T_{n-1}; \infty \rangle$. The function $C(t)$ is continuous, descending and limited function for each of intervals I_i . If we designate

$$C_{Li} = \inf_{t \in I_i} C(t); \quad C_{Ui} = \max_{t \in I_i} C(t),$$

for $i = 1; 2; \dots; n$, so for every $C_{cr} \in \langle C_{Li}; C_{Ui} \rangle$ exists at interval I_i only one t_{cr} so that

$$C_{cr} = C(t_{cr}).$$

From the relation (8) we obtain

$$t_{cr} = \frac{1}{k} \ln \frac{\sum_{j=0}^{i-1} C_j \cdot e^{kT_j}}{C_{cr}}. \quad (9)$$

$$C(t) = C_{cr},$$

It means that for every $t \in \langle T_{i-1}; t_{cr} \rangle$ is

$$C(t) \leq C_{cr},$$

and for each $t \in \langle t_{cr}; T_i \rangle$ is

Fig. 4: Concentration at repeated application.

(see Fig. 4).

$$C^*$$

In the case that the concentration mustn't exceed the defined limit value C^* , it is necessary to

$$C_0 \leq C^* \text{ and } C_{Li} + C_i \leq C^*,$$

choose such application times and substance

amounts so that
for $i = 1; 2; \dots; n-1$. If we want to reach a situation-
that for $t \in \langle 0; T_n \rangle$ the concentration will not be
reduced under the stated limit, it is necessary

$$C_0 > C_{\star} \text{ and } C_{Li} \leq C_{\star},$$

to choose such application times and substance
amounts so that
for $i = 1; 2; \dots; n-1$.

In a special case, if there was applied the sub-
stance repeatedly in the time points $t = 0; T; 2T; \dots;$
 $(n-1) \cdot T$, $T > 0$, $n \geq 2$ in the same amounts, thus
 $T_i = (i-1)T$ and $C_i = C_0$, for $i = 1; 2; \dots; n-1$, it is

$$C(t) = \begin{cases} 0, & t < 0, \\ C_0 \cdot e^{-kt} & 0 \leq t \leq T, \\ \vdots & \\ C_0 \cdot \frac{1 - e^{ikT}}{1 - e^{kT}} \cdot e^{-kt}, & (i-1) \cdot T \leq t < i \cdot T \\ \vdots & \\ C_0 \cdot \frac{1 - e^{nkT}}{1 - e^{kT}} \cdot e^{-kt}, & (n-1) \cdot T \leq t. \end{cases}$$

possible to present (see [1]), that for the time be-
haviour of concentration is valid

$$t_{cr} = \frac{1}{k} \ln \left(\frac{C_0}{C_{cr}} \cdot \frac{1 - e^{ikT}}{1 - e^{kT}} \right), t = 1, 2, \dots, n.$$

For the t_{cr} from the relation (9) we obtain in this
case

4. Conclusion

It is possible to perform an estimation of the
concentration of harmful chemical substances in
the soil using the above-described mathematical
model of the natural degradation of substances.
This model is a simple model and it does not take
into consideration another factors influencing re-
duction of concentration of chemical matters in
the soil. Despite of this the presented model is ap-
plicable during a standard practice. The suggested
model is theoretical, however in the case of it's
experimental verification it could be defined the
accuracy of the model for description of real pro-
cesses. Such verification could be also important
for development of a more accurate mathematical
model in the future.

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