



UNIONE EUROPEA
Fondo Europeo Agricolo
per lo Sviluppo Rurale



Regione Emilia-Romagna

L'Europa investe nelle zone rurali

Tecniche agronomiche per la prevenzione dell'inquinamento da nitrati e la conservazione della sostanza organica

Workshop intermedio I-II anno della sperimentazione (08.08.2018)

Nicolo Colambani¹, Fabio Vincenzi¹, Micol Mastrocicco², Elisa Soana¹, Giuseppe Castaldelli¹

1. SVeB - Department of Life Sciences and Biotechnology, University of Ferrara

2. DiSTABiF - Department of Environmental, Biological and Pharmaceutical Sciences and Technologies, Campania University "Luigi Vanvitelli"

ctg@unife.it, clo@unife.it

Gruppo Operativo NITRATI FERRARA: Fondazione per l'Agricoltura Fratelli Navarra, Az. Agr. Graziano Sarto, Università degli Studi di Ferrara, Fondazione CRPA Studi Ricerche (FCSR), Areté s.r.l., I.TER Soc. Coop a.r.l., HORTA s.r.l.



European Commission > EIP-AGRI > EIP-AGRI Workshop: Connecting innovative projects: Water & Agriculture

EIP-AGRI Workshop: Connecting innovative projects: Water & Agriculture

Dates	Wednesday, 30 May, 2018 - 09:00 to Thursday, 31 May, 2018 - 17:30
Type of event	EIP-AGRI workshop
Location	Spain Andalusia

The EIP-AGRI Workshop: Connecting innovative projects: Water & Agriculture took place in Almería, Spain, on 30-31 May 2018.

This workshop was organised by the European Commission Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development and the EIP-AGRI Service Point with support of the Andalusian Regional Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development and the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Environment.

Participation in this event was by invitation only.

Presentations (in order of the programme)

Day 1: Wednesday 30 May 2018

EIP-AGRI ...

Agricultural practices to prevent nitrates pollution and promote organic matter conservation

Tecniche agronomiche per la prevenzione dell'inquinamento da nitrati e la conservazione della sostanza organica

ITALIA – EMILIA ROMAGNA

Starting date - expected end date | 01.09.2016 – 31.08.2019

http://www.fondazione Navarra.it/nitrati_ferrara.htm

The aim is to develop agricultural practices to prevent nitrates pollution through the increase of organic matter content in soils.

Organic matter decreases the risk of water leaching and runoff and thus nitrates mobility. Moreover, recent scientific evidences prove that in fine soils organic matter availability favours the removal of the excess of nitrates via denitrification.

The project is carried out in two farms representative of fine-texture soils of the Pianura Padana, declared vulnerable to nitrates from agricultural origin. No tillage and minimum tillage regimes are compared to conventional practices for maize and wheat.

Expected results are the increase of soil organic matter, prevention of nitrates pollution, increase in the water retention capacity, stabilization of soil structure, increase of soil bearing capacity and decrease of carbon and water footprints.



Lead partner: Fondazione per l'Agricoltura F.lli Navarra

Other partners:

Research

- ▶ Università degli Studi di Ferrara – Department of Life Sciences and Biotechnology
- ▶ Fondazione CRPA – Research organisation
- ▶ i.ter – Progettazione ecologica del territorio
- ▶ Horta – Spin Off dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore
- ▶ Aretè – Research & Consulting in Economics

Farmers

- ▶ Azienda Agricola Sarto Graziano
- ▶ Azienda Agricola Sperimentale Fondazione F.lli Navarra



Project contact:

Giuseppe Castaldelli | Via L. Ariosto 35 - Ferrara
T: +39 0532 455737 | ctg@unife.it

Contact at workshop:

Luigi Fenati
T: +39 3356103337 | Luigifenati59@gmail.com

Con queste poche diapositive vogliamo richiamare il razionale che regge il progetto:

Il GO si avvale del contributo di due aziende agricole, l'Azienda Agricola Sarto Graziano e l'Azienda Agricola della Fondazione per l'Agricoltura Fratelli Navarra; entrambe si trovano nella **zona vulnerabile all'inquinamento da nitrati provenienti da fonti agricole" che corrisponde all'intero territorio della provincia di Ferrara.**

L'ipotesi è stata formulata sui «risultati di ricerche precedenti che **hanno evidenziato il ruolo della sostanza organica come elemento di prevenzione delle perdite di nitrati e di protezione dell'inquinamento delle acque superficiali e di falda.** «

... il Gruppo Operativo intende dare sviluppo a tecniche agronomiche dedicate alla prevenzione delle perdite di nitrati in zona vulnerabile, tramite l'aumento della sostanza organica dei terreni.»

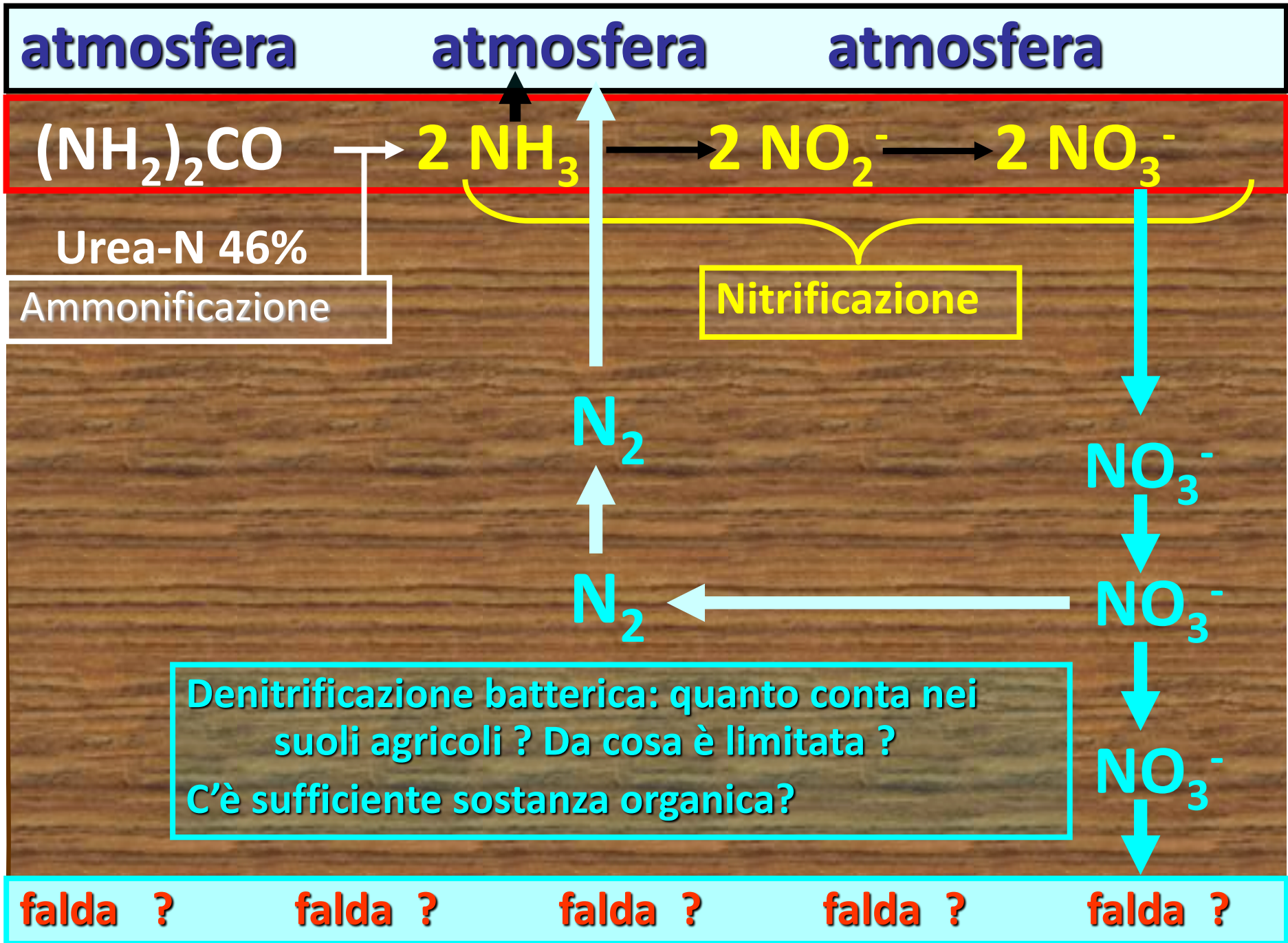
L'incremento della sostanza organica ha:

effetti fisici: «.... all'aumentare del contenuto di sostanza organica di un suolo aumenti la ritenzione idrica e di conseguenza diminuiscano sia il ruscellamento che la percolazione (Mastrocicco et al., 2010, Aschonitis et al., 2011, 2013, 2014)»

e **microbiologici**, questi ultimi meno intuitivi dei precedenti: «**all'aumento del contenuto di sostanza organica aumenta la rimozione dei nitrati in eccesso, tramite denitrificazione.**

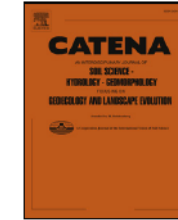
Tale fenomeno è stato evidenziato in suoli a bassa permeabilità o, più in generale, in condizioni di saturazione e ristagno idrico che favoriscono l'insorgere di condizioni di **manca di ossigeno**. In tali condizioni la mineralizzazione della sostanza organica procede tramite processi respiratori anaerobici e in particolare, se sono disponibili nitrati, tramite denitrificazione, come dimostrato con studi sia in laboratorio che in campo (Mastrocicco et al., 2011.a, 2011.b; Castaldelli et al., 2013.a, 2013.b).

Per queste ragioni, l'adozione di tecniche di minima lavorazione e/o conservative ed il progressivo incremento di sostanza organica, unitamente al riequilibrio delle comunità batteriche, fungine e di metazoi che ne consegue, **hanno un effetto diretto sulla riduzione della vulnerabilità ai nitrati che è la finalità primaria del progetto.**



Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](https://www.sciencedirect.com)

Catena

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/catena

Soil type and microclimatic conditions as drivers of urea transformation kinetics in maize plots



Giuseppe Castaldelli^a, Nicolò Colombani^a, Elena Tamburini^a, Fabio Vincenzi^a,
Micòl Mastrocicco^{b,*}

^aSVeB — Department of Life Sciences and Biotechnology, University of Ferrara, Via L. Borsari 46, 44121 Ferrara, Italy

^bDiSTABiF — Department of Environmental, Biological and Pharmaceutical Sciences and Technologies, Campania University “Luigi Vanvitelli”, Via Vivaldi 43, 81100 Caserta, Italy

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Urea fertilizer
Nitrification rate
Ammonia volatilization
Numerical modelling
Relative humidity
Cation exchange capacity

ABSTRACT

This study presents a multidisciplinary approach (hydrological, microbiological, agronomic) to determine the dynamics of transformation of synthetic urea applied as soil fertilizer during maize production. The approach consisted in field and laboratory experiments on urea hydrolysis, ammonia volatilisation and nitrification, in four soil types (named Silty-loam, Silty-clay, Peat and Sand) intensively fertilized with synthetic urea. The field plots were modelled with HYDRUS-1D to determine the fate and transport of N species in the top soils. The numerical models successfully captured the main N transformations throughout the simulated period. In addition to the field monitoring of nitrogen species, microbial C and N, and urease activity were screened in each soil. The field soil sampling highlighted that the kinetics of ammonification was consistent with the hydrolysis of urea except for the sandy soil; kinetics of ammonification decreased in the order: Silty-clay > Peat >> Silty-loam > Sand. The differences of urease activities and nitrification potential rates between soils supported the measured field nitrification rates, and were as follow in order of decreasing rate: Silty-clay > Silty-loam > Peat > Sand. The lowest nitrification rates pertained to the inherently more vulnerable sandy soil due to the scarcity of nitrifiers. The performance of volatilization was as follow in order of decreasing rate: Sand >> Silty-loam > Peat > Silty-clay; but in general very low volatilization rates were found. This was imputed to the concurrence of both elevated soil CEC that promoted ammonium sorption and to low wind speed in the monitored plots. The presented multidisciplinary approach should be employed in many other agricultural settings to obtain robust data for numerical models simulations on the fate and transport of reactive N species in agricultural lands.

Reactive nitrogen losses via denitrification assessed in saturated agricultural soils

Giuseppe Castaldelli¹, Nicolò Colombani¹, Elisa Soana¹, Fabio Vincenzi¹, Elisa Anna Fano¹, Micol Mastrocicco^{2#}

¹SVeB - Department of Life Sciences and Biotechnology, University of Ferrara, Via L. Borsari 46, 44121 Ferrara, Italy

²DiSTABiF - Department of Environmental, Biological and Pharmaceutical Sciences and Technologies, Campania University “Luigi Vanvitelli”, Via Vivaldi 43, 81100 Caserta, Italy

#Corresponding author:

Abstract

The aim of the present study was to quantify nitrate (NO_3^-) removal via denitrification in an intensively cropped lowland of the Po River delta (Northern Italy), characterized by fine textured soils, generally poor of labile organic matter and amended mainly with synthetic fertilizers. Laboratory core incubations in water saturation conditions were performed on two contrasting soil types characterized by different soil textures (silty-loam and silty-clay) and amended with NO_3^- or with NO_3^- and acetate. Denitrification was evaluated by the concomitant measurements of NO_3^- consumption and N_2 production via $\text{N}_2:\text{Ar}$ analyses by Membrane Inlet Mass Spectrometry (MIMS).

The water-logged soils showed higher capacity to reduce NO_3^- to N_2 when supplied with acetate as organic substrate, while, without acetate amendment, NO_3^- removal was limited by the lack of labile organic substrates. Transient nitrite (NO_2^-) accumulation was documented in acetate amended mesocosms, due to concurrent presence of elevated pH values and use of highly oxidized substrates (like acetate).

This study suggests that agricultural practices aimed to increase the availability of labile organic matter, such as acetate, are beneficial to buffer reactive N excess in soils and to reduce NO_3^- leaching towards groundwater and surface waters.



Direct measurement of dissolved dinitrogen to refine reactive modelling of denitrification in agricultural soils



Micòl Mastrocicco^a, Nicolò Colombani^{b,*}, Giuseppe Castaldelli^b

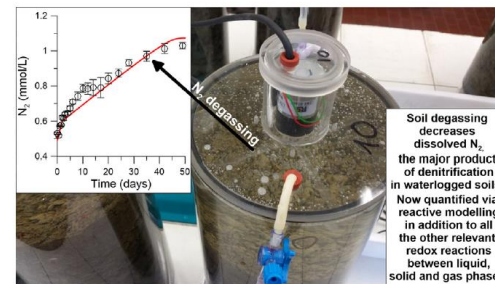
^a DISTABIF-Department of Environmental, Biological and Pharmaceutical Sciences and Technologies, Campania University 'Luigi Vanvitelli', Via Vivaldi 43, 81100 Caserta, Italy

^b SVEB-Department of Life Sciences and Biology, University of Ferrara, Via L. Borsari, 46, 44100 Ferrara, Italy

HIGHLIGHTS

- Soils' denitrification rate increased when supplied with acetate.
- Soils showed high N₂ degassing, responsible for the low dissolved N₂ concentrations.
- This is the first model calibrated versus dissolved N₂ and all other redox species.

GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT



ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 8 April 2018

Received in revised form 26 June 2018

Accepted 30 July 2018

Available online 31 July 2018

Editor: José Virgilio Cruz

Keywords:

Denitrification

Soil

Shallow groundwater

Organic matter

Acetate

Reactive modelling

ABSTRACT


Nitrogen fertilizers used in agriculture often cause nitrate leaching towards shallow groundwater, especially in lowland areas where soil permeability, ploughing, clay content, and the flat topography minimizes surface runoff. The introduction of good agricultural practices to reduce the nitrate amount entering the groundwater system is crucial to ameliorate the kinetic control on nitrate denitrification capacity. With this aim, a series of anaerobic mesocosms, consisting of loamy and clay soils and nitrate rich water, were modelled using acetate and natural organic matter as electron donors. Acetate was chosen because it is the main intermediate in many biodegradation pathways of organic compounds, and hence it is a suitable carbon source for denitrification. To account for the spatial variability of soil parameters, the experiments were performed in triplicates. The geochemical code PHREEQC(3) was used to simulate kinetic denitrification, and equilibrium reactions of gas and mineral phases. The reactive modelling results highlighted a rapid acetate and nitrate degradation rate, a rapid production of dissolved inorganic carbon and dinitrogen, and a steady concentration of dissolved iron and sulphate, suggesting that the main pathway of nitrate attenuation is through denitrification; concomitantly excluding the occurrence of other processes leading to nitrate consumption. In the absence of acetate, the loamy soil, poor of natural organic matter, did not allow to complete the denitrification process.

This modelling study investigates in detail the relationship between the denitrification process in natural soils, with excess and in limitation of organic substrates, and the occurrence and fate of dissolved dinitrogen analysed with a high precision membrane inlet mass spectrometer. Results demonstrate that modelling nitrate degradation processes as a whole, using geochemical datasets and codes, will improve the estimates of agricultural landscapes denitrification and support better nitrogen management, especially in lowland environments.



Article

Effects of Moisture and Particle Size on Quantitative Determination of Total Organic Carbon (TOC) in Soils Using Near-Infrared Spectroscopy

Elena Tamburini ^{1,*} , Fabio Vincenzi ¹, Stefania Costa ¹, Paolo Mantovi ², Paola Pedrini ¹ and Giuseppe Castaldelli ¹

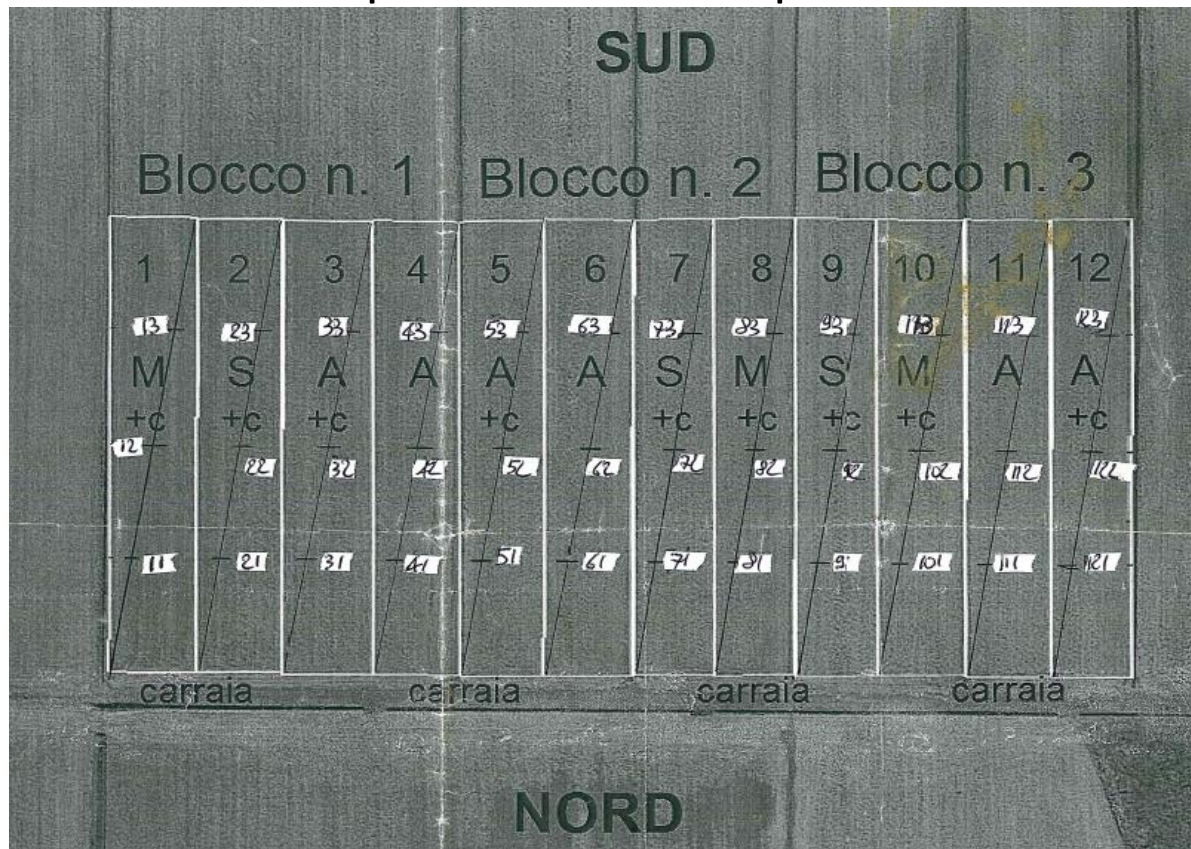
¹ Department of Life Science and Biotechnology, University of Ferrara, Via L. Borsari, 46, 44121 Ferrara, Italy; fabio.vincenzi@unife.it (F.V.); stefania.costa@unife.it (S.C.); pdp@unife.it (P.P.); ctg@unife.it (G.C.)

² Research Centre on Animal Production, CRPA, Viale Timavo, 43/2, 42121 Reggio Emilia, Italy; p.mantovi@crpa.it

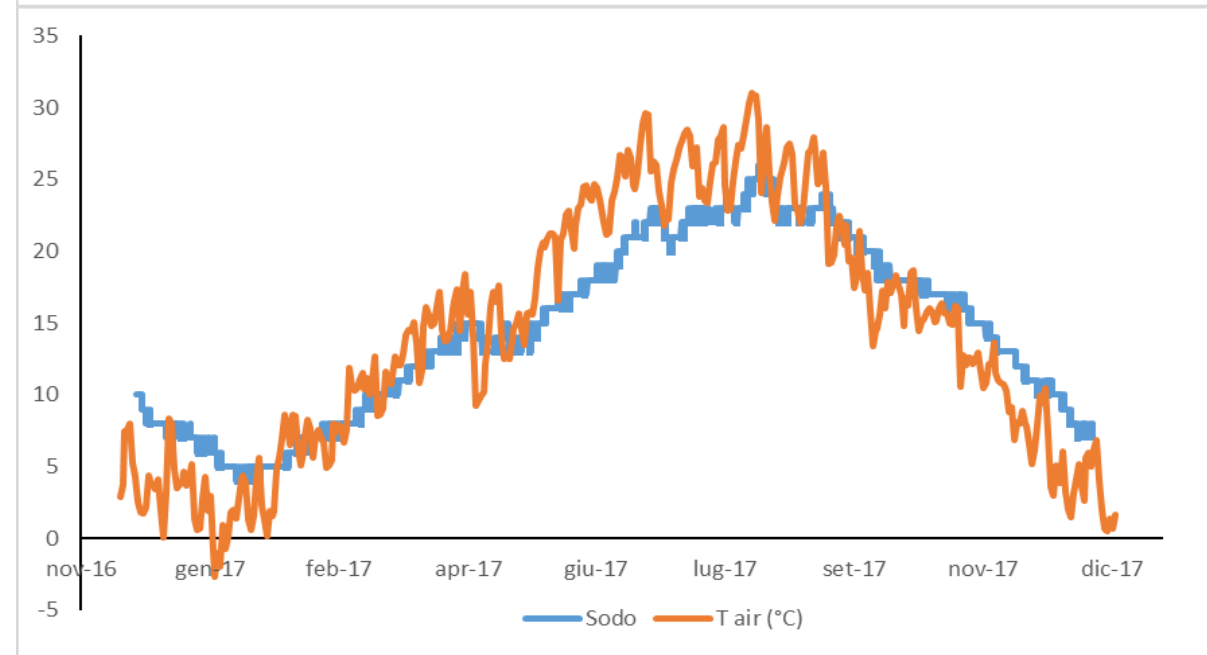
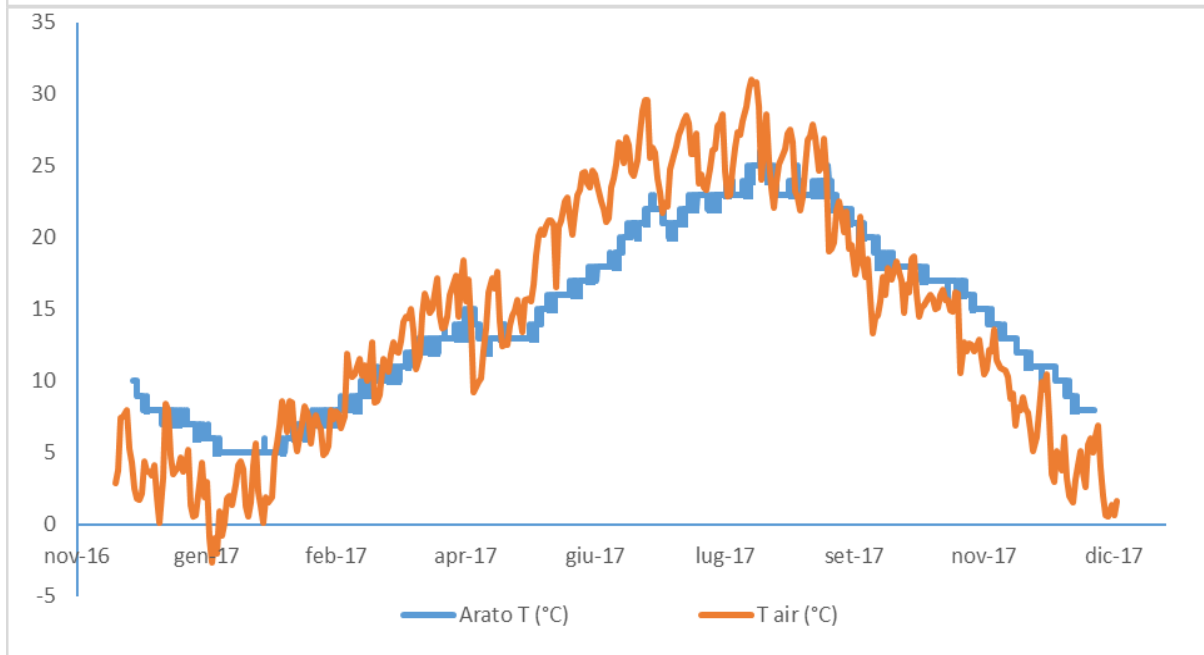
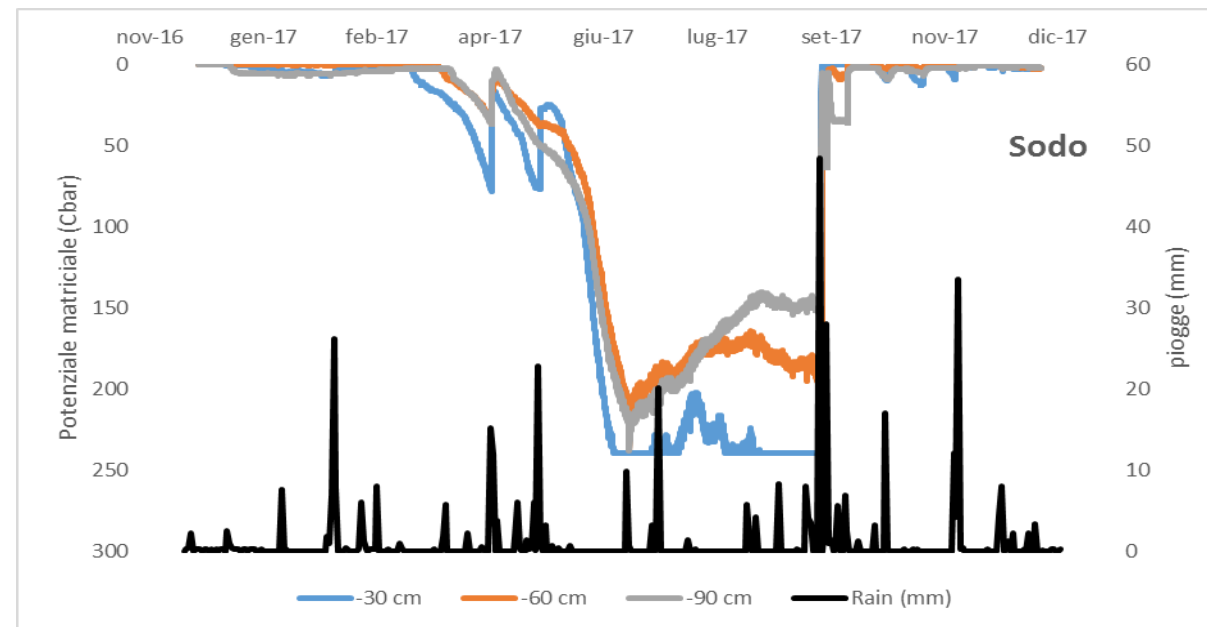
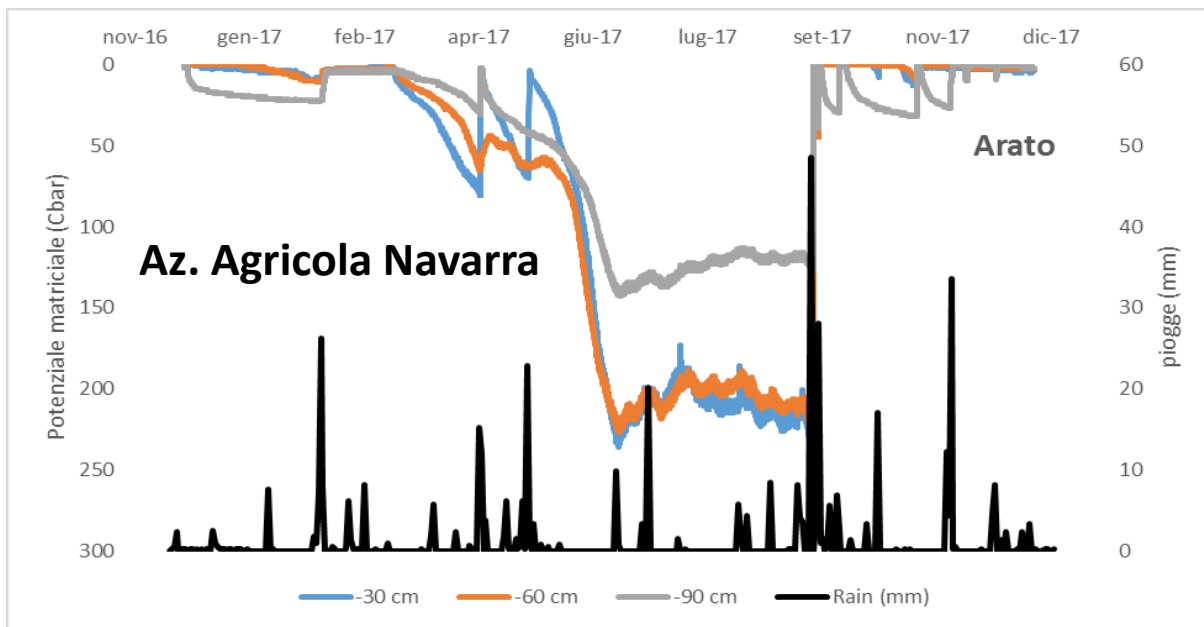
* Correspondence: tme@unife.it; Tel.: +39-0532-455-329

Received: 4 August 2017; Accepted: 12 October 2017; Published: 17 October 2017

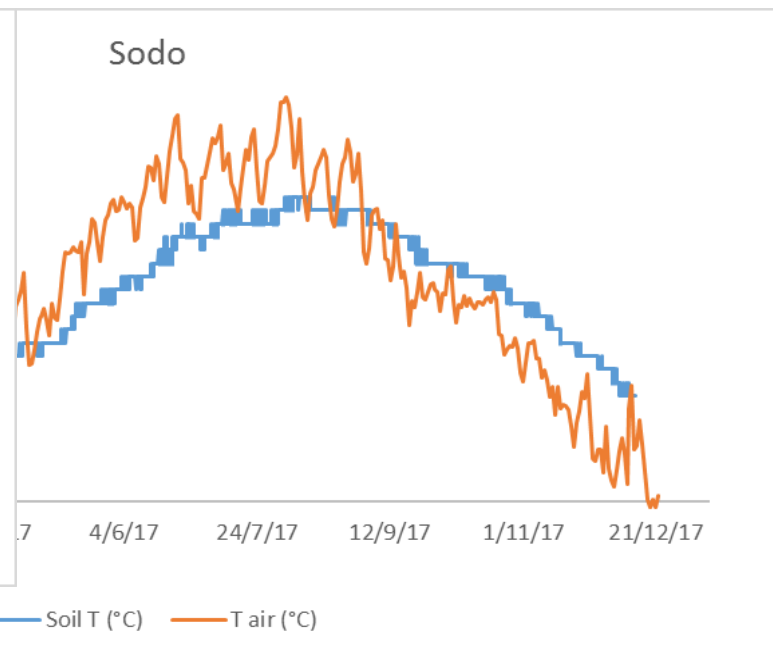
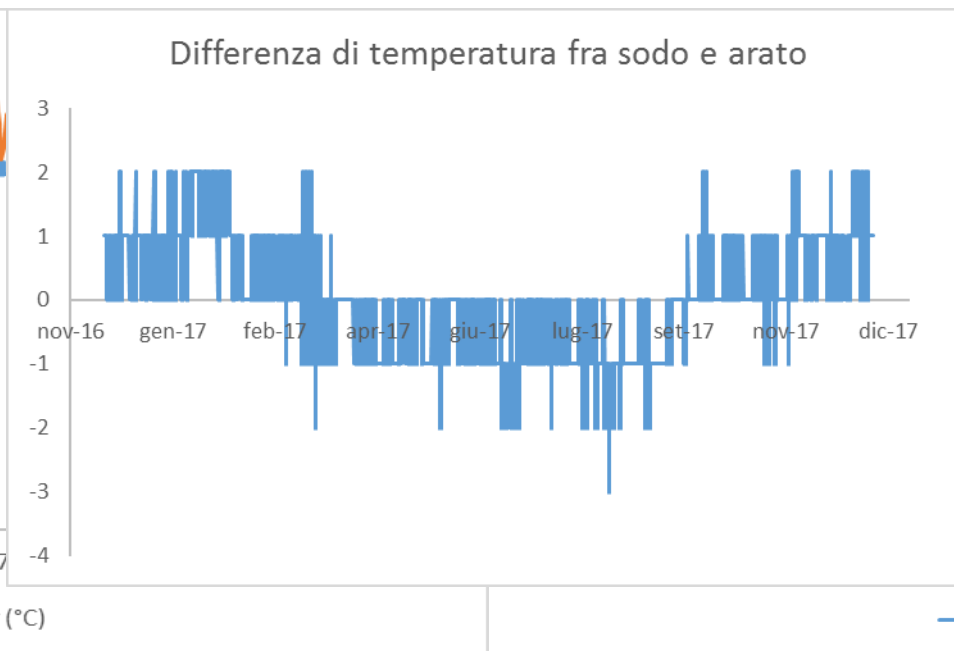
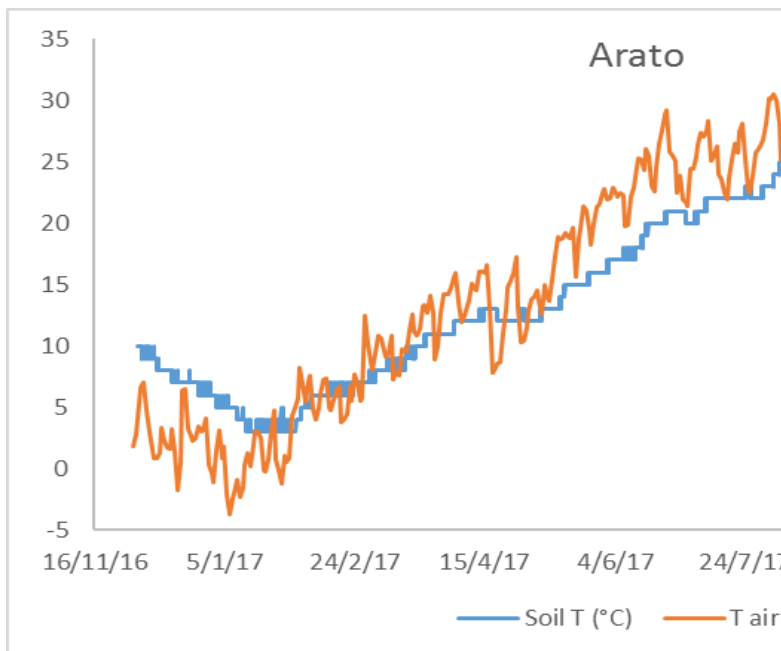
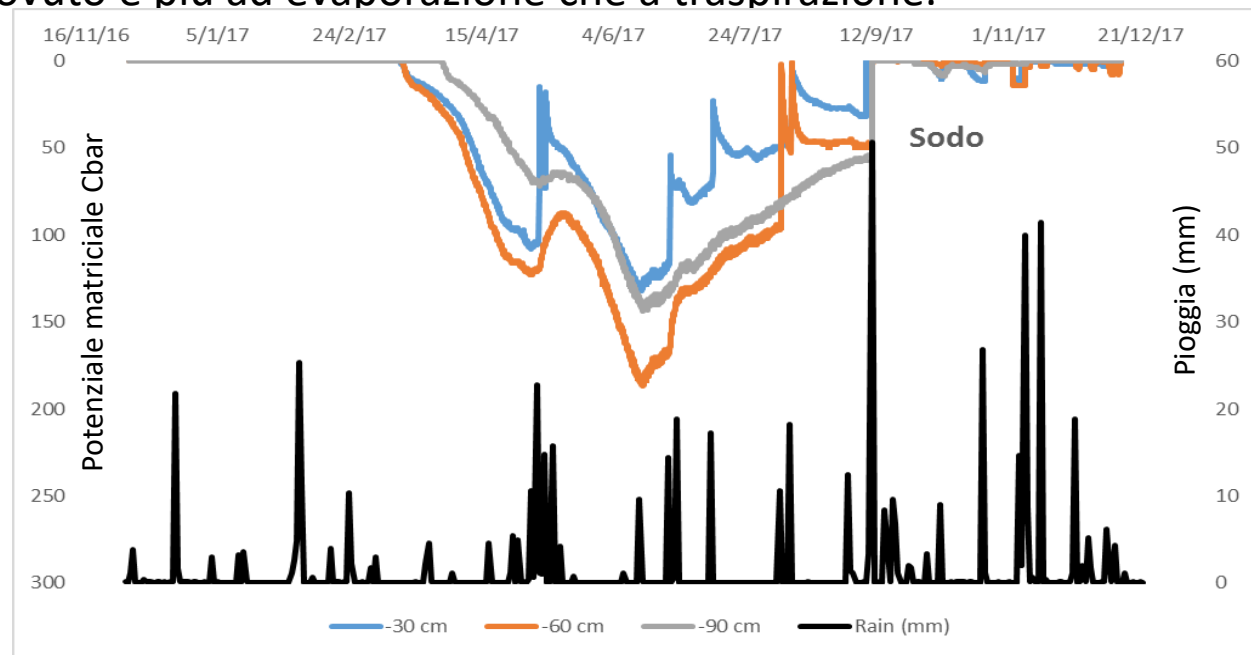
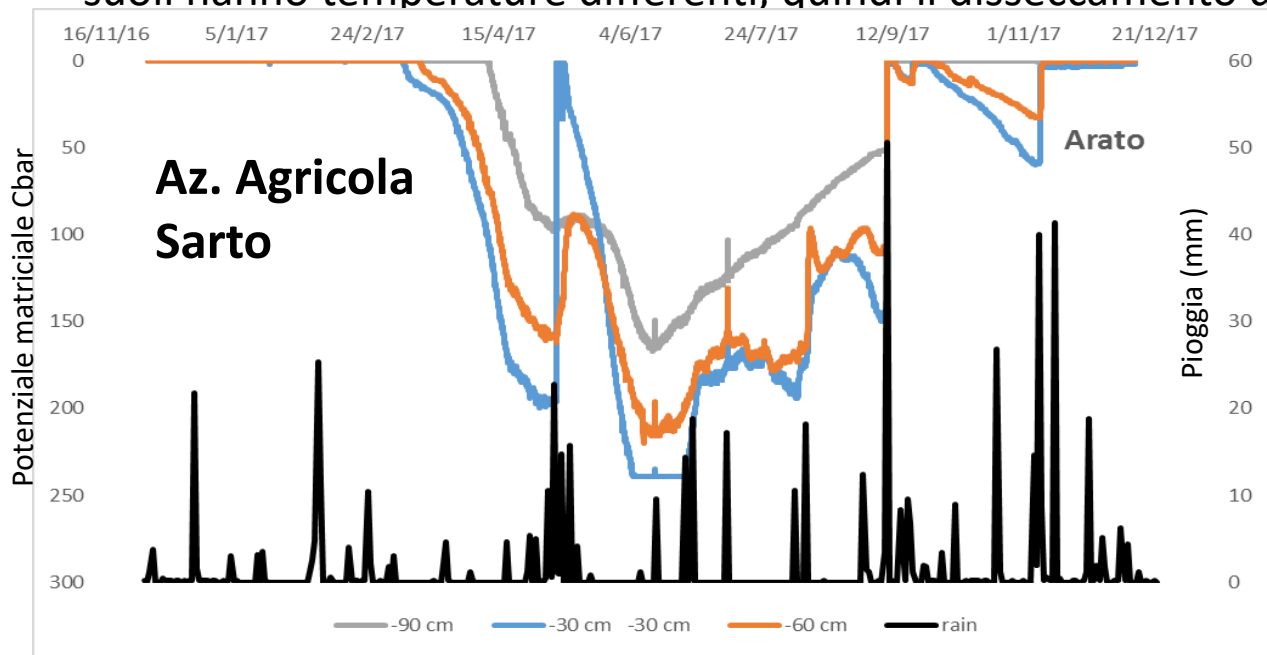
- La presentazione è articolata in due parti, la prima riguardante i parametri fisici del suolo e la seconda incentrata sull'azoto.
- Al momento della presentazione pubblica dei dati (quando?), data la mole dei dati, le due parti dovranno essere due presentazioni a se stanti.
- **In ciascuna azienda** i campi sono strumentati con: **2 centraline** per la misura in continuo di temperatura e potenziale idrico, nel convenzionale e nel sodo e con **3 piezometri** per il prelievo della falda a vari livelli, **in ciascuno dei quattro trattamenti**: convenzionale, convenzionale+compost, minime+compost e sodo+compost.



A Gualdo il suolo arato rimane umido anche in superficie (0-30 cm), mentre nel sodo tende a disseccarsi durante il periodo estivo. Entrambi hanno temperature molto simili.

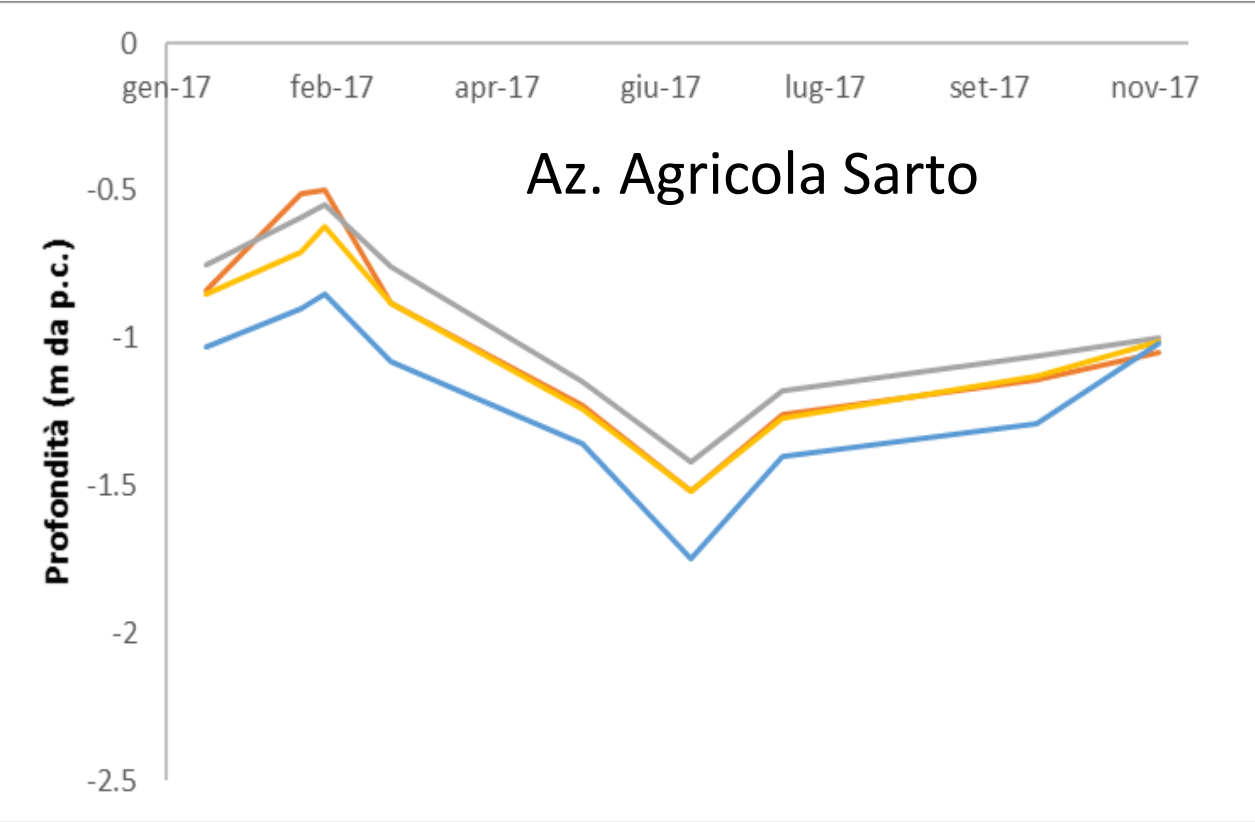
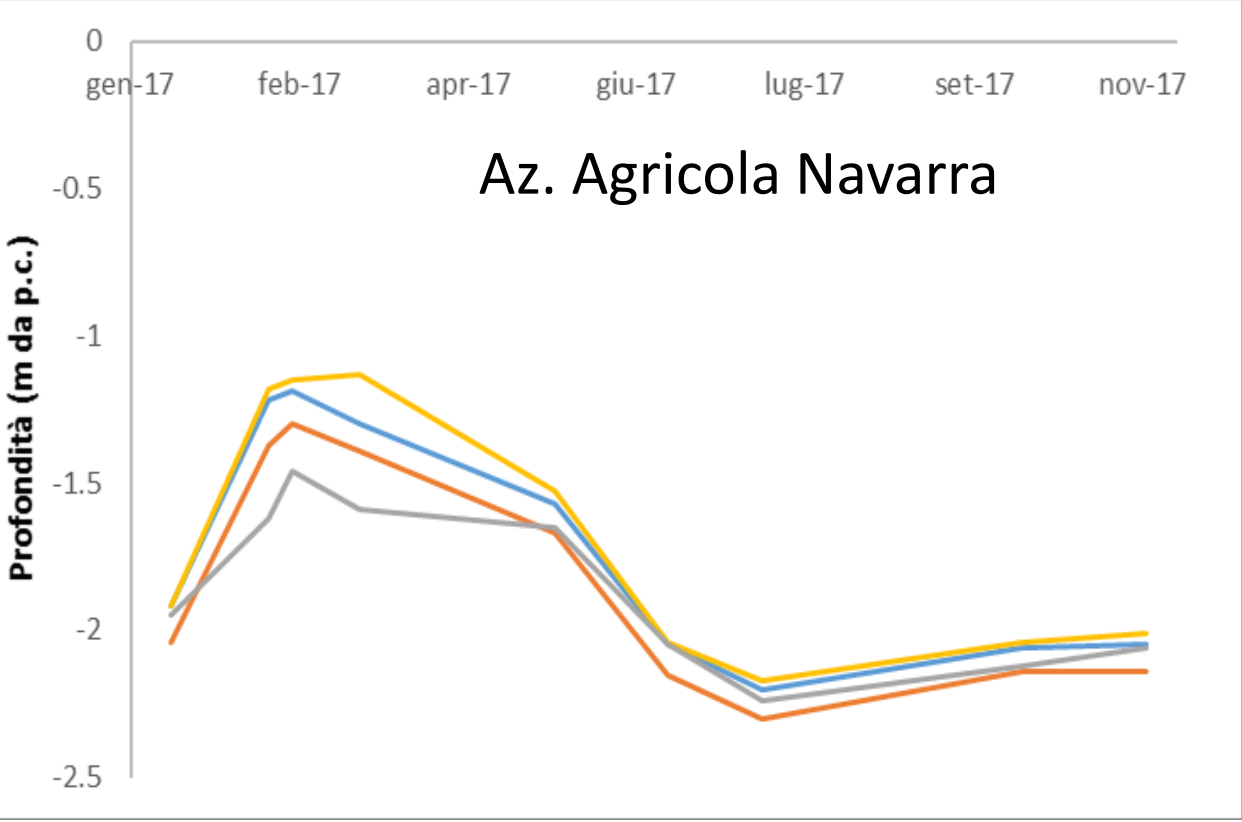


A Bando il suolo arato tende a disseccarsi durante il periodo estivo mentre nel sodo rimane umido anche in superficie. I suoli hanno temperature differenti, quindi il disseccamento dovuto è più ad evaporazione che a traspirazione.



- **I grafici che seguono riguardano misure fatte nelle 4 + 4 batterie di piezometri, di cui ciascuna consta di tre piezometri (Cona: -2, -3, -4 e Bando: -1, -2, -3).**
- **I risultati presentati sono una estrapolazione che descrive la testa dell'acquifero, ovvero l'acqua di più recente percolazione (le analisi relative agli altri pozzi sono in completamento)**
- **Le prime indicazioni indicano una notevole complessità dei processi, comunque spiegabile, che differisce tra i due siti sperimentali.**
- **A conferma della bontà dei risultati, si osservi la rispondenza agli andamenti delle varie curve.**

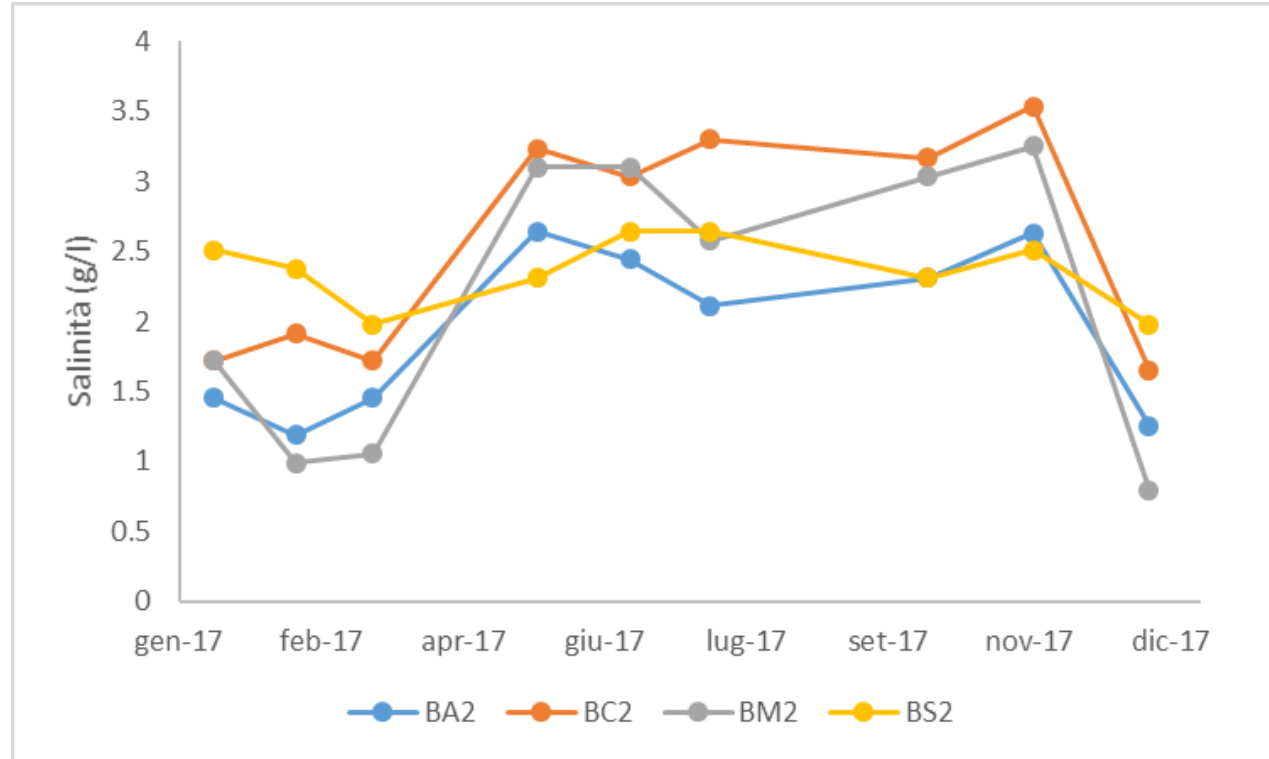
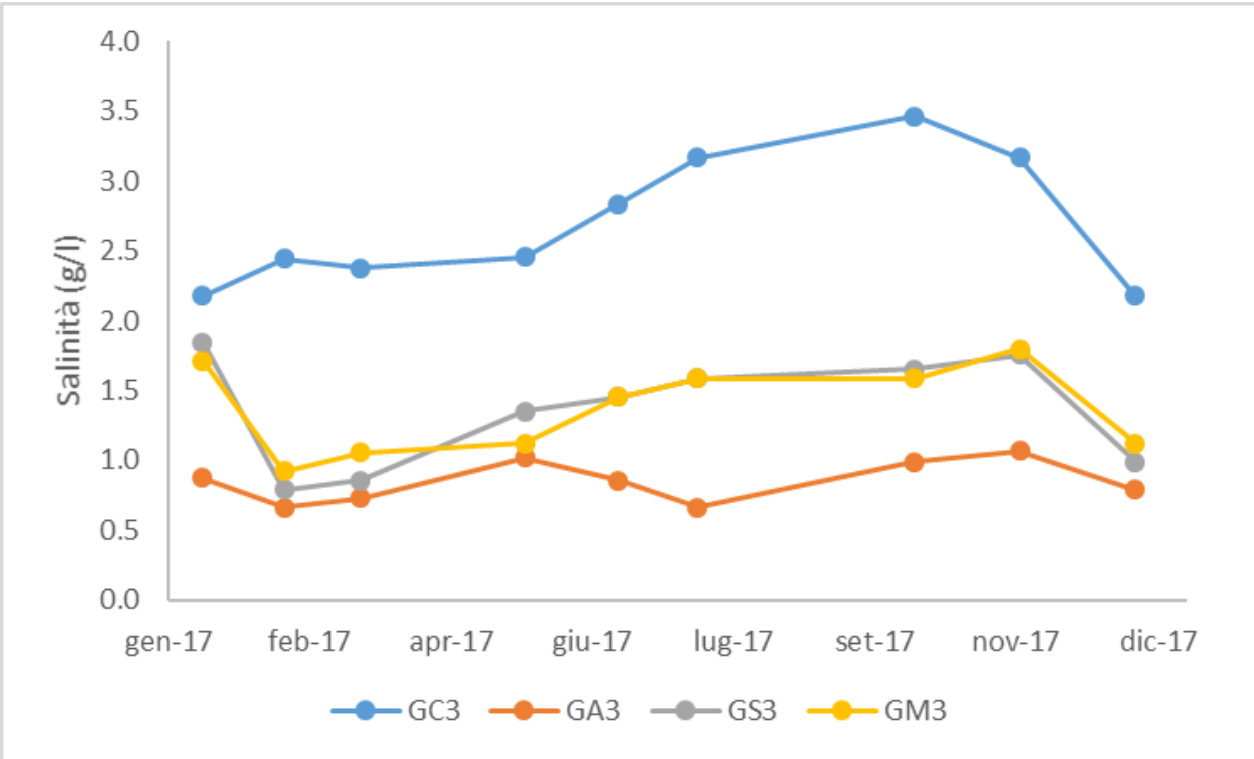
A Gualdo la falda cresce nel periodo invernale e si abbassa durante il periodo estivo coerentemente con la precipitazione cumulata in sito. Le differenze fra le varie parcelle sono dovute alla quota topografica leggermente differente. Mentre a Bando la falda segue non solo le precipitazioni ma è anche influenzata dai vari scoli e canali che la circondano, drenandola.



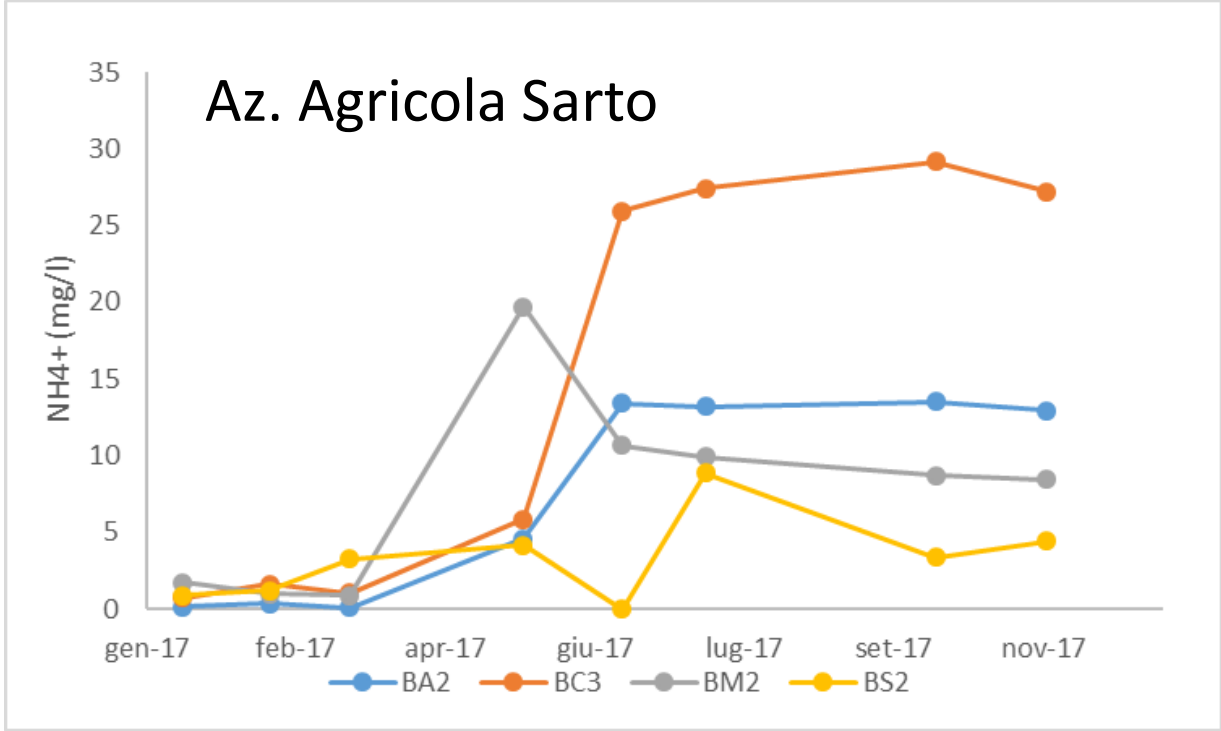
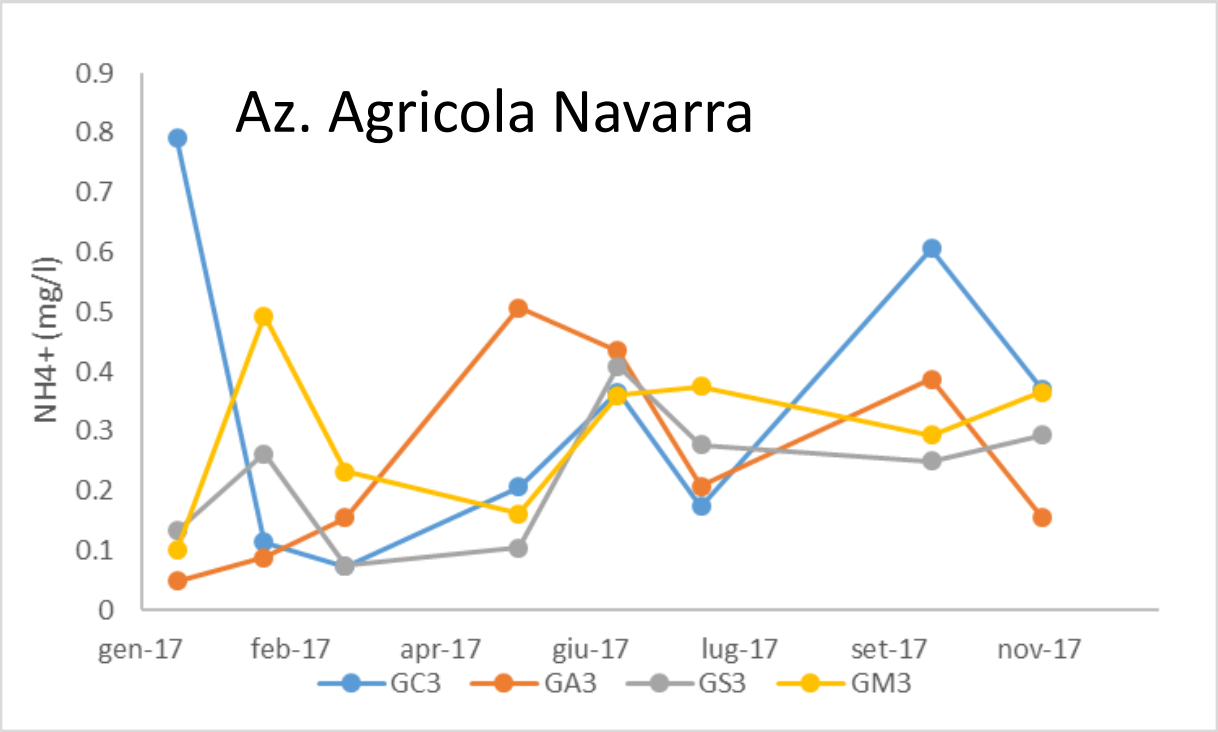
Come si può notare dalle soggiacenze i livelli di falda sono molto prossimi al piano campagna a Bando e meno a Gualdo.

A Gualdo la salinità della falda è simile nelle varie parcelle tranne in quella con compost probabilmente per la presenza pregressa di sali, infiltratisi per vie preferenziali dove si trova il pozzo.

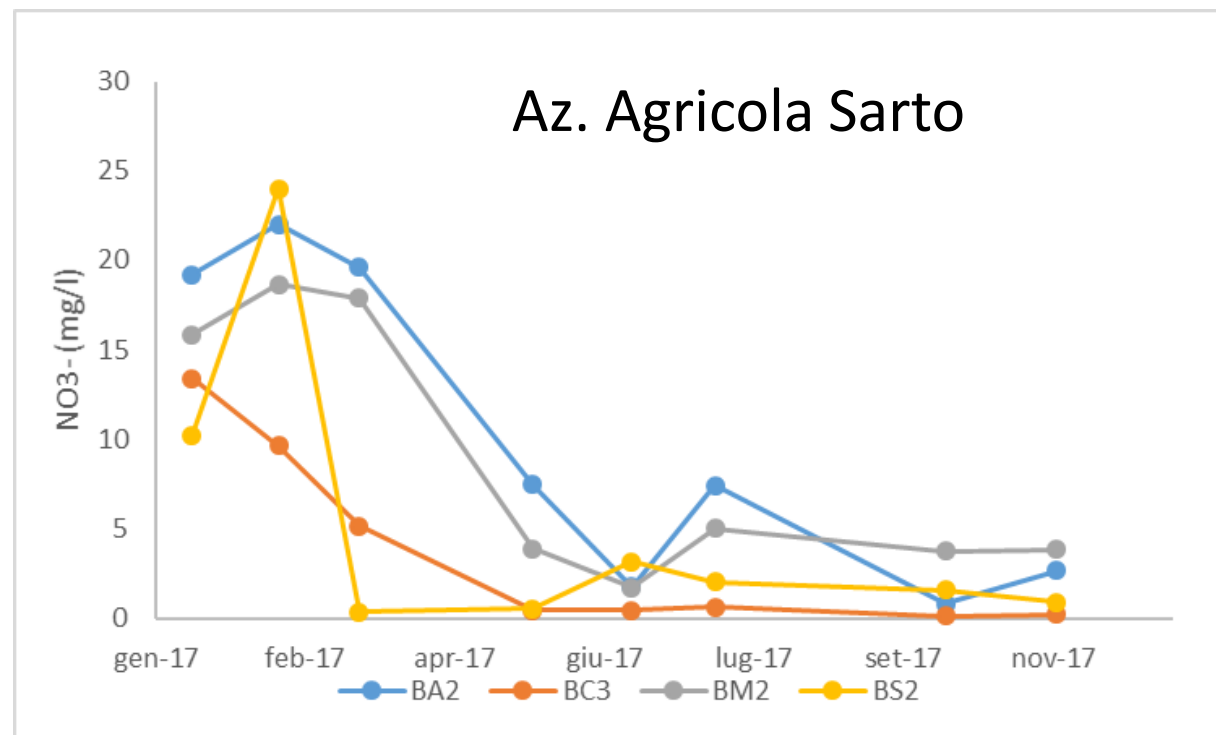
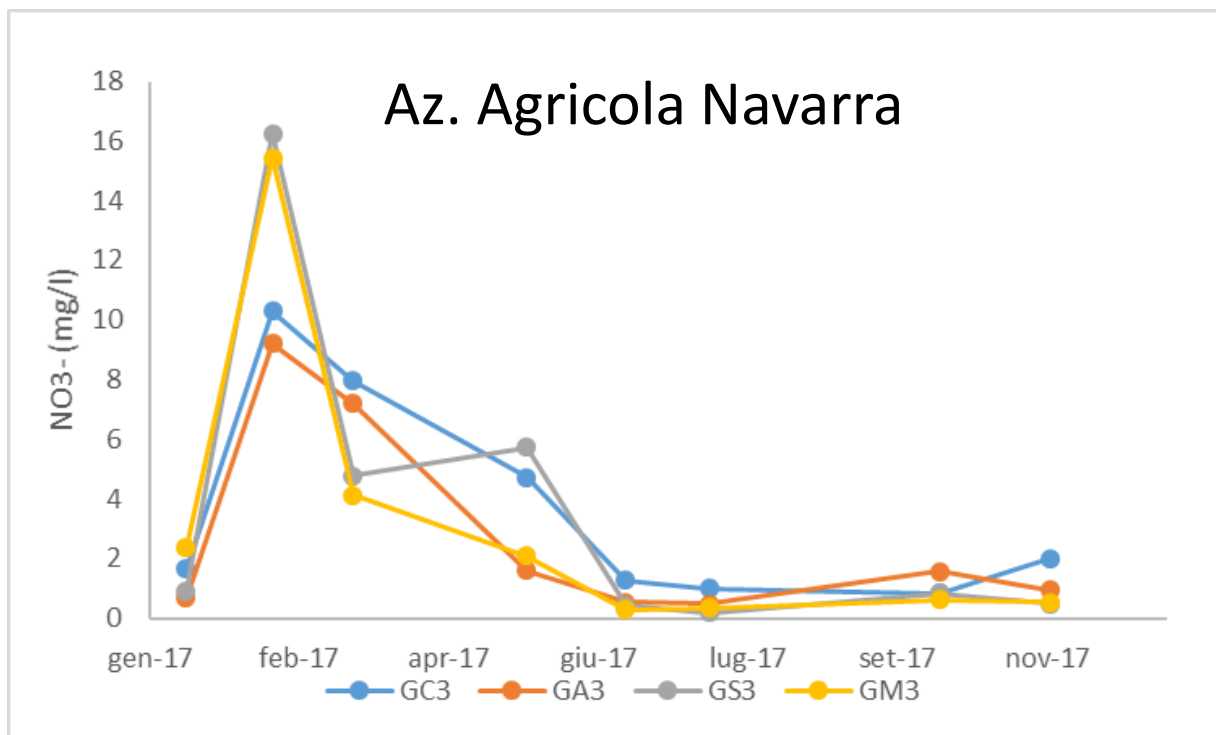
La tendenza è di una evapoconcentrazione estiva dei sali disciolti e loro diluizione in inverno. A **Bando** si nota, più marcatamente, lo stesso trend estivo/invernale, ma con **salinità più elevate** dovute ad acque salmastre tipiche della zona bonificata.



A Gualdo le concentrazioni di ammonio in falda sono generalmente basse, sempre minori di 1 mg/l senza particolari trend stagionali. A Bando si nota un incremento di ammonio, presente in anche nella falda più profonda, correlato a salinità più elevate e tipico di acque salmastre ricche di materia organica, tipiche della zona bonificata.

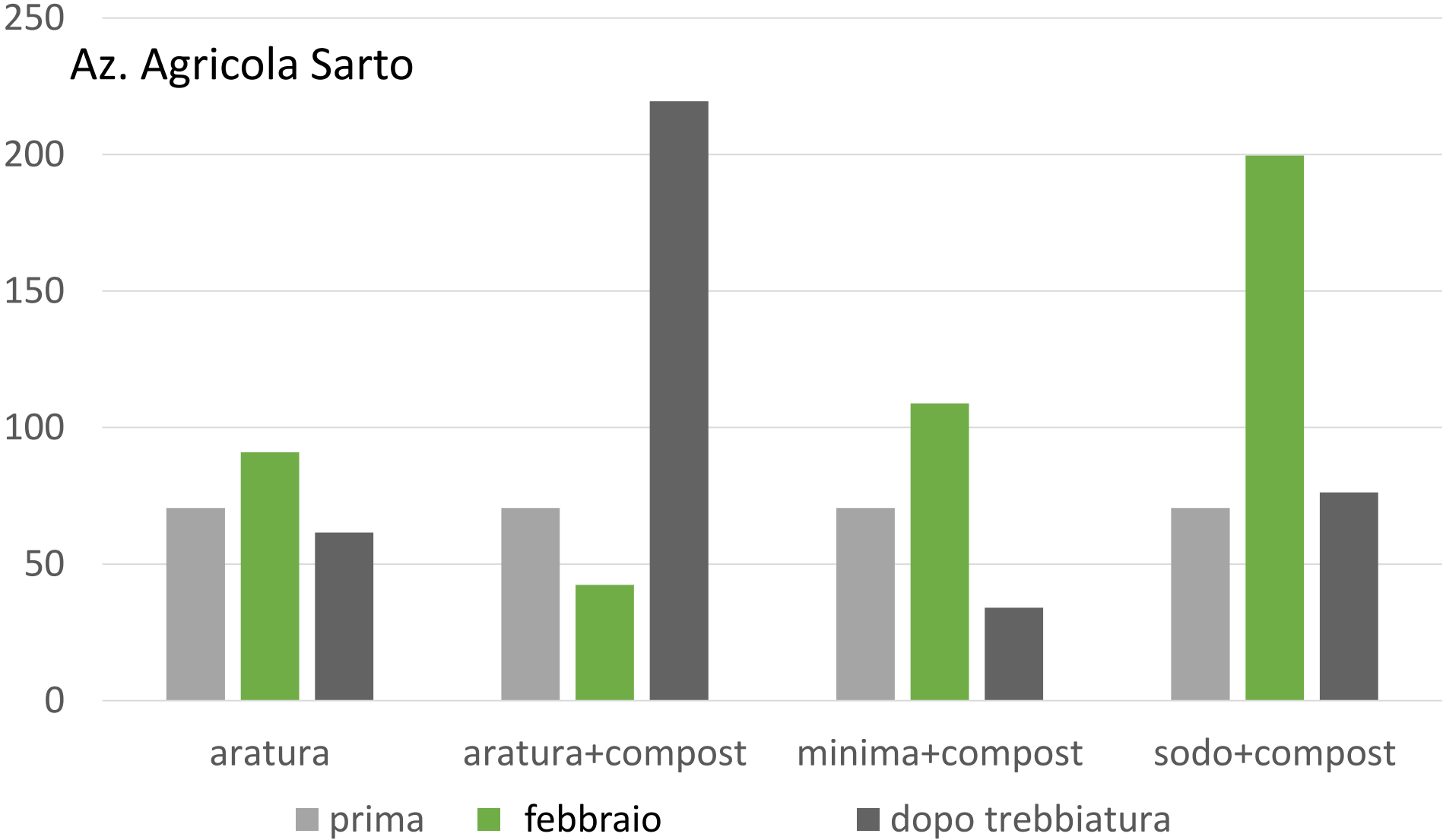


A Gualdo si nota un picco di nitrati solamente nel periodo di ricarica della falda ma con concentrazioni minori del limite (50 mg/l). A Bando si nota lo stesso trend, con concentrazioni leggermente più alte, probabilmente dovute al percorso più breve di percolazione nella zona non satura. Da aprile in avanti le concentrazioni sono sotto i 5 mg/l.



Andamento nitrati (kg N /ha) strato 0-30 cm

Az. Agricola Sarto



Per riassumere

- **Risultati coerenti con l'ipotesi e omogenei, anche se il quadro complessivo che emerge è complesso**
- **Necessità sia di una trattazione idrogeologica sia biogeochimica, entrambe sinergiche per la formulazione delle migliori pratiche agronomiche**
- **Esperimenti di laboratorio, effettuati a supporto della sperimentazione in campo e in corso di pubblicazione, supportano i risultati in via di acquisizione.**