



GRACEnet

(Greenhouse Gas Reduction through the Agricultural Carbon Enhancement network)

An assessment network of soil carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas mitigation through agricultural management

Presented by: Ronald Follett

**The Soil-Plant-Nutrient Research Unit
Agricultural Research Service of USDA
Fort Collins, Colorado**



GRACEnet-Leadership

Ron Follett --- Fort Collins, CO

- Steve DelGrosso --- Fort Collins, CO
- Jane Johnson --- Morris, MN
- Tim Parkin --- Ames, IA
- Jeff Smith --- Pullman, WA

Acknowledgement

- To all GRACEnet scientists for their hard work and creative approaches.
- To those GRACEnet scientists who contributed slides for this presentation.

Why is GRACEnet needed?

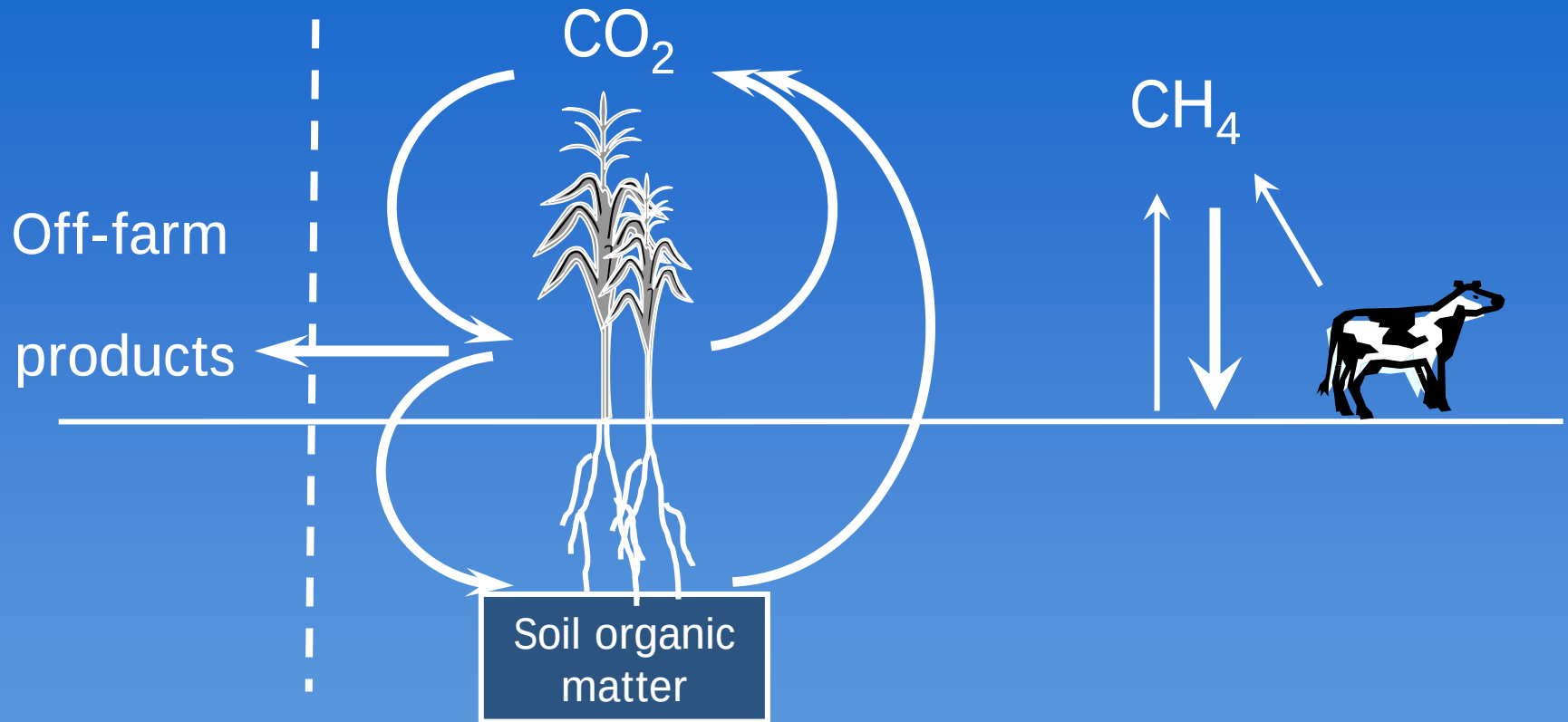
- Observed and predicted climate change is attributed to atmospheric enrichment by greenhouse gases (especially CO₂, N₂O, and CH₄.).
- These increases are largely from burning of fossil fuels, land use, livestock husbandry, and cement manufacturing.
- The atmospheric C pool increased by ~ 3.2 to 3.3 Pg/yr* during the 1980s and 1990s but by 4.1 Pg/yr between 2000 and 2005 (IPCC, 2007).
- Atmospheric CO₂ has increased from 280 ppm (pre-industrial) to 380 ppm by 2006.

* 1pg = 10¹⁵g = 1,000 MMt = 1,102 MT

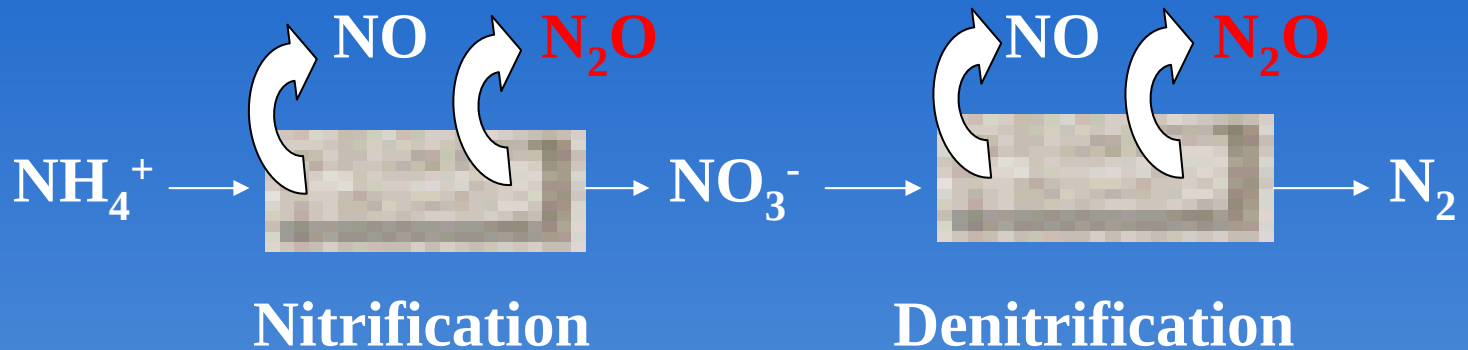
Population Growth

- World population is projected to increase from 6.5 billion in 2007 to 9.5 billion by 2050.
- Increasing populations require energy and plant nutrient inputs to produce the food they need.
- Efficiency per unit input of water, land area, and energy-based input will be of great importance.
- Agriculture is highly important for providing solutions to these urgent issues.

Carbon cycle on agricultural land



Gaseous Emission of N



Conceptual model of regulation of N trace gas production via nitrification and denitrification:

(Firestone and Davidson, 1989)

OBJECTIVES of GRACEnet

- 1. Evaluate the soil C status and direction of change of soil C in existing typical and alternative agricultural systems.**
- 2. Determine net GHG emission (CO_2 , CH_4 and N_2O) of existing and alternative agricultural systems.**
- 3. Determine the environmental effects (water, air and soil quality) of new agricultural systems developed to reduce GHG emission and increase soil C storage.**

APPROACH AND PROCEDURES

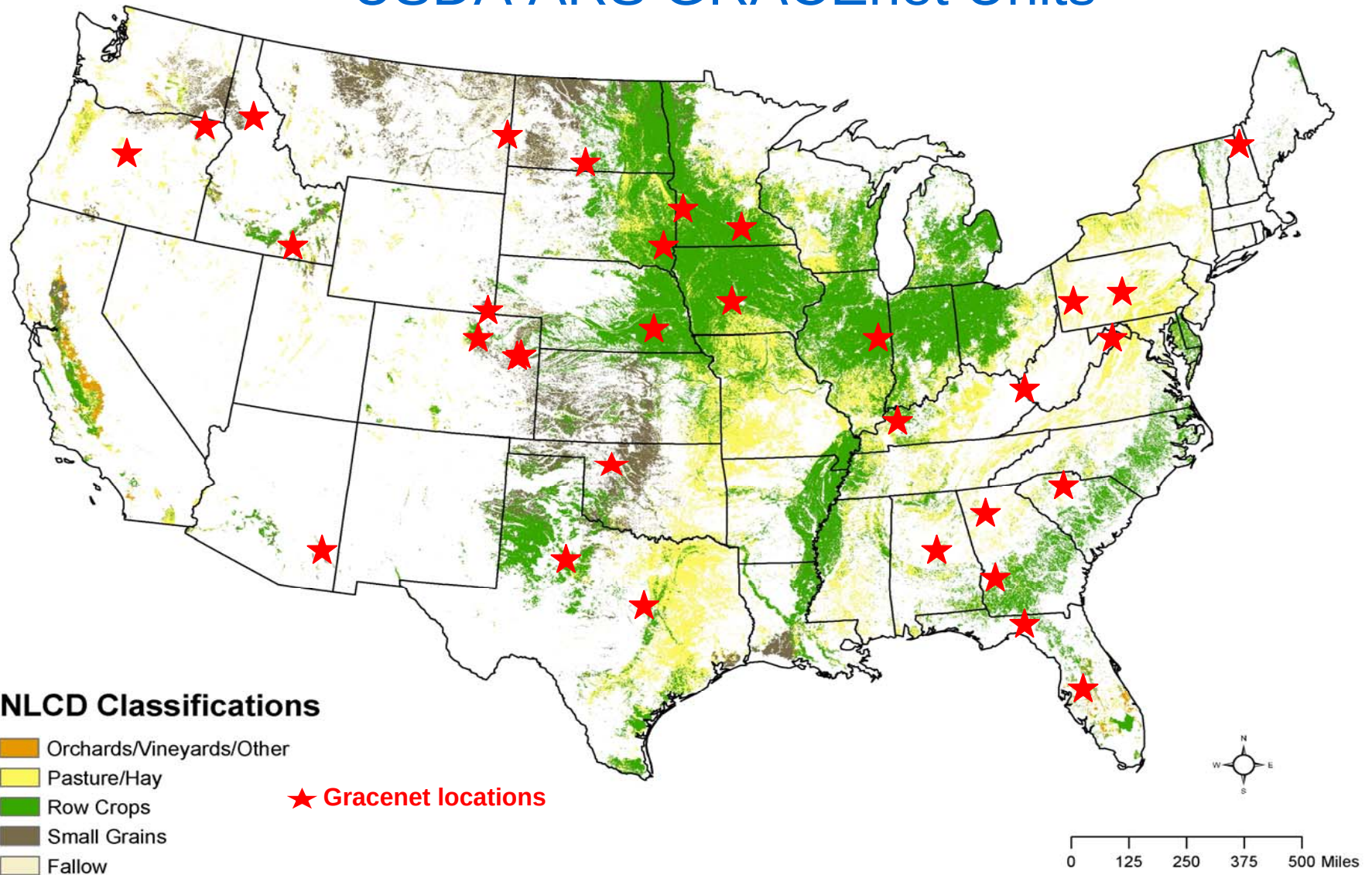
Approach: The GRACEnet experimental concept is based on four location-specific scenarios or treatments:

1. Business as usual
2. Maximizing C sequestration rate
3. Minimizing net GHG emission. This system differs from #2 because N_2O and CH_4 emission must also be considered.
4. Maximizing environmental benefits.

Products:

1. A national database of GHG flux and C storage.
2. Regional and national guidelines of management practices.
3. Development and evaluation of computer models.
4. Summary papers for use by action agencies and policy makers.

USDA ARS GRACEnet Units



What I will cover

- There is way too much material to do justice to, which is good!
- For various GRACEnet locations, I will provide some information about:
 - Experimental resources (land, equip, etc.).
 - Some of the experiments being conducted.
 - Very little about, but some results.

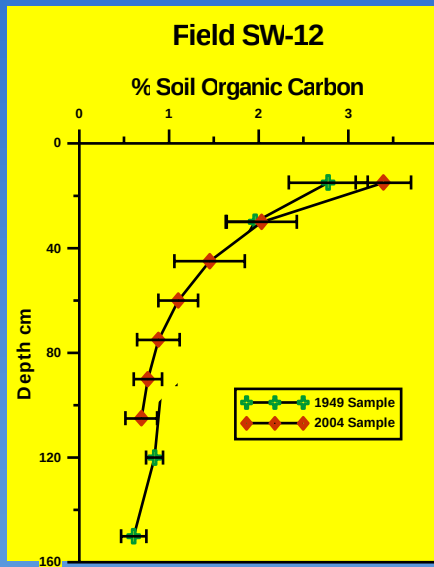
APPROACH AND PROCEDURES

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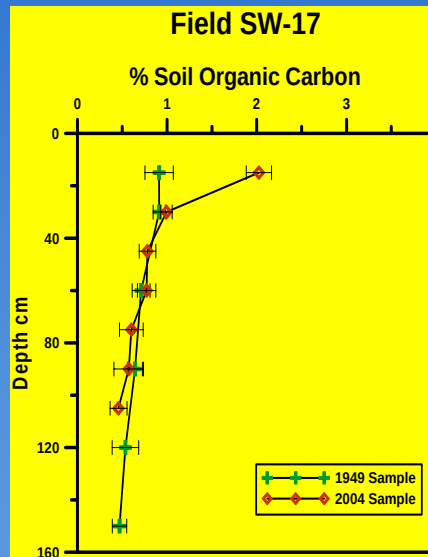
Soil organic carbon contents sampled in 1949 (after intensive conventional tillage in the production fields) and 2004 (with indicated management) in Central Texas. Note that management changed the mass and distribution of carbon, and that modern conventional tillage resulted in a small increase in soil carbon content.

Native pasture



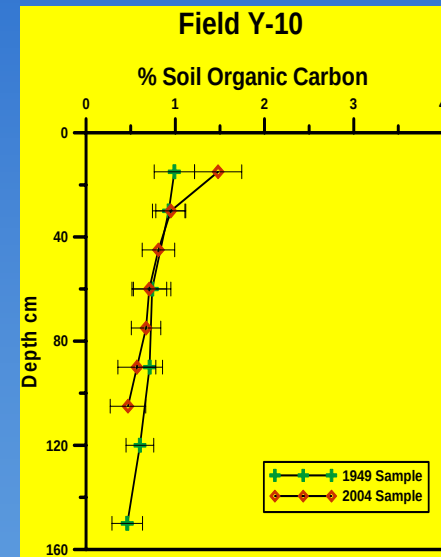
Native Pasture / Meadow

Coastal Bermuda Grass since 1949



- Prior to 1949, Cotton and Corn were the predominate crops
- Sprigged to Coastal Bermuda Grass in 1949

Agricultural production



In row crop and small grain production prior to and after 1949

Soil carbon accumulation and CO₂ flux in a maize, wheat, soybean rotation

A GRACEnet project in the Crop
Systems and Global Change Lab,
Beltsville, MD

Automated soil CO₂ flux chamber



Automated soil CO₂ flux system, spring 2008 (prior to soil preparation for planting)



Results to date

- Tillage affects bulk density, but not yet on soil carbon or crop yield (2 years)
- N affects crop yield (maize and wheat)
- N and tillage affects soil CO₂ flux (spring 2008) (prior to soil preparation for planting)

UNIT: North Central Agricultural Research
Laboratory (NCARL)

LOCATION: **Brookings, SD**

PRIMARY CONTACT:

Mike Lehman, Soil Microbiologist

OTHER SCIENTISTS:

Shannon Osborne, Agronomist

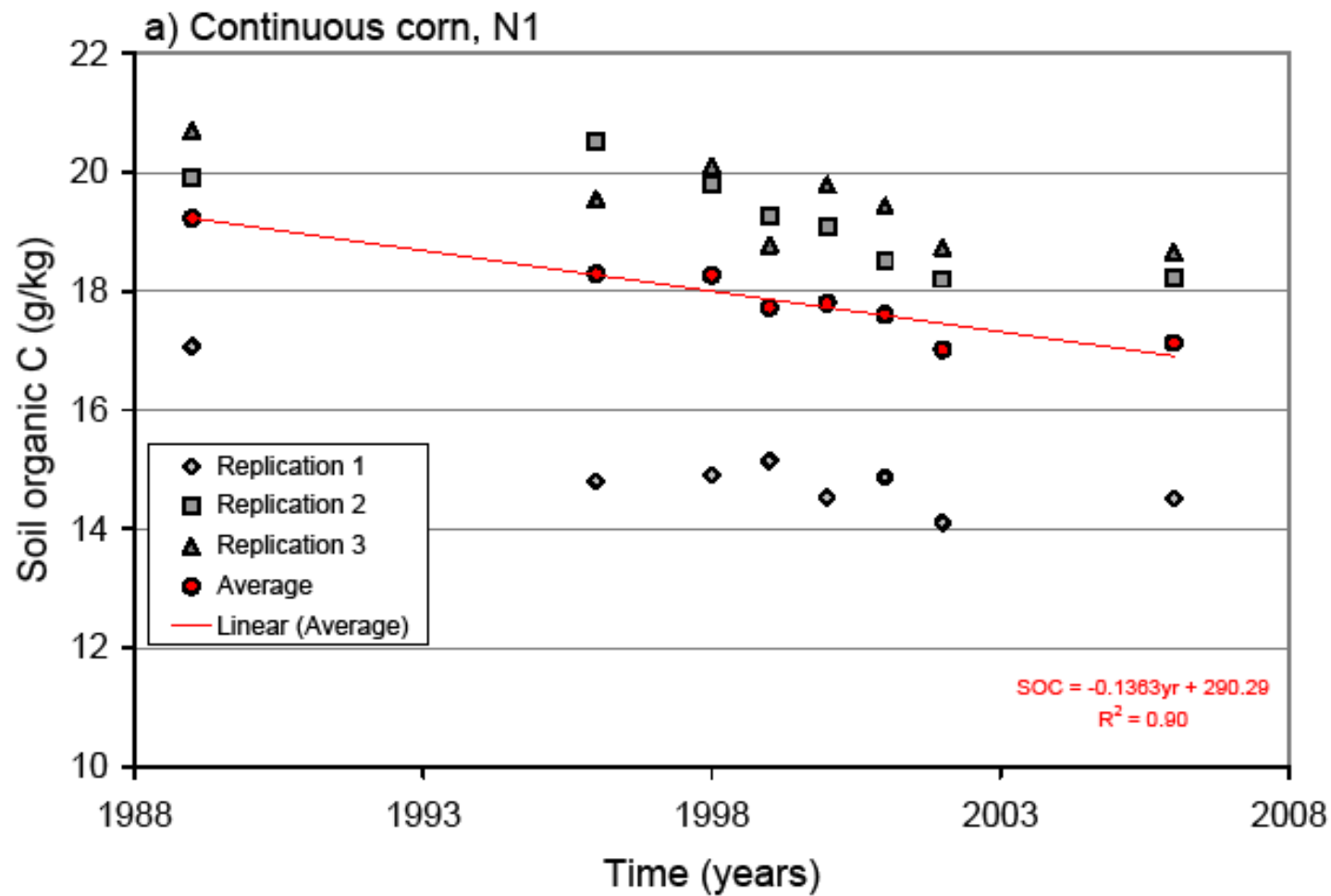
Joe Pikul, Soil Scientist

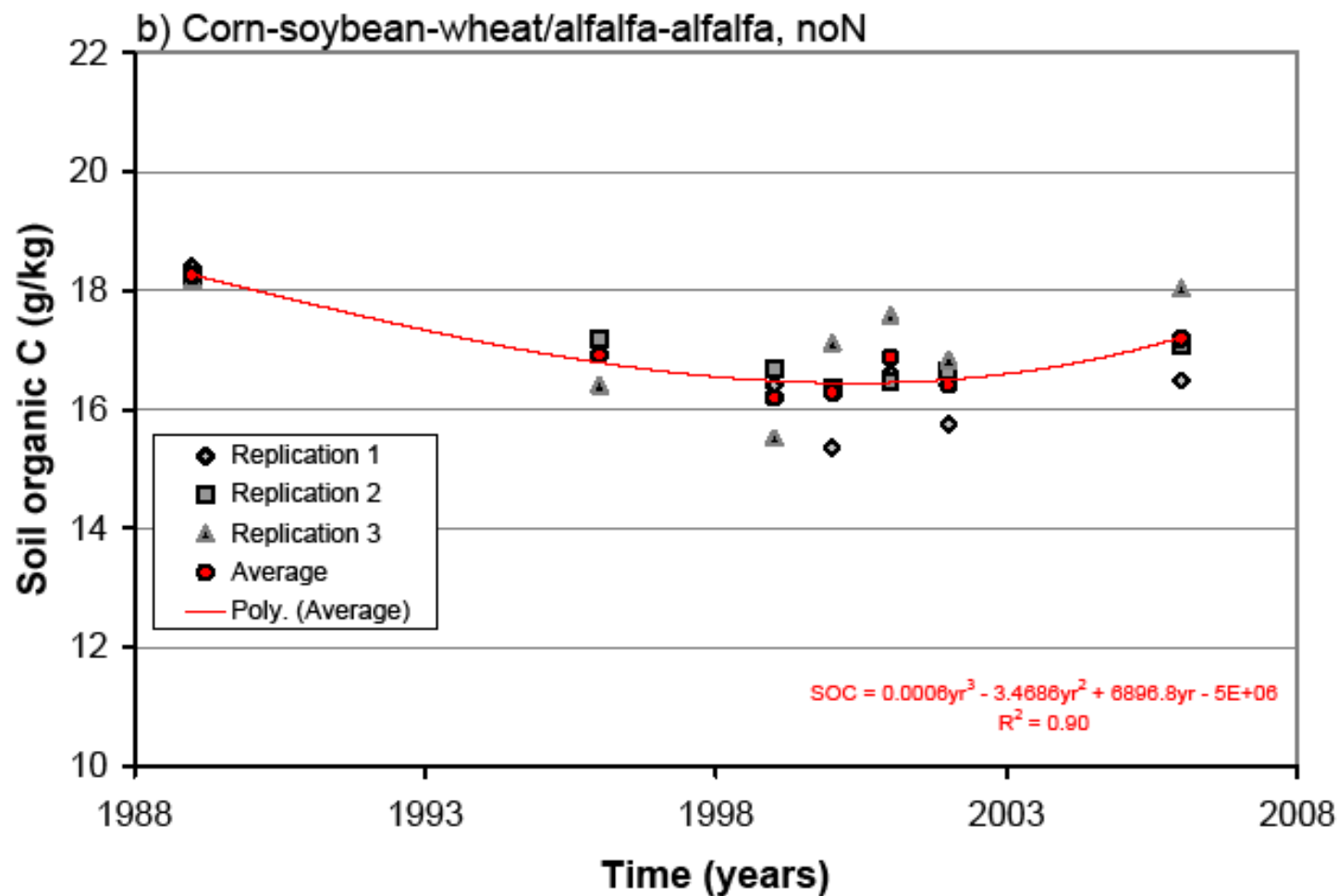


Location Description

- **Upper Mid-West Corn Belt**
- **Mixed-Grass Prairie**
- **Mean Annual Temperature 8 °C**
- **Mean Annual Precipitation, 58 cm**
- **Barnes Sandy Clay Loam**
- **All Plots Non-Irrigated**







Central Great Plains Research Station Akron CO

Primary GRACEnet contact : Maysoon Mikha

Other scientist involved : Merle Vigil

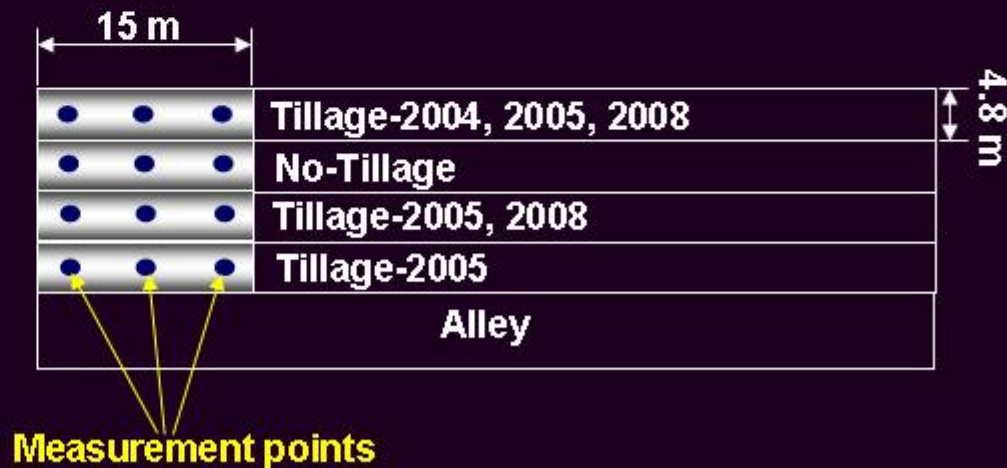
Site Description :

- Long-term no-tillage experiment (Farmer field)
- Treatments: Sweep tillage after 12 years of no-tillage

- 1 - year tillage
- 2 - year tillage
- 3 - year tillage
- No - tillage

• C Sequestration

- Soil C
- CO₂ flux (using Licor)



CO₂ Flux Apparatus



Columbia Plateau Conservation Research Center Pendleton, OR

Dryland Cropping Systems:

GRACEnet experiment

USDA-ARS-CPCRC
Pendleton, OR

Pendleton, OR

Typical cropping system: wheat-fallow, conventional tillage.

- Maximizing C sequestration rate:
 - a. Economically viable: wheat-fallow under sweep tillage.
 - b. Technically feasible: continuous winter wheat under direct seeding tillage management.
- Minimizing net greenhouse gas emissions: winter wheat-winter wheat-sudan sorghum rotation, direct seeding.



ARS, Sidney, MT

Tillage, Cropping Sequence,
and Nitrogen Fertilization
Effects on Dryland Soil
Carbon Storage and
Greenhouse Gas Emission

Primary Contact: Upendra Sainju

Other Scientists Involved: Jay Jabro, Thecan Caesar, and
William Stevens



Fig. 1. Tilled and non-tilled malt barley plots (top left) and collection of gas from the static gas chambers (top right). Malt barley at 120 and 0 kg N ha⁻¹ (bottom left) and pea and malt barley (bottom right).

Product 2: CO₂ emission

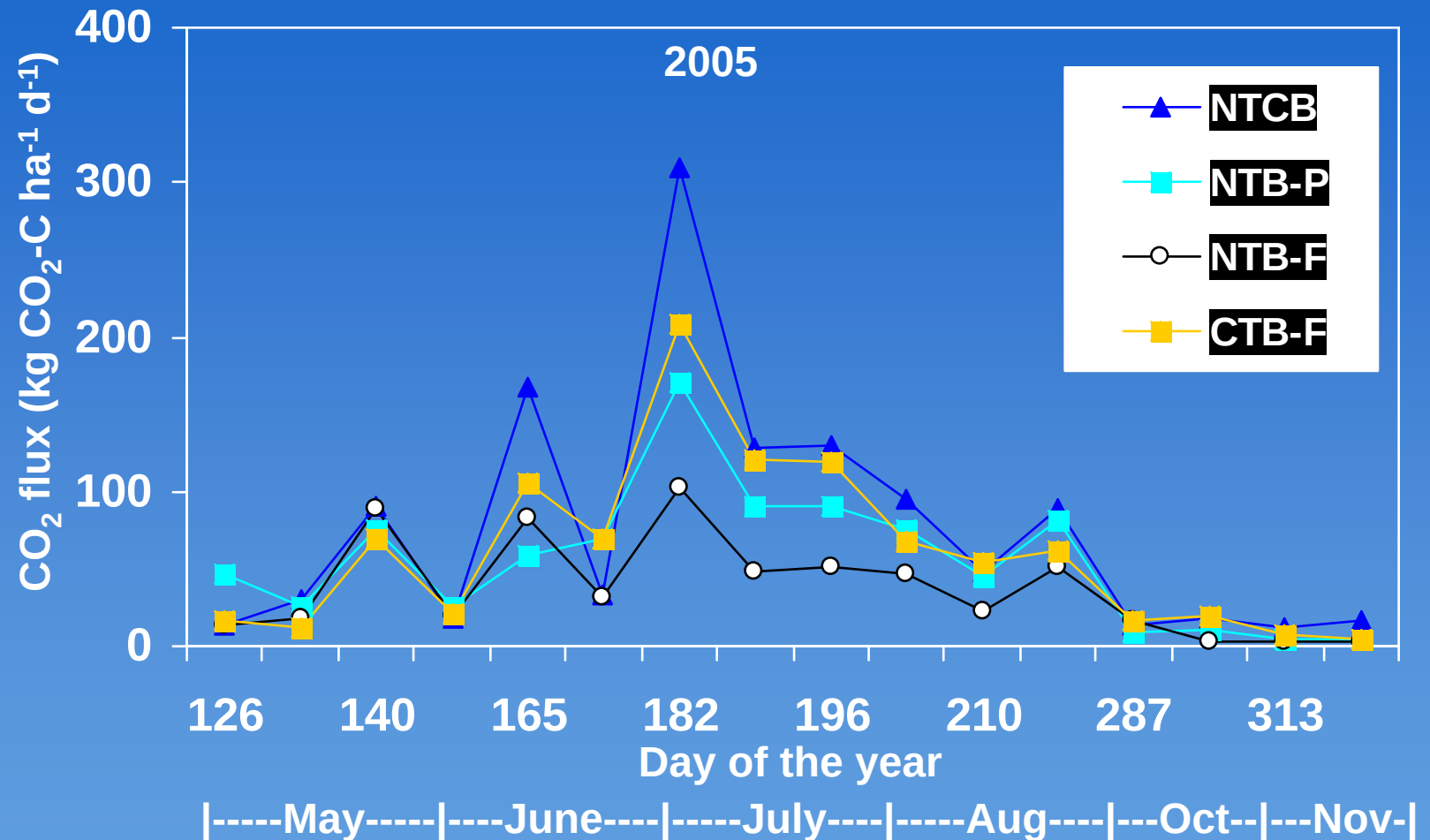
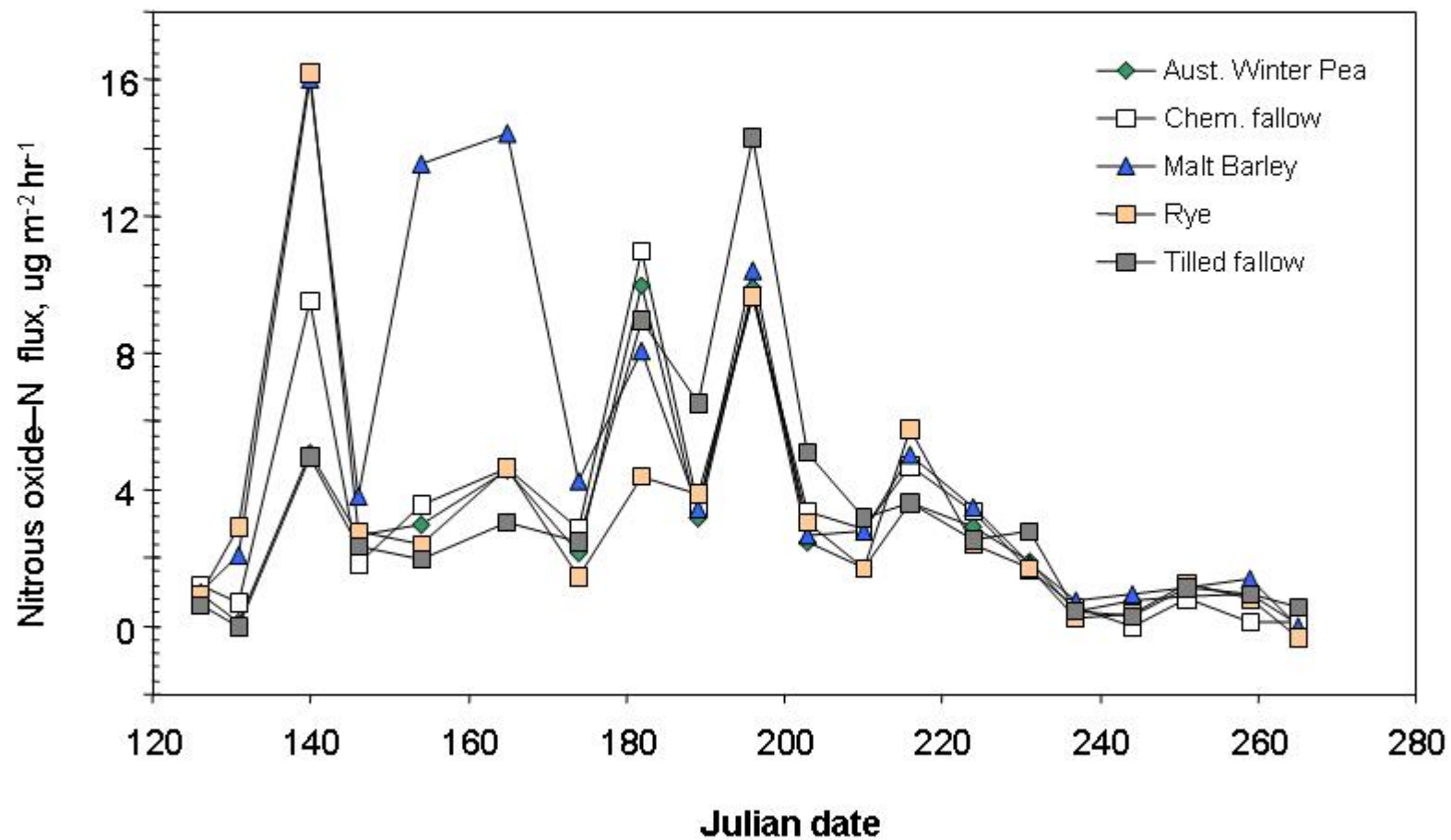


Fig. 2. Carbon dioxide emission as influenced by tillage and cropping sequence in 2005. NTCB represents no-tiled continuous malt barley; NTB-P, no-tiled malt barley-pea; NTB-F, no-tiled malt barley-fallow; and CTB-F, conventional-tilled malt barley-fallow.

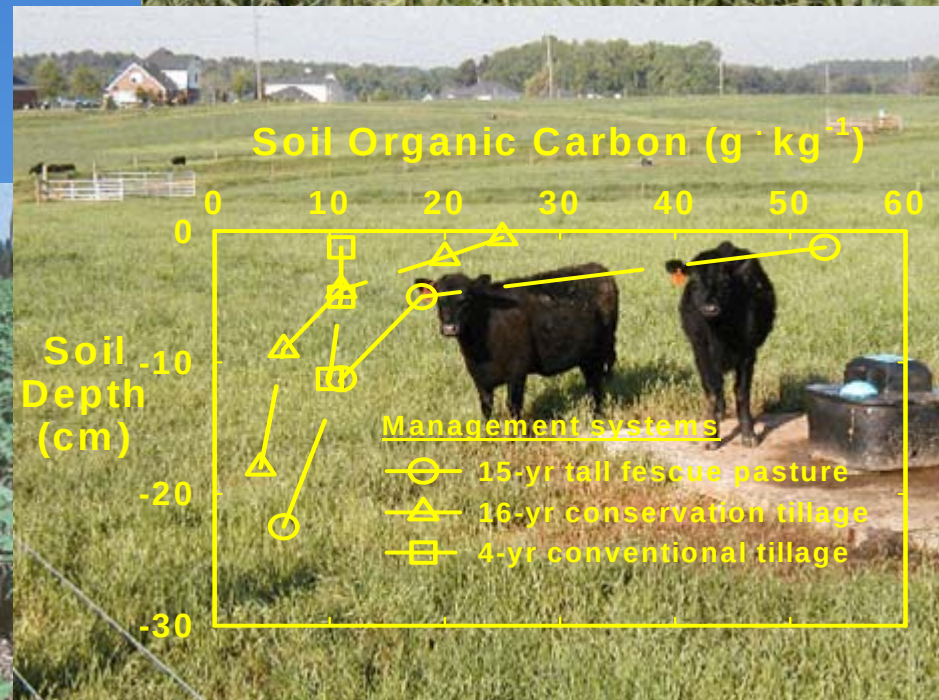
Nitrous oxide emission as affected by cover crops - Sidney, 2005



GRACEnet – Watkinsville, GA

Database of soil C and trace gas flux for crop, pasture and rangeland systems in the USA.

- Long-term studies of:
- Pasture (nutrient source x endophyte x grazing)
- Cropland (tillage x nutrient source; cover crop management)
- Integrated crop-livestock (tillage x N source x cover crop management)



GRACEnet – Watkinsville

Associated Water Quality Studies



Dawson Field Grazing Study



Pasture-Crop Rotation Study



P 1-4 Watershed Study



Water Quality Plots

RU- Microbial biophysics and residue chemistry ERRRC, Wyndmoor PA

- Primary: D. Douds
- Others: K. Nichols
(ARS Mandan, ND)
- The Rodale
Institute:
 - Paul Hepperly
 - Rita Seidel
- Scenarios
 - Conventional
 - Organic, legume
cover
 - Organic, manure



Background

- **Hypothesis:** Mycorrhizal fungi contribute significantly to carbon sequestration in organically farmed soils.
- Mycorrhizal fungi produce glomalin, a glycoprotein resistant to degradation
- Relative to the conventional, organic farming systems of the Farming Systems Trial have:
 - Greater populations of Mycorrhizal fungi
 - More soil C

Influence of pecan-derived biochar on chemical properties of a Norfolk loamy sand soil (Florence, SC)

Jeff Novak¹, Warren Busscher¹, Don Watts¹ and Mohamed Ahmedna²

¹USDA-ARS-CPRC and ²NC A&T

March, 2008



Increasing SOC contents

- Deep-rooted cover crops (rye, etc.)
- Conservation tillage.



Norfolk soil physico-chemical properties



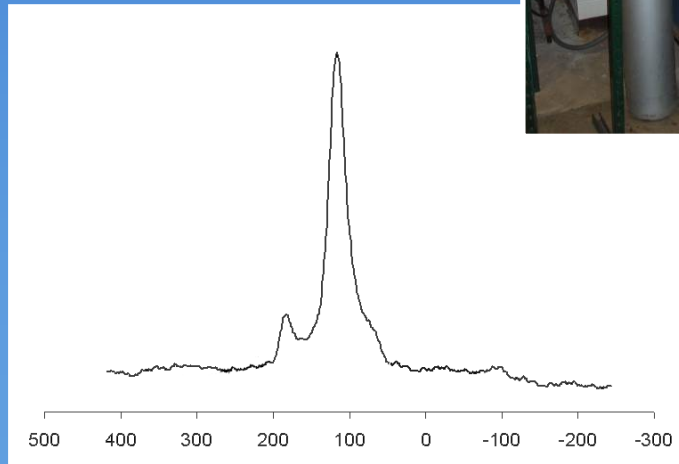
Norfolk loamy sand

- well-drained, marine sediments
- 0 to 15 cm Ap horizon
- underlain by a 15 to 30 cm
- deep E horizon
- E horizon lacks structure and forms
- a hard layer (limits root penetration)

% SOC in Norfolk profile	
<u>Depth (cm)</u>	<u>% SOC</u>
0 to 15	0.39
15 to 30	0.18
30 to 45	0.13
45 to 60	0.14
60 to 75	0.16
70 to 90	0.14

Properties of pecan-derived biochar

- Created biochar from pecan-shells by oxidation to 700°C
- Biochar is 88 % OC, 0.4 % N (220:1, C:N ratio), pH of 7.5
- Most C (69 %) is recalcitrant because it is distributed in polymerized aromatic ring structures



Norfolk soil with and without biochar



Norfolk soil + 0% biochar



Norfolk soil + 1% biochar

Soil C under Improved Grasses on in the Southern Plains Mixed Grass Prairie (Woodward, OK)

1. Compare soil carbon storage in long-term stands of improved grasses to that under the native prairie and cropland.
2. To evaluate plant rooting characteristics and soil C storage in long-term grassland fields.
3. To evaluate above ground biomass productivity of native grasses as potential biomass fuel sources.

Grass species	Scientific name	Origin	Estab	Years
Sand Bluestem	<i>Andropogon hallii</i> Hack.	Native	1980	28
Switchgrass	<i>Panicum virgatum</i> L.	Native	1980	28
Weeping lovegrass	<i>Eragrostis curvula</i> (Schrad.)	Introd.	1958	50
Native Prairie		Grazed		100's+ +
Native Prairie		UnGrazed		50+ +
Wheat	<i>Triticum aestivum</i>	Cropland		28







APPROACH AND PROCEDURES

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National Soil Tilth Lab

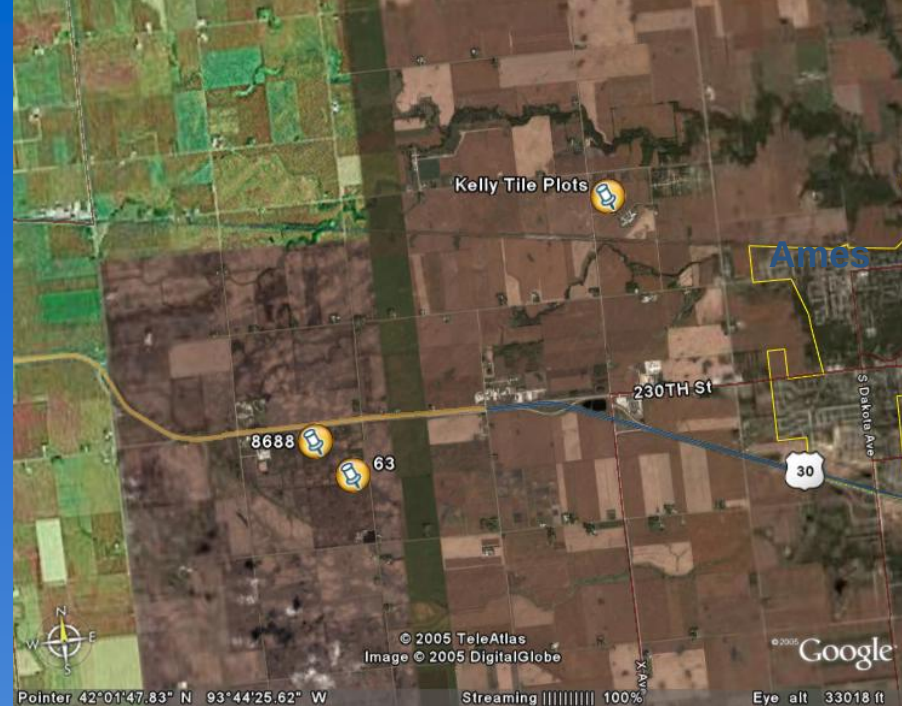
GRACEnet Contact: Tim Parkin

Other Scientists: J. Hatfield, T. Kaspar
J. Prueger, T. Sauer, J. Singer

Site description: Central Iowa

Corn/Soybean

AMES, IA



Methods

Soil Sampling: April

First Year : 0-90 cm

Subsequent Years: 0-30 cm

Variables: O.C, T.C, T.N., E.C.,
pH, NO₃, NH₄, W.C., Texture

Plant Sampling:

October: Yield, Above Ground Biomass

April: Surface Residue

Trace Gas: N₂O, CH₄

- 2 chambers/plot (in- and between rows)
- March through Sept. 1x / week
- Oct. through Dec. 2x / week
- Jan., Feb., 1x / month

- 30 cm diameter vented chambers
- Gas samples at 0, 15, 30, and 45 minutes

Ancillary measurements:

- soil water content (0-6cm)
- temperature (air, 5 cm)
- Data loggers – temperature:
air, 5, 10 cm (hourly).



Other Studies

Temporal variability of
 N_2O emissions using
automated chambers



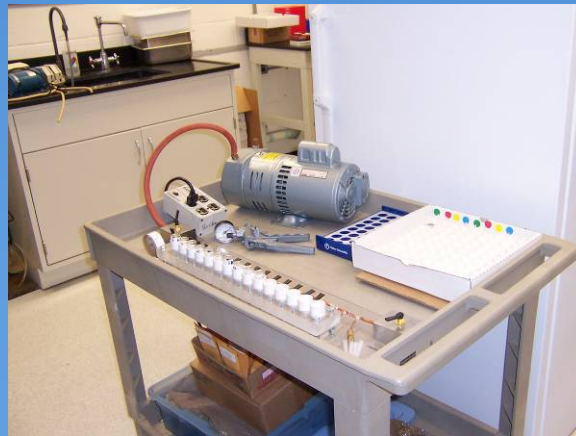
Annual C balance in corn/soybean fields using eddy covariance



Primary contact: Jane Johnson;
Others: Don Reicosky, Sharon Weyers
Morris, MN



**North Central Soil Conservation
Research Laboratory**



Manure and tillage effects on carbon loss and water fluxes using eddy covariance techniques

D. C. Reicosky¹, J. M. Baker², T. E. Ochsner², S. Lachnicht Weyers¹



¹ USDA-ARS, North Central Soil Conservation Research Laboratory,
803 Iowa Ave., Morris, MN 56267; Phone: 320-589-3411, ext. 144;
E-mail: don.reicosky@ars.usda.gov

² USDA-ARS and University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN

Nitrogen Fertilization Effects on Nitrous Oxide Emissions from Irrigated Cropping Systems

Fort Collins, CO

Ardell D. Halvorson, Soil Scientist

Steve Del Grosso, Soil Scientist

Curtis A. Reule, Soil Scientist

USDA-ARS, Fort Collins, CO

Email: ardell.halvorson@ars.usda.gov

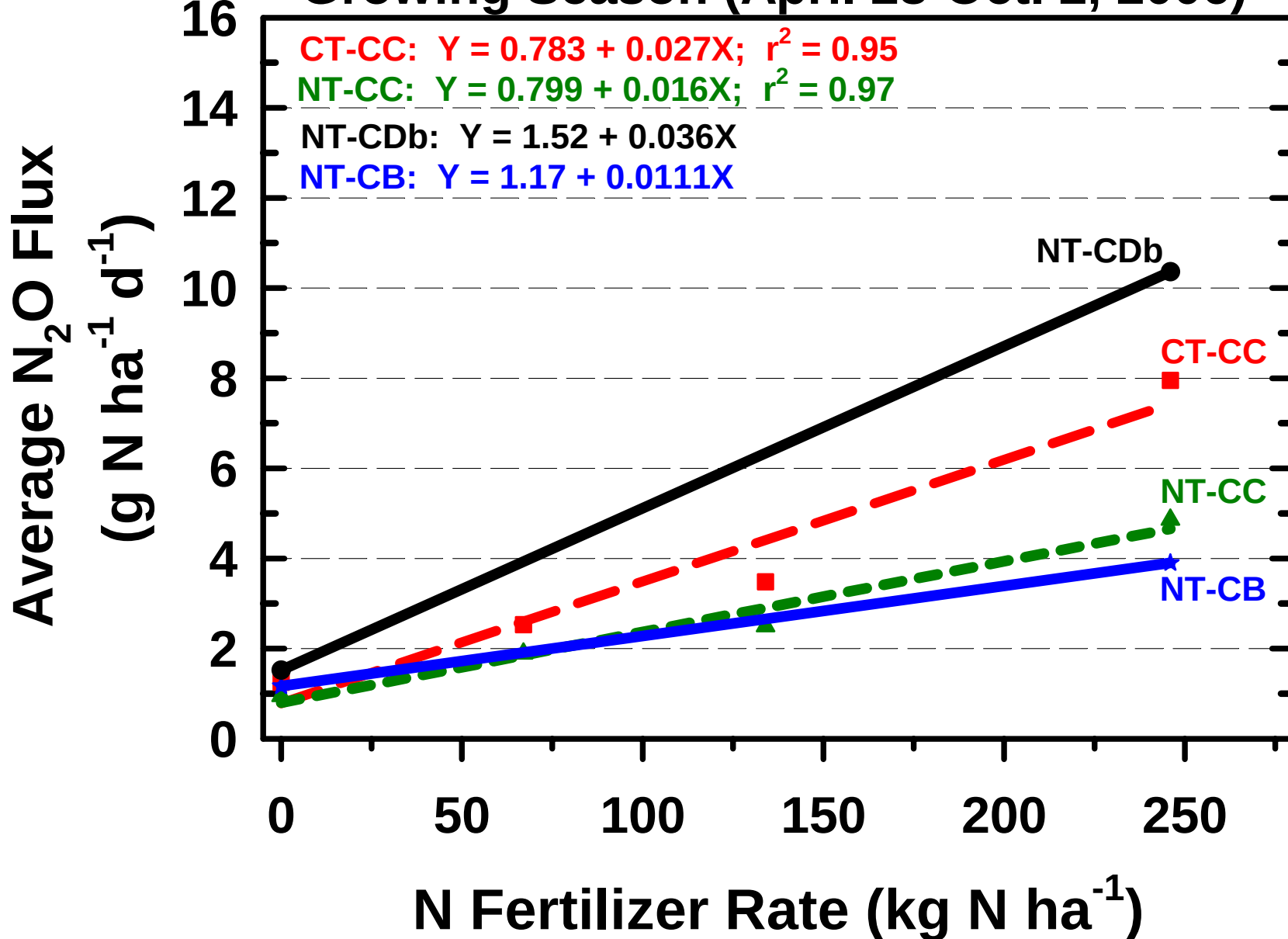


Conventional Till

No Till



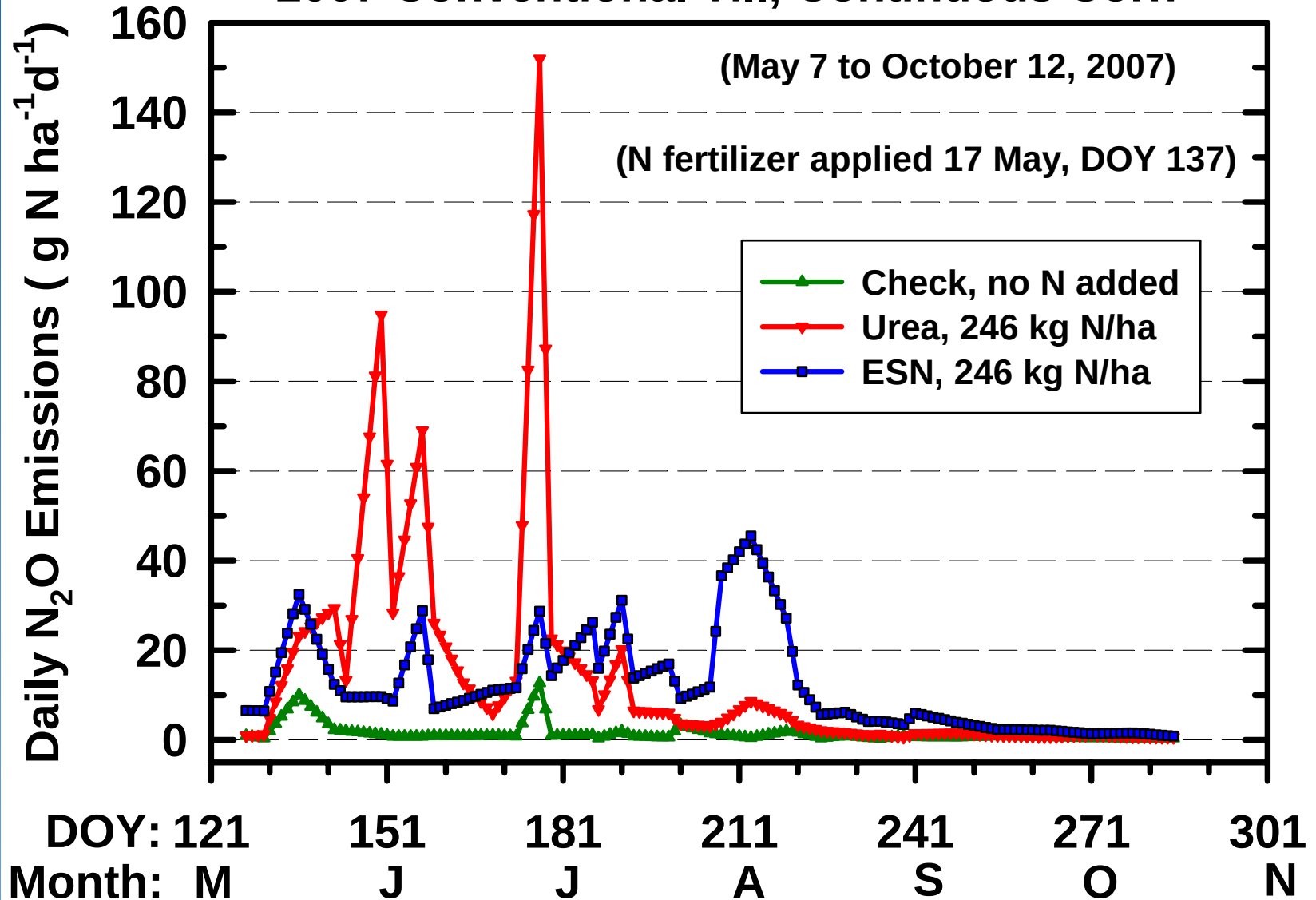
Growing Season (April 28-Oct. 2, 2006)



2007 Conventional Till, Continuous Corn

(May 7 to October 12, 2007)

(N fertilizer applied 17 May, DOY 137)



St. Paul, MN

Site description: Glacial Outwash Plain. Silt loam soil
- Primary land use in the region : Corn/soybeans



John Baker,
ARS



Rod Venterea,
ARS



Tyson Ochsner,
ARS



Tim Griffis, U of M
collaborator

R3 plots

Chamber measurements of N_2O , CH_4 , & CO_2 fluxes
Also soil temperatures and water contents, yield, NO_3 leaching



Field-Scale Treatments

Eddy covariance measurements of CO₂ exchange, ET
Also soil water & heat flow, some C isotope research

1. **Business as usual** – Corn/soybeans, chisel/disk tillage



2. **C sequestering** – Minimum tillage, rye cover crop after corn



3. **Optimized for total env. Benefit** – corn / kura clover



Production System affects soil C stocks and physical properties (**Orono, Maine**)

	Soil C	POM-C	Stable Aggregates
	%	% of C	0.5 - 2 mm
Barley-Potato	2.43	19.8	54
Soil Conserving	2.34	21.4	60
Soil Improving	3.18	34.7	62

Experiment started in 2004, soil samples from May 2007



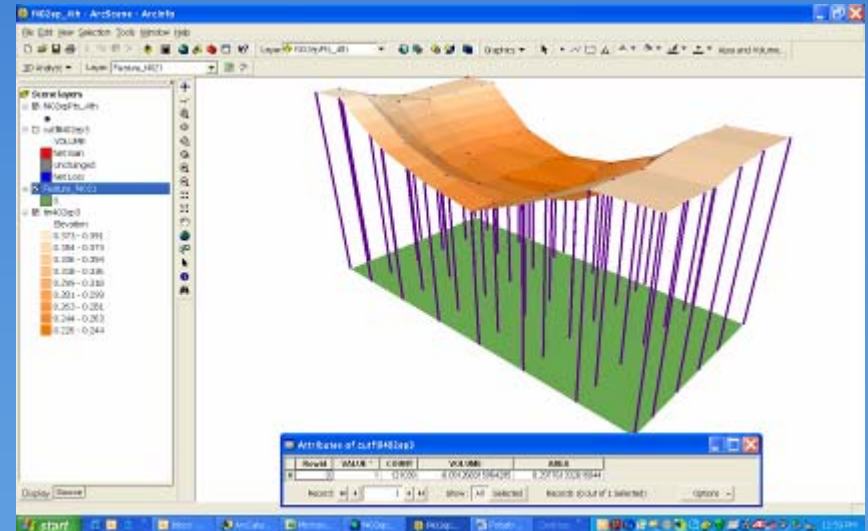
Chamber in Barley



Chamber in Potato

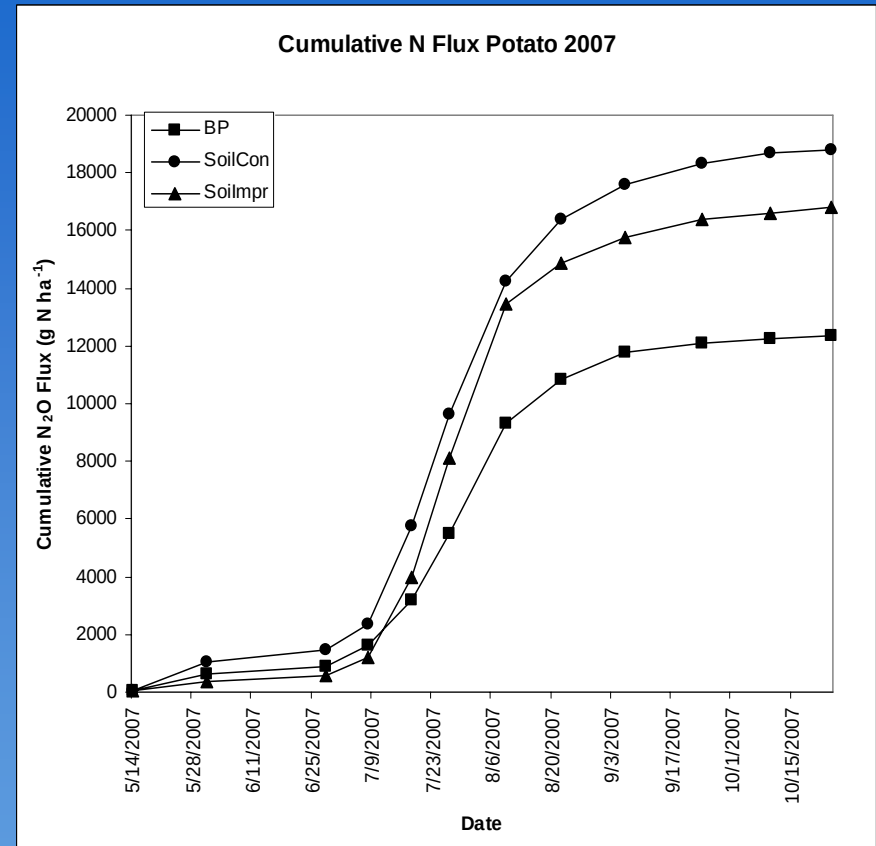
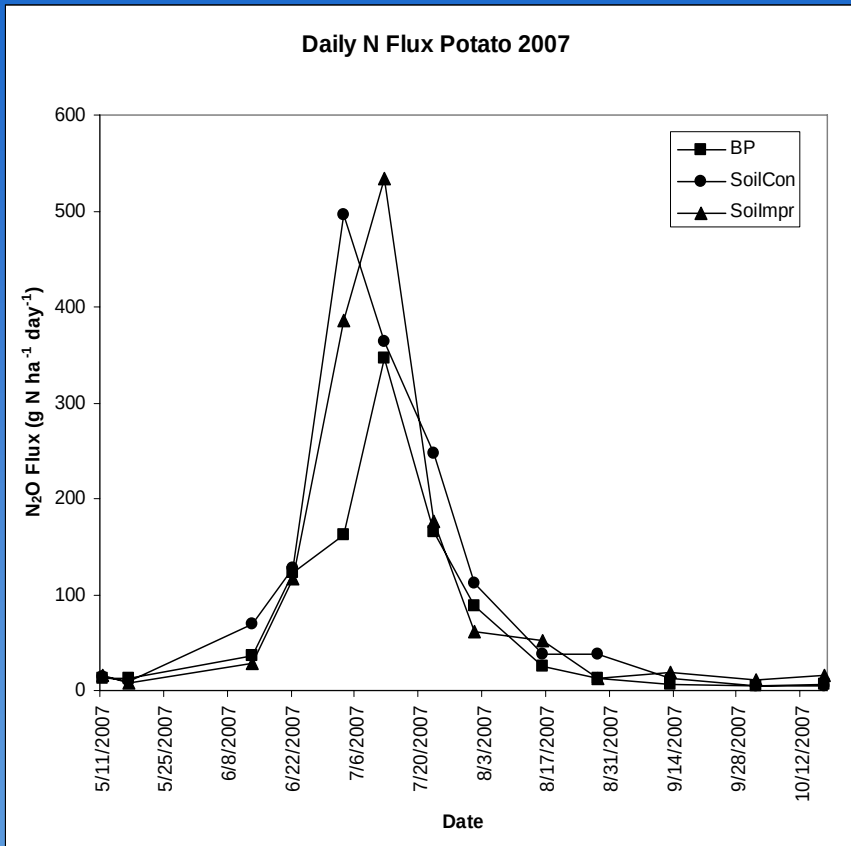


Micro-topography



Headspace Estimation

N₂O from potato – Presque Isle ME



BP = 2-yr Barley-Potato rotation

SoilCon = 3-yr Barley-Sod-Potato rotation

SoilImp = 3-yr Barley-Sod-Potato rotation, with compost each year

**UNIT: North Central Agricultural
Research Laboratory (NCARL)
LOCATION: Brookings, SD**

PRIMARY CONTACT:

Mike Lehman, Soil Microbiologist

OTHER SCIENTISTS:

Shannon Osborne, Agronomist

Joe Pikul, Soil Scientist



Site 2: Long-term Alternative Rotations

GRACEnet Objective: net GHG emissions

GRACEnet Measures: CO₂, CH₄, N₂O



- ✓ Established 2000
- ✓ ten 4-yr rotations, each phase
- ✓ 4 reps each, random block

GRACEnet Treatments:

- ❑ Business as usual: corn/soy
- ❑ Env. benefit: corn/pea/ww/soy; corn/oats/ww/soy

CO₂ Flux (mg CO₂-C/m²·h)

- Summer: 40 – 160
- Fall: 10 - 20
- Winter: <10
- Spring: up to 100 at planting

N₂O flux

- generally neutral
- spring positive flux

Methane flux

- slight sink



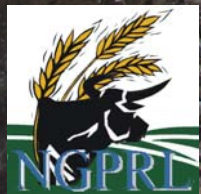
GRACEnet Location Synopsis

Northern Great Plains Research Laboratory

Mandan, ND

**Mark Liebig, Rebecca Phillips, David Archer,
Scott Kronberg, Jason Gross**

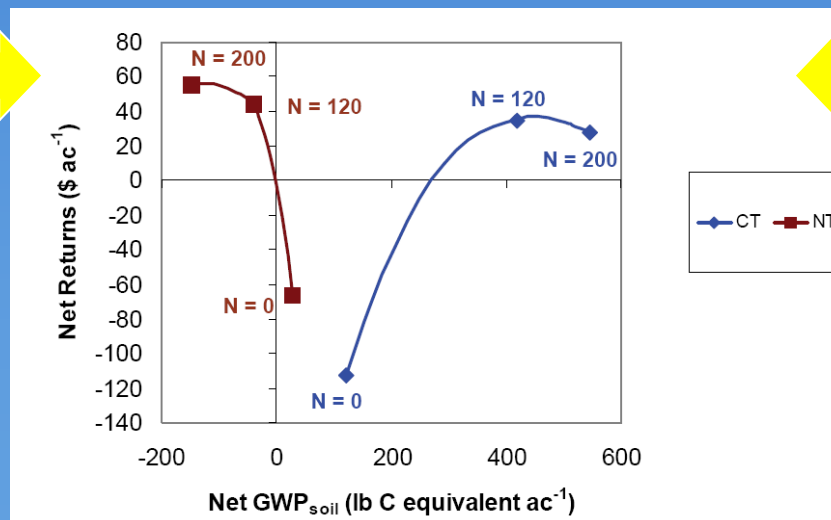
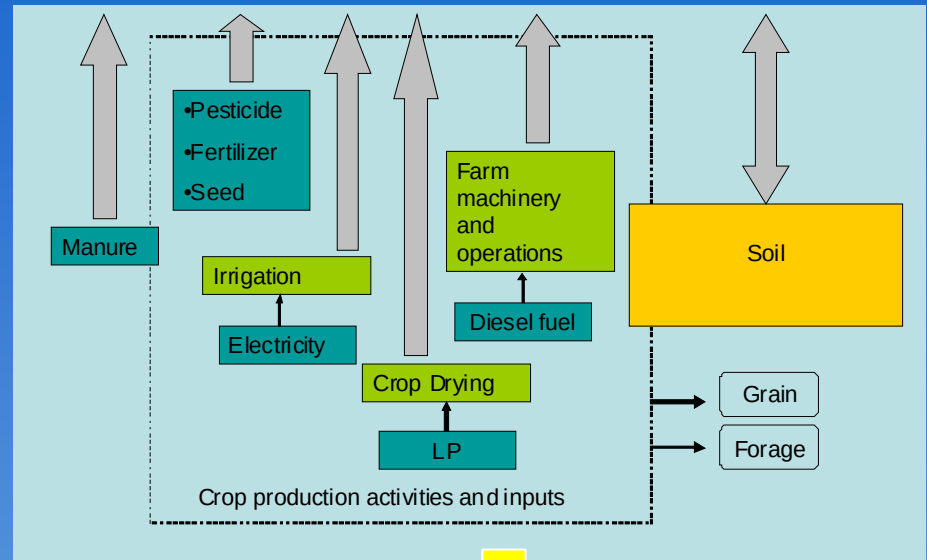
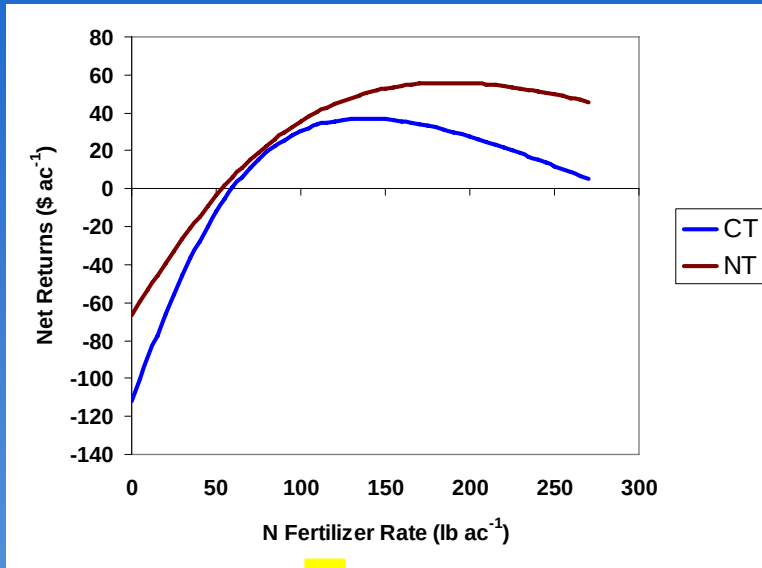
May 2008



Field Evaluations (GHG flux, SOC) NGPRL (Liebig, Phillips, Gross, Kronberg)

- Long-term grazing and cropping systems (Liebig, Gross)**
- N₂O emissions from late-autumn manure application to cropland (Phillips)**
- Hydropedologic vegetation zones in wetland landscapes (Phillips)**
- N₂O emissions as influenced by Tannin-affected cattle urine (Liebig, Kronberg)**

Economic / Life-cycle Analysis NGPRL (Archer)



Greenhouse Gas Emissions following Application of Swine Effluent by Different Methods

Bowling Green, KY

- **Research conducted at Animal Waste Management research Unit**
 - **Karamat Sistani and Jason Warren**

Objective:

- **Evaluate greenhouse gas emissions from swine effluent after injection, surface application or application in combination with aeration in a no-till corn grain production system.**



Injection

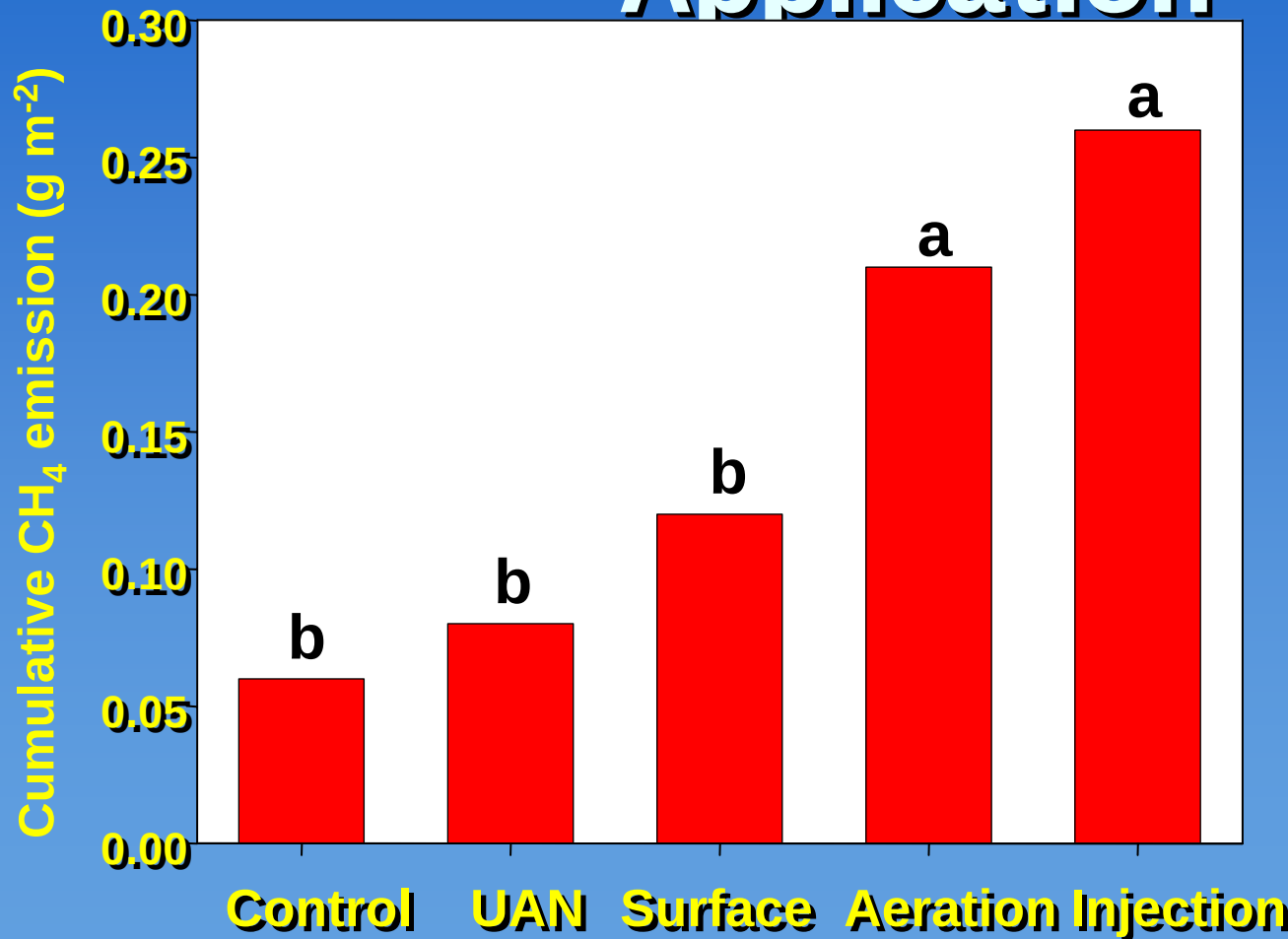


Aeration



Surface application

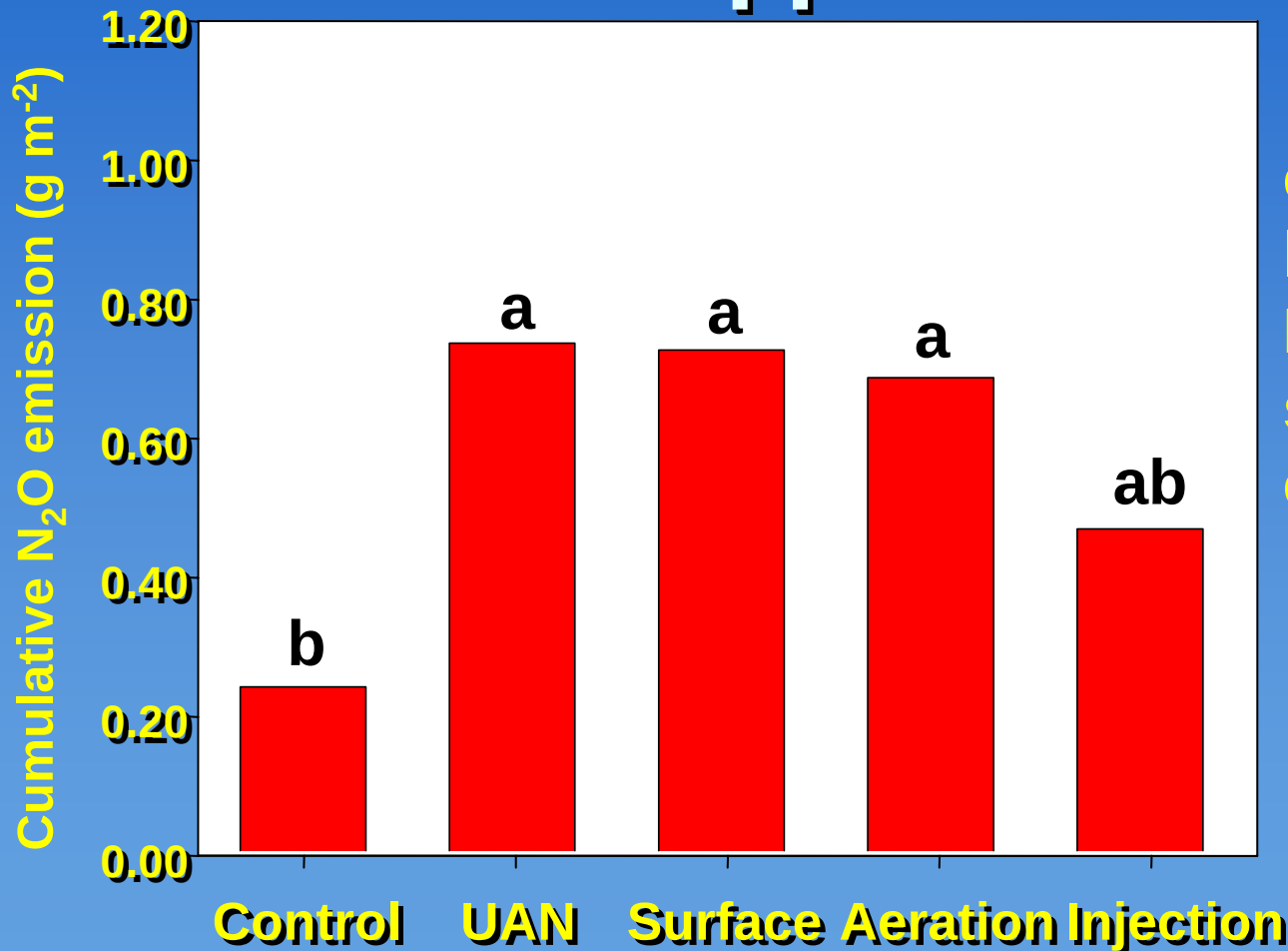
Cumulative CH₄ Emissions during 141 Days after Application



➤ Incorporation appears to promote CH₄ emissions

➤ CH₄ emission from effluent incorporation was elevated for approximate 7 Days after application.

Cumulative N₂O Emissions during 141 Days after Application



➤ Injection of swine effluent appears to limit the amount of N₂O emitted from soil applied swine effluent

Southwestern Rangelands and Greenhouse Gas (Tucson & Maricopa, AZ)

- Southwestern rangeland soils, despite arid soil conditions, cycle vast amounts of trace gases.
- Such rangelands cover more than 200 million ha of land area in the Western US.
- Summer 2004 and 2007: Explored CH₄ dynamics in response to cattle grazing and mesquite control



Live Mesquite

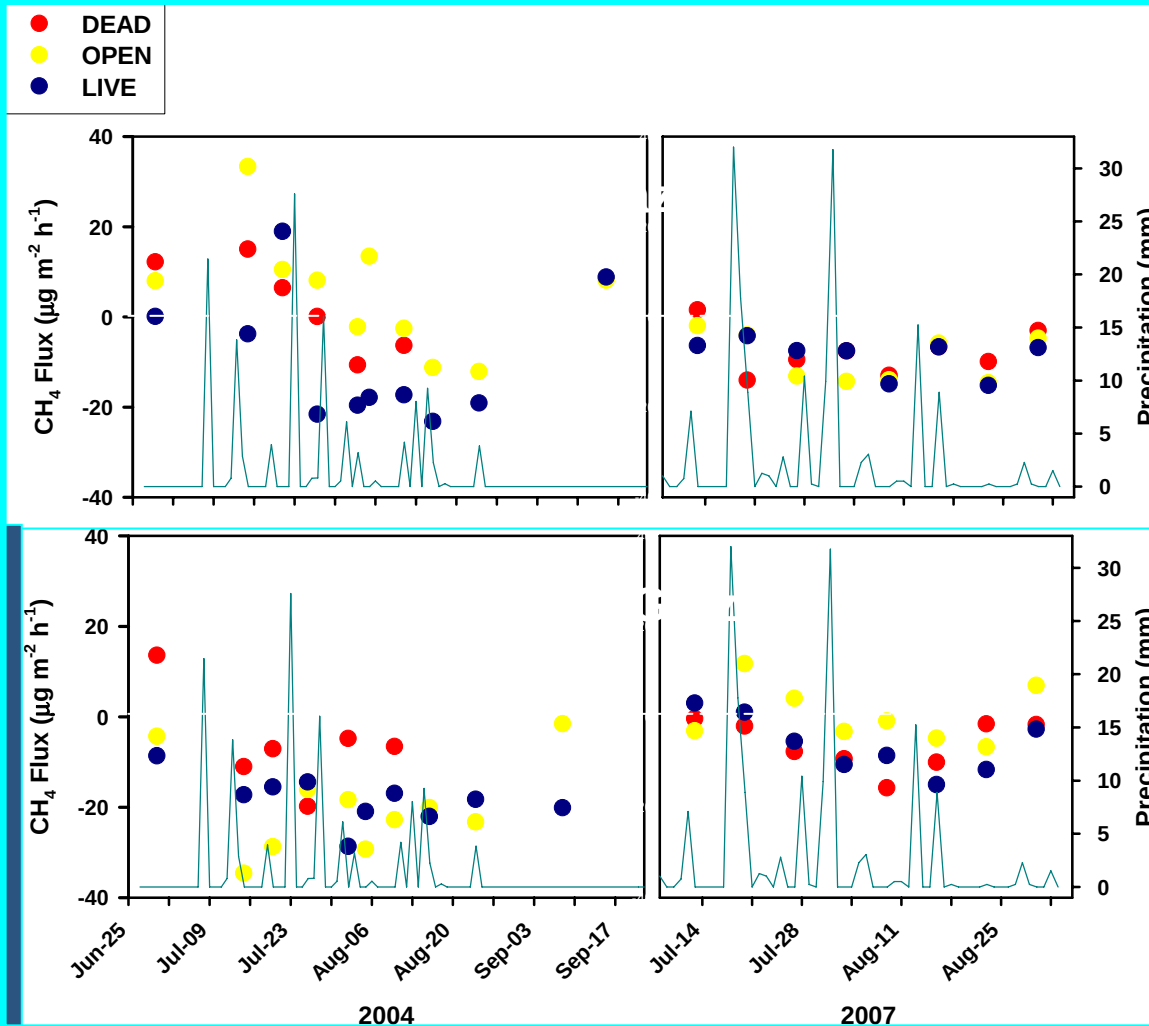


Dead Mesquite



Open Site

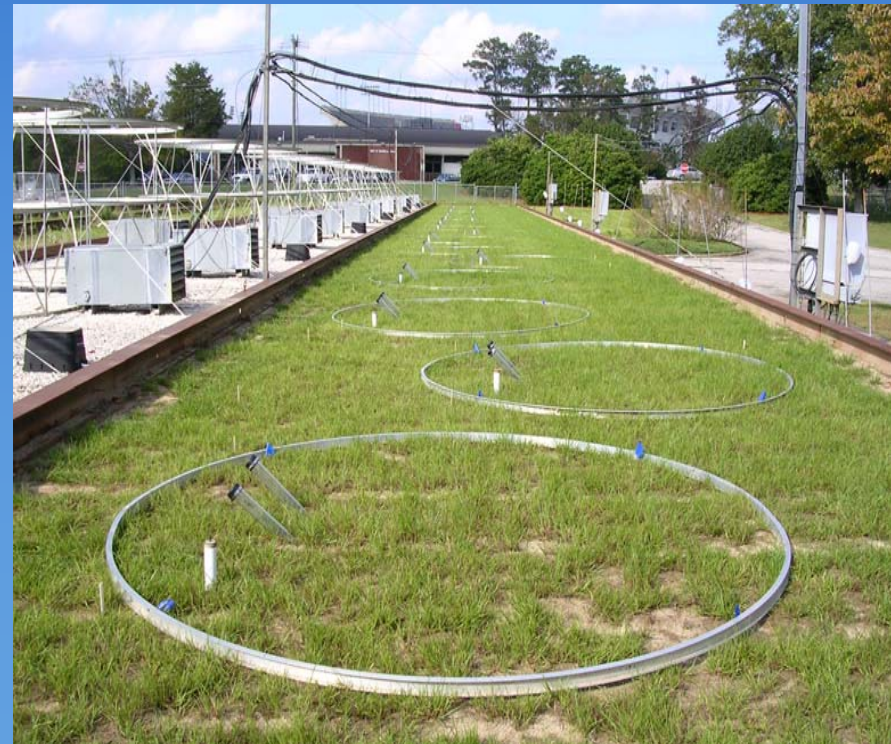
Results: CH₄ Surface Flux



- Early monsoon CH₄ production in all sites.
- Non-grazed sites (bottom) consumed CH₄ at a 2X the rate of the grazed sites (top).
- The strongest contributors to the CH₄ sink were the living mesquite sites.

Effects of Elevated Atmospheric CO₂ on Agriculture (Auburn, AL)

- Pasture Systems of the Southeast
- Conventional vs. Conservation Cropping System



Results

- **Soil CO₂ efflux increased by both elevated CO₂ and conservation management**
- **In both cases, soil CO₂ efflux increased by approximately 50 %**

Development of a Subsurface Applicator for Poultry Litter

Alabama
Arkansas
Kentucky
Maryland
Mississippi



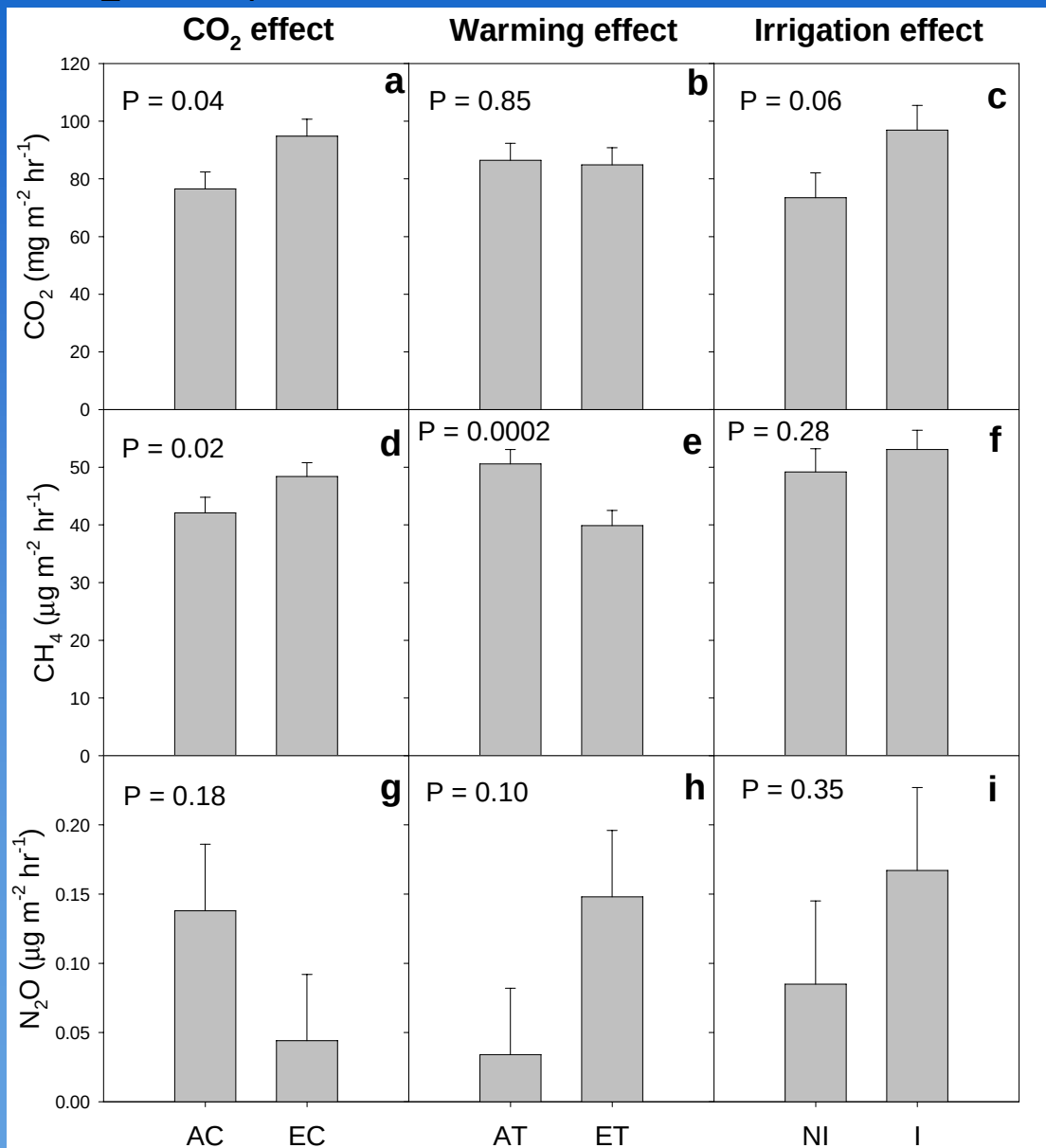
Prairie Heating And CO₂ Enrichment (PHACE) – Cheyenne, WY

- Semi-arid rangeland system
 - Annual precip: 388 mm
- CO₂ treatment: ambient vs 600 ppm
- Warming treatment: day: +1.5 °C during the day and +3 °C during the night
- Irrigation treatment: three irrigations during the growing season, 20 mm each



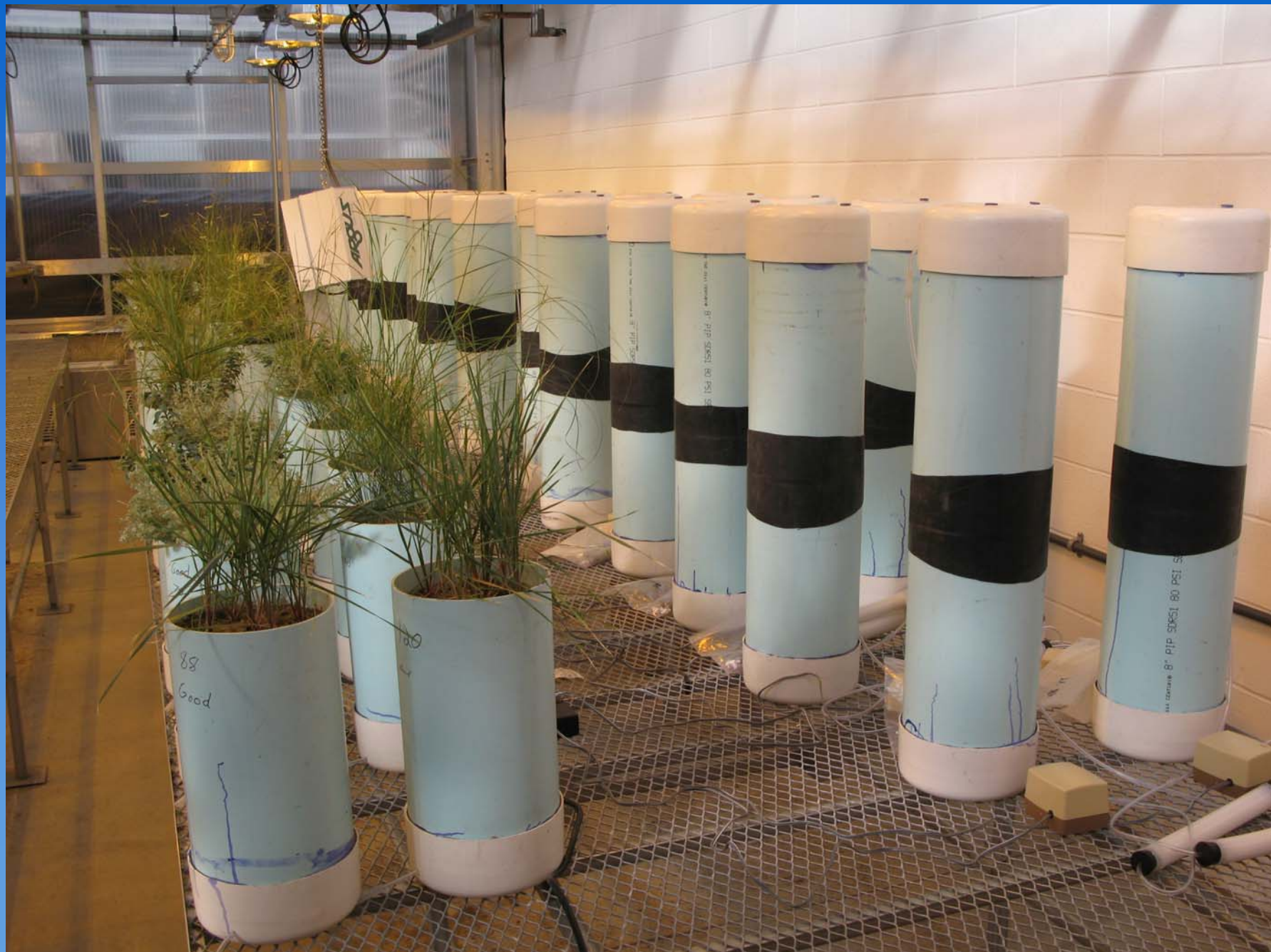
Photo: Elizabeth Pruessner

CO₂ production and CH₄ consumption increases with elevated CO₂. CH₄ consumption decreases with warming.

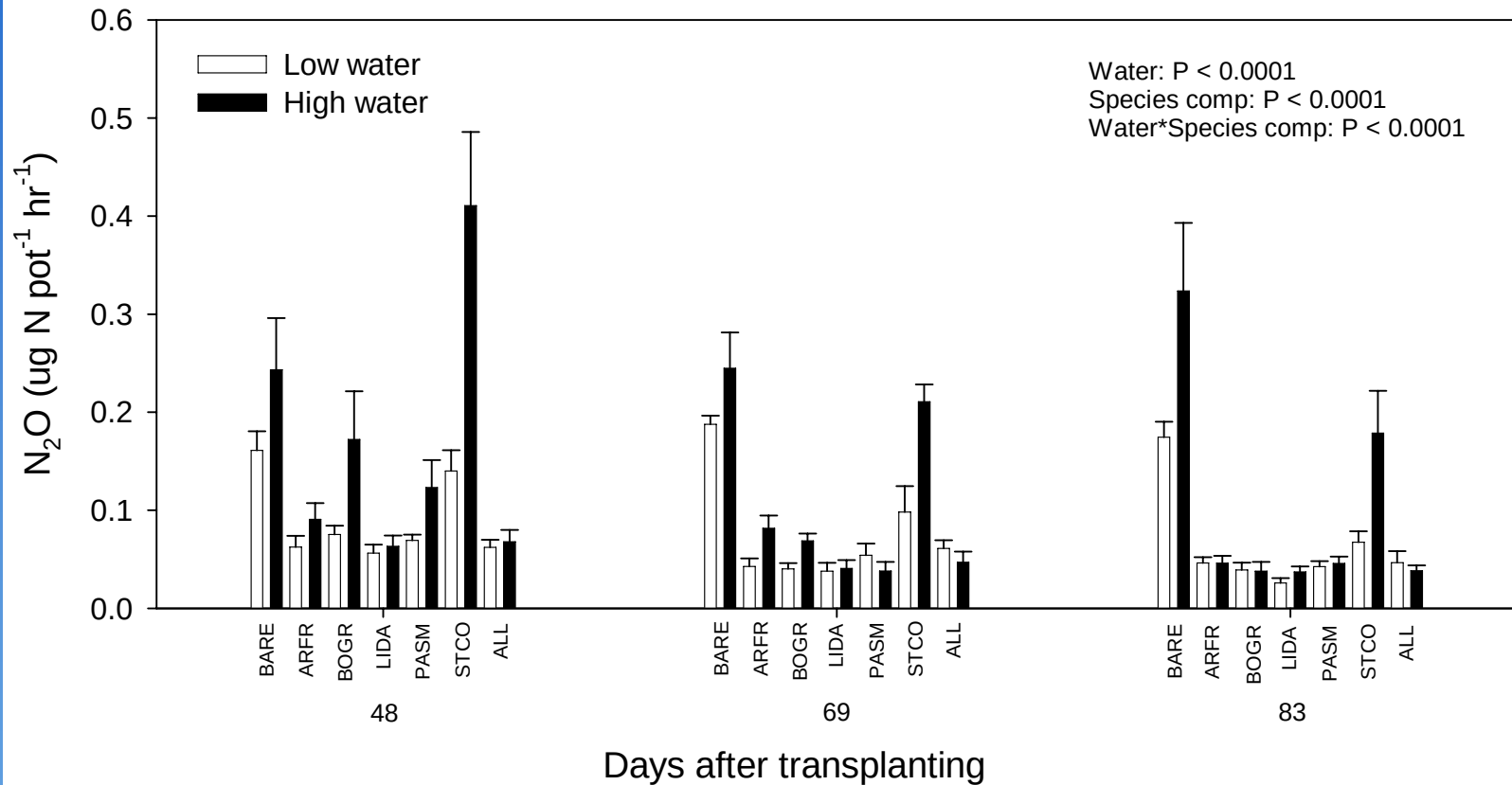


CO₂, water, and species composition effects on greenhouse gas fluxes – a greenhouse study of the effect of:

- Atmospheric CO₂ (380 vs. 750 ppm)
- Water availability (15 vs. 20%)
- Species composition: no plants, perennial grasses *Bouteloua gracilis*, *Pascopyrum smithii*, *Stipa comata*, the sub-shrub *Artemisia frigida*, and the forb *Linaria dalmaticai*, and all five together.



N_2O production significantly differed among species and interacted with water availability



University Park, PA

- Greenhouse gas emissions and C sequestration from:
 - Dairy forage system (corn-soybean-alfalfa)
 - Grazed pasture
 - Biofuel feedstock crops (switchgrass and reed canary grass)





PRODUCTS

- 1. A national database of GHG flux and C storage.**
- 2. Regional and national guidelines of management practices.**
- 3. Development and evaluation of computer models.**
- 4. Summary papers for use by action agencies and policy makers.**

Sub-networks

- For internal and external collaborations.
- To provide cross-regional data.
- To address specific questions that may be posed to the GRACEnet project.

A national database of GHG flux and C storage.

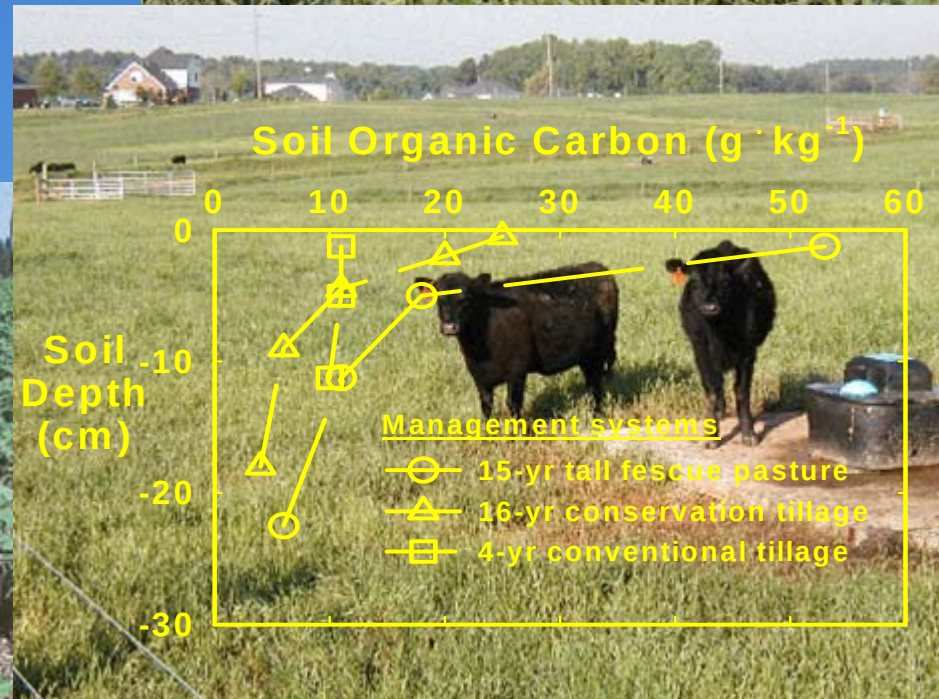
- **The data base format has been designed and GRACEnet locations have agreed upon it.**
- **The data base is up on a server site**
- **Experimental data is being solicited from all GRACEnet locations for input into the database as it becomes available.**

GRACEnet

Database of soil C and trace gas flux for crop, pasture and rangeland systems in the USA.

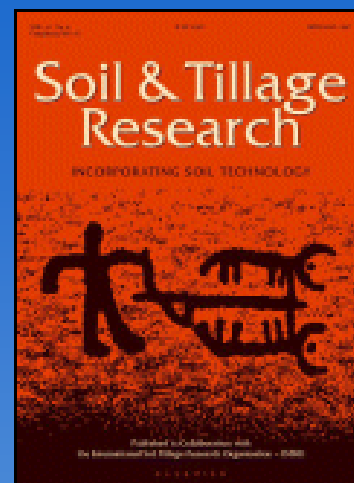
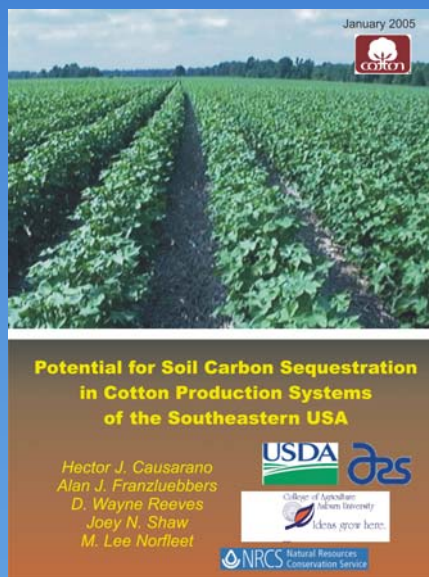
Long-term studies of:

- Pasture (nutrient source x endophyte x grazing)
- Cropland (tillage x nutrient source; cover crop management)
- Integrated crop-livestock (tillage x N source x cover crop management)



GRACEnet

Regional and national publications and guidelines of management that reduce GHG intensity, applicable for use by producers, federal and state agencies and C brokers.



Greenhouse Gas Contributions and Mitigation Potential in Agricultural Regions of North America

Special issue (Vol 83, August 2005)

ARTICLE IN PRESS

+ MODEL

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

ScienceDirect

ELSEVIER

Environmental Pollution xx (2007) 1–18

ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

www.elsevier.com/locate/envpol

Review

Agricultural opportunities to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions^{☆,☆☆}

Jane M.-F. Johnson^{a,*}, Alan J. Franzluebbers^b, Sharon Lachnicht Weyers^a, Donald C. Reicosky^a

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^b USDA-Agricultural Research Service, 1420 Experiment Station Road, Watkinsville, GA 30677-2373, USA

Received 4 June 2007; accepted 10 June 2007

Management options can be used to reduce agriculture's environmental impacts.

Lab publication commissioned by Cotton Incorporated (January 2005)

GRACEnet

Summary paper for action agencies and policy makers based on the current state of knowledge



AGRICULTURAL EXHAUST: A REASON TO INVEST IN SOIL

Alan J. Franzluebbers, Ronald F. Follett, Jane M.F. Johnson, Mark A. Liebig, Edward G. Gregorich, Timothy B. Parkin, Jeffrey L. Smith, Stephen J. Del Grosso, Michael D. Jawson, Dean A. Martens

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Volume 61, Number 3

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GRACEnet

Evaluation and modification of computer models created to assess management effects on net GHG emission.

Effectiveness of the soil conditioning index as a carbon management tool in the southeastern USA based on comparison with EPIC

D.A. Abrahamson, M.L. Norfleet, H.J. Causarano, J.R. Williams, J.N. Shaw, and A.J. Franzluebbers

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JOURNAL OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

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Simulating Field-Scale Soil Organic Carbon Dynamics Using EPIC

Soil Sci. Soc. Am. J. 71:1174-1185
doi:10.2136/sssaj2006.0356

SSSAJ: Volume 71: Number 4 • July–August 2007

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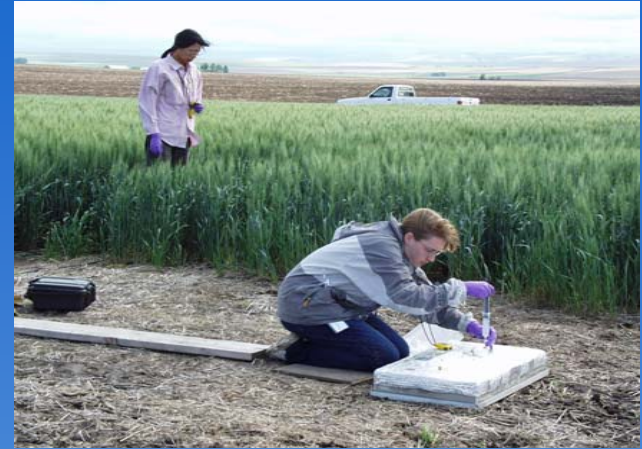
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R. César Izaurralde
Joint Global Change Research Institute
Pacific Northwest National Laboratory
Univ. of Maryland
College Park, MD 20740

CQESTR

Evaluation and modification of computer models created to assess management effects on net greenhouse gas emissions.



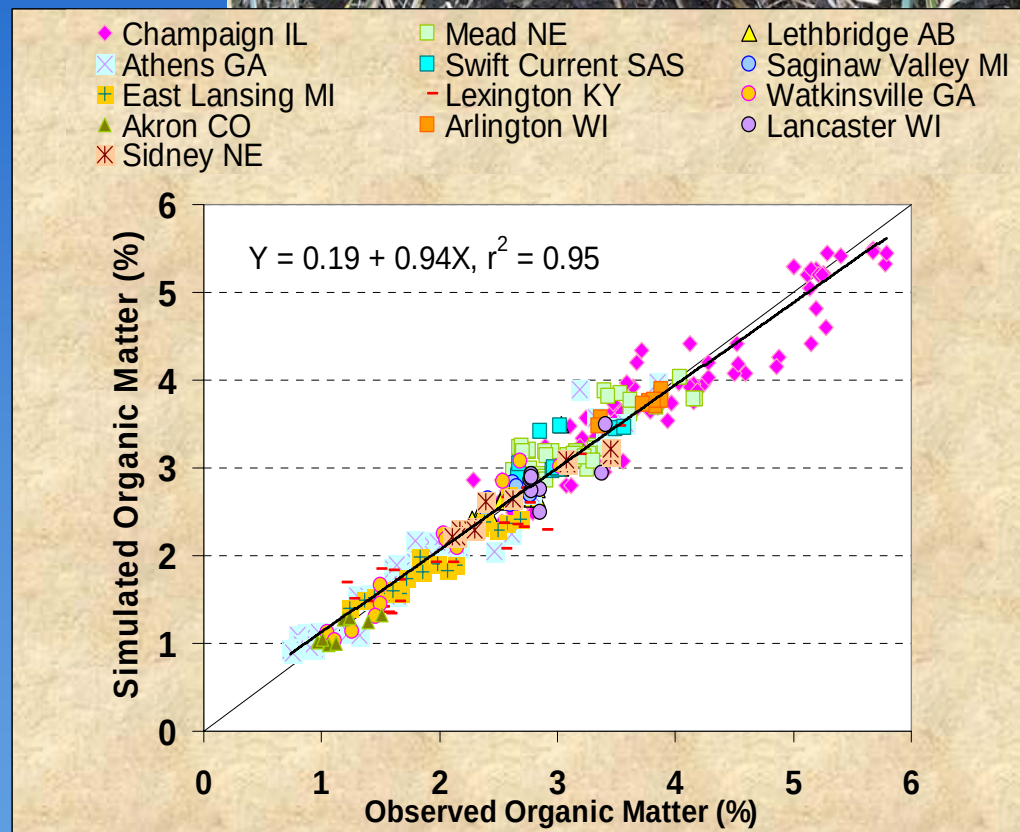
CQESTR Development:
Decision support tool for
managing soil carbon.



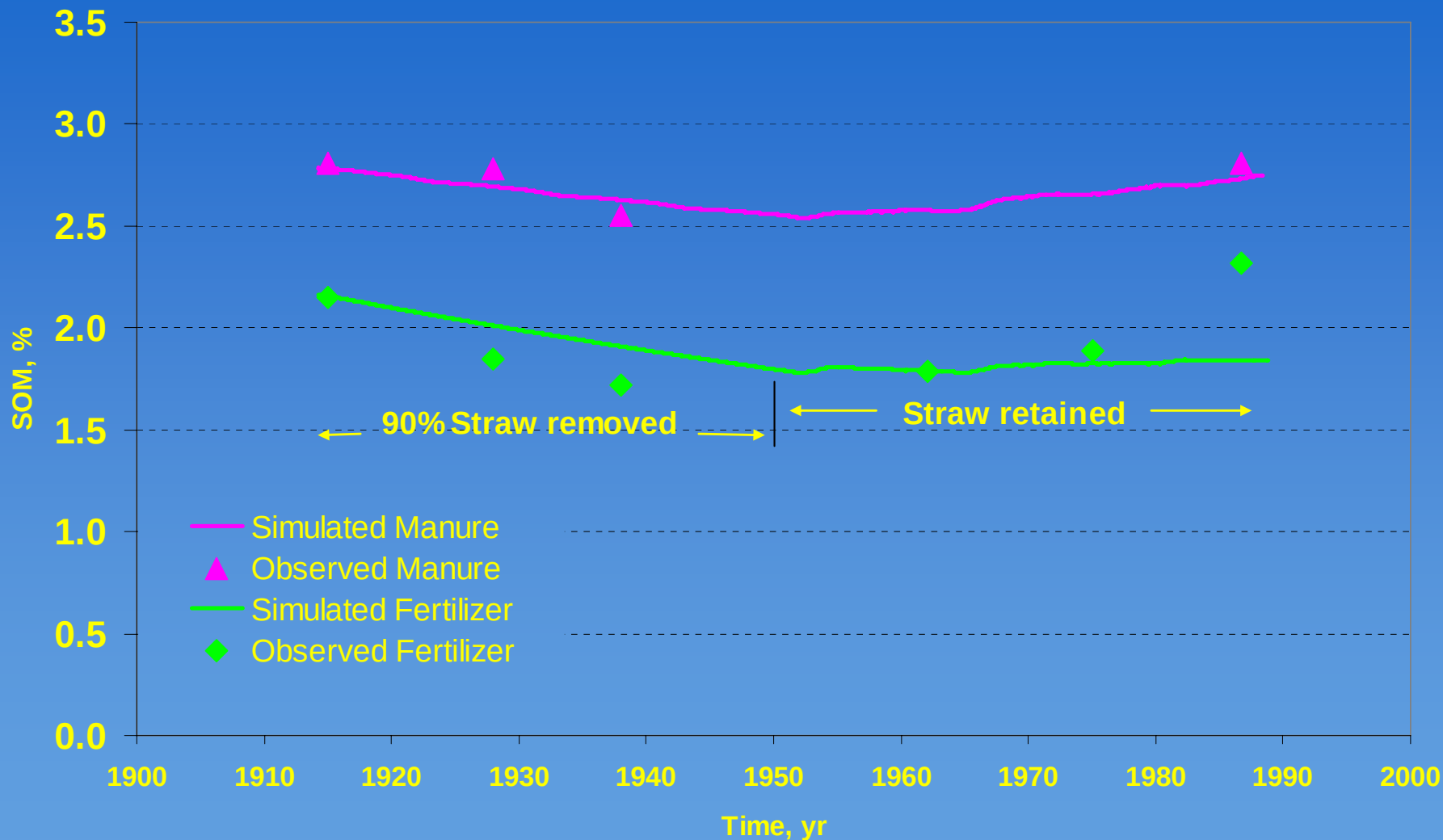
CQESTR Development:

Decision support tool for
managing soil carbon

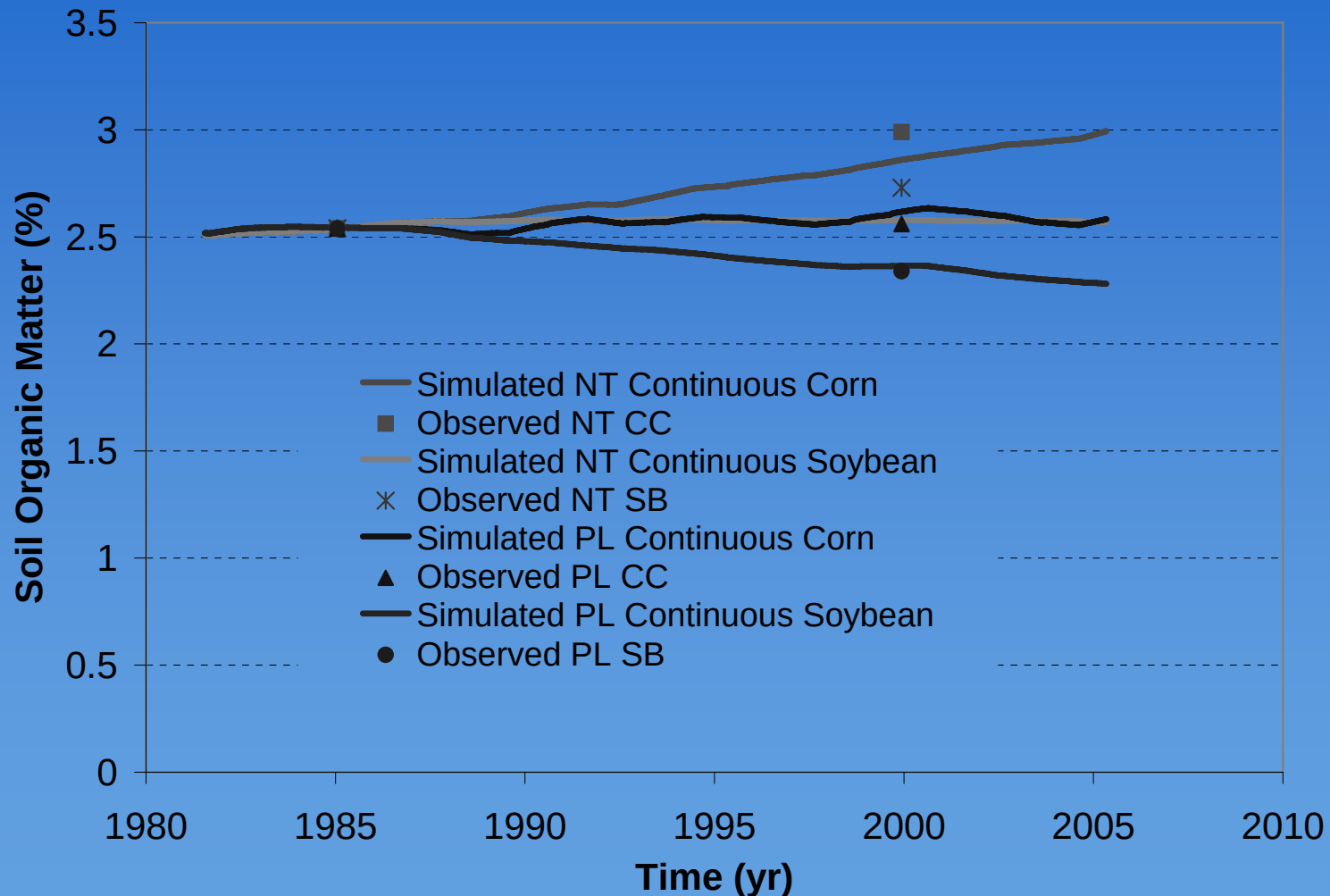
306 pairs of observed
and simulated SOM
values are well
correlated ($r^2 = 95\%$, $P < 0.0001$) with a 1:1
correspondence for
the majority of values.



Winter wheat, residue management change, ca 1950 moderately drained silt loam (Sanborn Field, Columbia, MO)



CQESTR predictions for a moderately well drained silty clay loam soil (0-24") at Lincoln, NE



GRACEnet Provides Data to Develop, Run, and Test Models

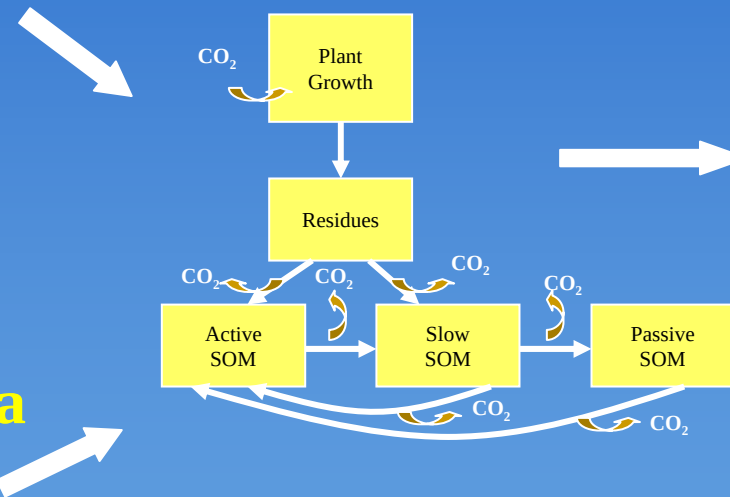
GRACEnet Model Input Data

- Land Management
- Soil properties
- Weather
- Etc.

GRACEnet Model Testing Data

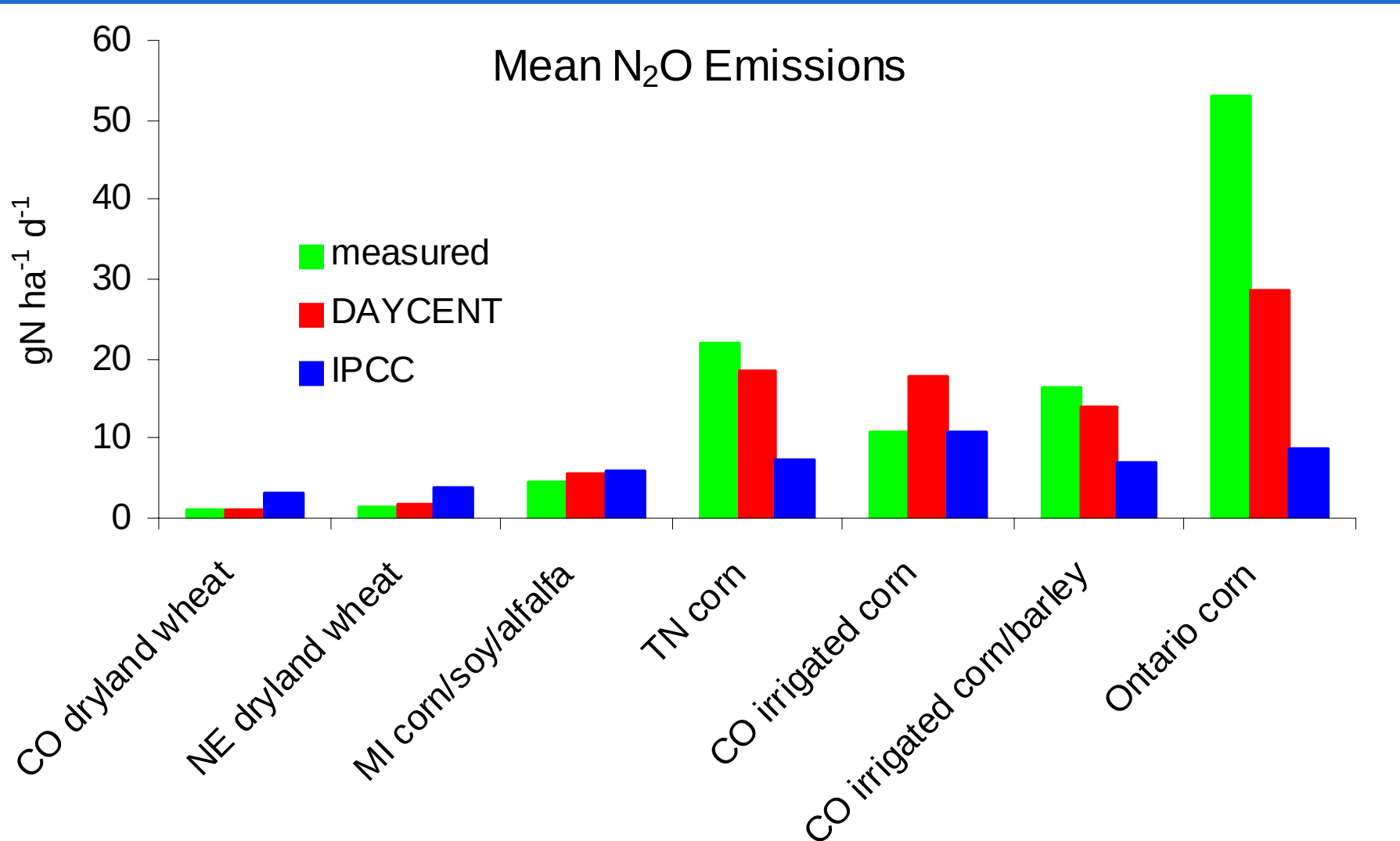
- Gas flux
- Soil C, N
- Crop yields
- Etc.

DAYCENT Model

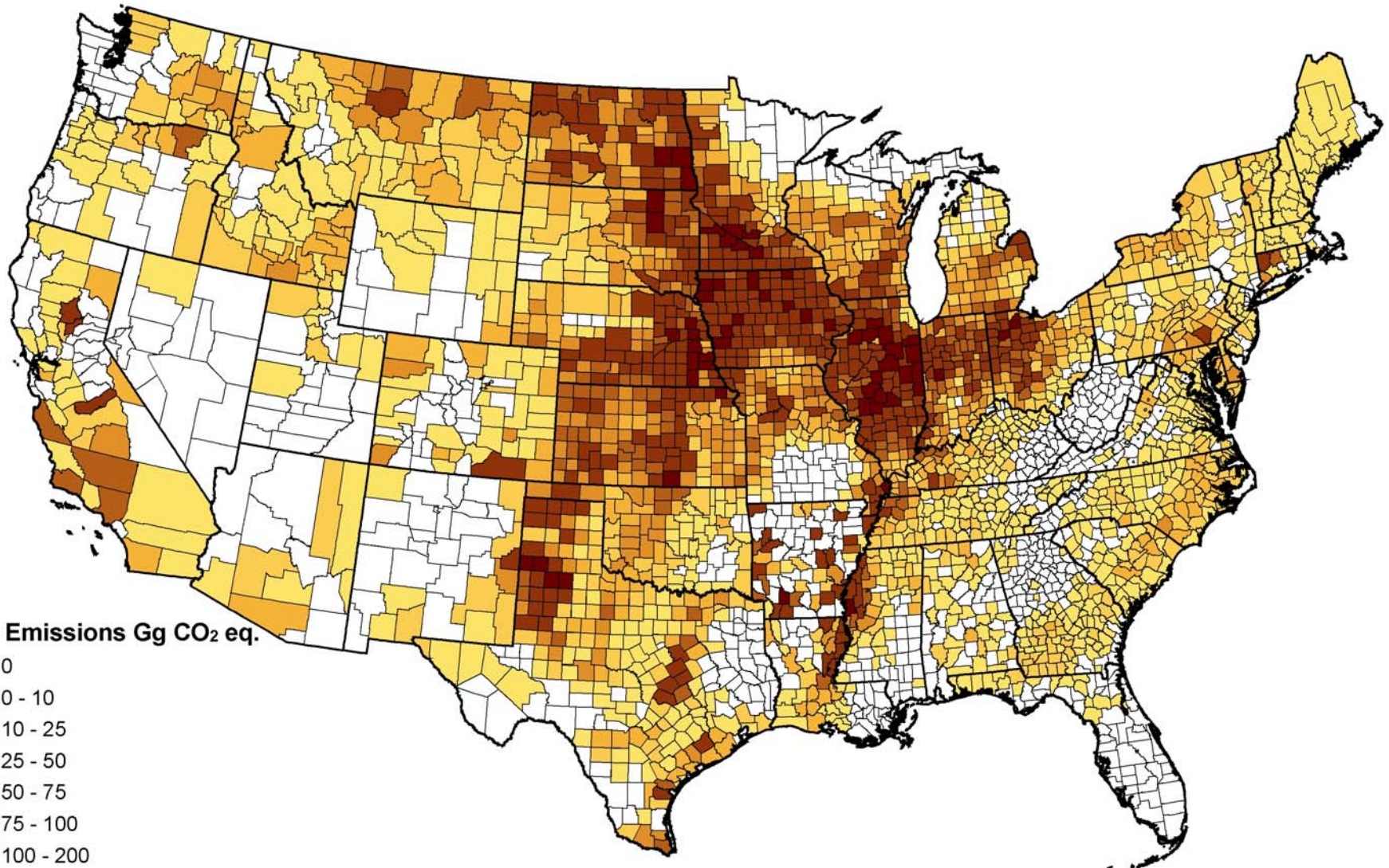


**Multi-Scale
GHG Flux
Estimates**
(Site, Regional and
National Scales)

DAYCENT and IPCC Emissions vs. Measurements



DAYCENT N₂O Emissions from Major Crops for USDA GHG Inventory



Expert input for National or Regional needs:

- **Global Change Climate Office of USDA**
- **Other Government Agencies (EPA, etc.)**
- **The Chicago Carbon Exchange**
- **The North Dakota Farmers Union**
- **Northwest Direct Seed Association**
- **Industry**
- **Others**



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Chief Economist

Global Change
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Technical Bulletin XXXX

U.S. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORY: 1990-2005



The End

Thank you



***USDA-Agricultural Research Service;
Fort Collins, CO; USA***