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FOLIAR-AND SOIL-APPLIED BIOSTIMULANTS FOR BELLPEPPERS IN FLORIDA

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ABSTRACT. The response of bellpeppers (*Capsicum annuum* L.) to 11 foliar – or soil – applied biostimulants was evaluated for several seasons in west-central Florida (lat. 27° 30' N; long. 82° 30' W). The bellpeppers were grown with the full-bed polyethylene mulch production system with micro-(trickle-) irrigation. Among the products investigated were seaweed extracts, aketo-carboxylic- and amino-acids, cytokinins, mono-nitrophenolates, hydrogel polymers, as well as various macro – and micronutrients in water-soluble forms. The compounds were applied according to manufacturers' recommendation. A few of the biostimulant products increased early (first two harvests) yield and fruit size compared to water control. The beneficial effect of biostimulants, however depended on the bellpepper cultivars. The biostimulant products had very little, mainly non-significant, effect on macro-and microelemental concentrations in pepper leaves and fruits