



**UNSW**  
SYDNEY

**Creating DSM to apply**

**SIX-EASY-STEPS ameliorant and nutrient guidelines**

**Maryem Arshad, Nan Li,**

**Michael Sefton, Lawrence Di Bella, Rod Nielson, John Trianatfilis**



Problem definition:  
**SIX-EASY-STEPS**

Digital Soil Mapping  
**DSM**

Case Studies:  
**CEC, ESP and Exch. Ca + Exch. Mg**

**DSM**  
**SIX-EASY-STEPS**

# Introduction



## Australian Sugarcane

Sugarcane (*Saccharum officinarum* L.) occupies ~545,000 ha

70% cultivation in alluvial-estuarine areas, however there are problems because soil  
infertile (sandy > 60 %),  
Acidic (pH < 5.5) and  
sodic (ESP > 15 %)

Implications with regard to;

Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC)  
Nutrients (Exch. Ca + Exch. Mg)  
Unstable (i.e. ESP)

# Introduction – An industry “Soil”ution?

## Six-Easy-Steps Nutrient management guidelines

Step 1: Knowing and understanding our soils.

Step 2: Understanding and managing nutrient processes and losses.

Step 3: Soil testing regularly.

Step 4: Adopting soil-specific nutrient management guidelines.

Step 5: Checking on the adequacy of nutrient inputs.

Step 6: Keeping good records to interpret trends and modify nutrient inputs when/where required.



## Six-Easy-Steps Soil Ameliorants

Lime



Gypsum



## Soil Nutrients

Calcium (Ca)

Magnesium (Mg)

Nitrogen (N)

Phosphorus (P)

Potassium (K)

Sulphur

Micronutrients

# Introduction – An industry “Soil”ution?

## Six-Easy-Steps Nutrient management guidelines

Table 1 – Lime guidelines based on exchangeable soil calcium (Ca)

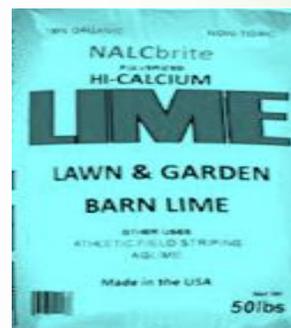
Soil calcium (meq/100g)	Lime application (tonnes/ha)
<0.2	3
0.2–0.4	2.5
0.4–0.6	2
0.6–0.8	1.5
0.8–1.1	1
1.1–1.5	0.5

Table 3 – Gypsum guidelines for sodic soils

ESP (%)	Gypsum rate (tonnes/ha)
<5	0
5–10	5
10–15	7.5
>15	10

## Six-Easy-Steps (Burdekin Valley) Ameliorants

### Lime



Infertility  
CEC (cmol(+)/kg)  
Apply

### Gypsum



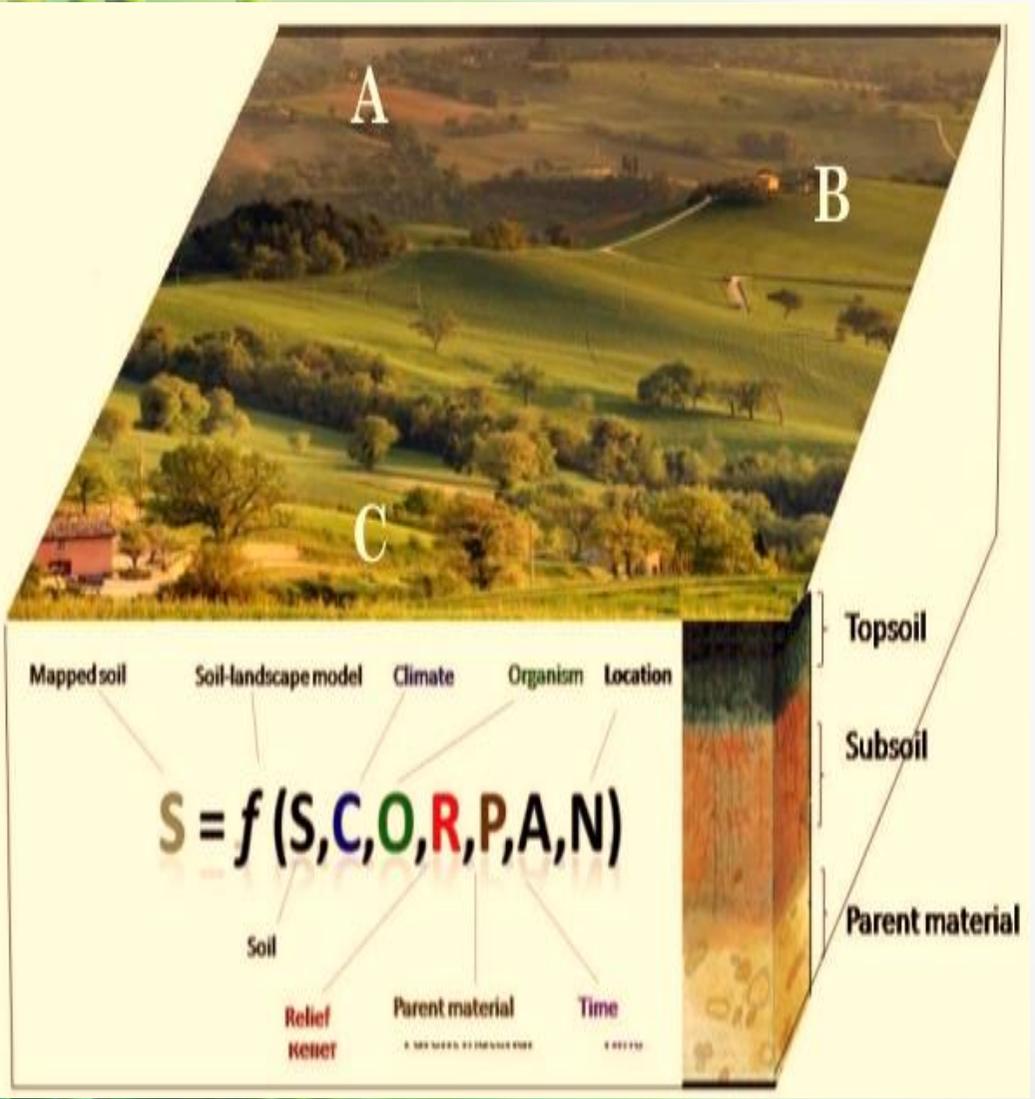
Sodicity  
ESP (%)  
Apply

# Introduction – An industry problem?

Six-Easy-Steps (**Soil** data not so cheap)



# DSM – An innovative “Soil”ution?



## Digital Soil Mapping

Creation and population of spatial information using **Soil** and **Digital** data coupled with **Models** either **Spatial** or **Non-spatial inference**

Three components:

**Soil** and **Digital** data  
**Models**

# Digital data



Table 1. IAEA recommended windows for conventional 3-channel airborne gamma-ray spectrometry (IAEA 1991).

<i>Element analysed</i>	<i>Isotope used</i>	<i>Gamma ray energy MeV</i>	<i>Energy window MeV</i>
Potassium	$^{40}\text{K}$	1.46	1.370–1.570
Uranium	$^{214}\text{Bi}$	1.76	1.660–1.860
Thorium	$^{208}\text{Tl}$	2.61	2.410–2.810

## Gamma-ray spectrometer- RS700

Passive proximal sensor which detects gamma-rays from radioactive isotopes

Measures:

**K**

**U**

**Th**

**TC**

Depth of measurement

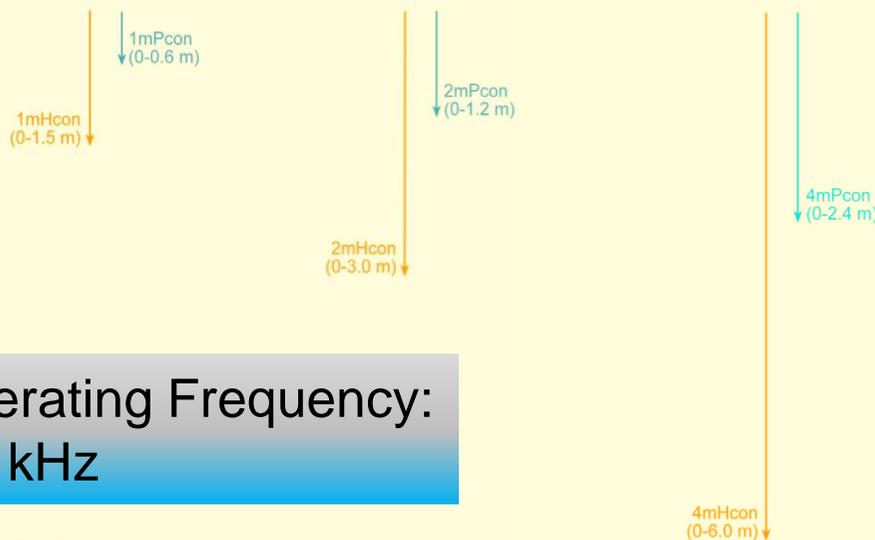
0-0.45 m

Related:

*clay*

*mineralogy*

# Digital data



Operating Frequency:  
9.0 kHz

## Electromagnetic induction: DUALEM-421

Single frequency multi-coil array electromagnetic (EM) instrument

Measures:

Apparent electrical conductivity ( $EC_a$  –mS/m)

Perpendicular (Pcon) and  
Horizontal coplanar (Hcon)

Depth of measurement

1mPcon (0-0.5 m) 1mHCon (0-1.5)  
2mPcon (0-1 m) 2mPcon (0-3)

Related:

*moisture*, *salinity*,  
*clay* and *mineralogy*



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# Comparing management zone maps to address infertility and sodicity in sugarcane fields

Maryem Arshad,

Nan Li, Sam Lamari, Michael Sefton, John Triantafyllis



Problem



Digital Soil Mapping  
**DSM**



Clustering



Management Zones

# DSM – An innovative “Soil”ution?

## DSM

Step 1: Meeting

Step 2: Measurement

Step 3: Modelling

Step 4: Mapping

Step 5: Management

Step 6: Monitoring

Herbert - HCPSL

Soil: CEC  
ESP

Digital: Digital Elevation Model  
 $\gamma$ -ray spectrometry  
Electromagnetic EM

Model: Clustering Digital data

Comparison: DSM  
Traditional soil texture map  
Field delineations

Infertility  
CEC (cmol(+)/kg)  
Apply



Sodictiy  
ESP (%)  
Apply

# Introduction – An industry “Soil”ution?

## Six-Easy-Steps Nutrient management guidelines

Table 1 – Lime guidelines for acid soils (when pH water < 5.5)

CEC (meq/100g)	Lime application (tonnes/ha)
< 3.0	2.25
3.0 – 6.0	4
> 6.1	5

Table 4 – Gypsum guidelines for sodic soils

ESP (%)	Gypsum rate (tonnes/ha)
< 5	0
5 - 10	2
10 - 15	4
> 15	6

## Six-Easy-Steps (Herbert Valley)

### Soil ameliorants

#### Lime



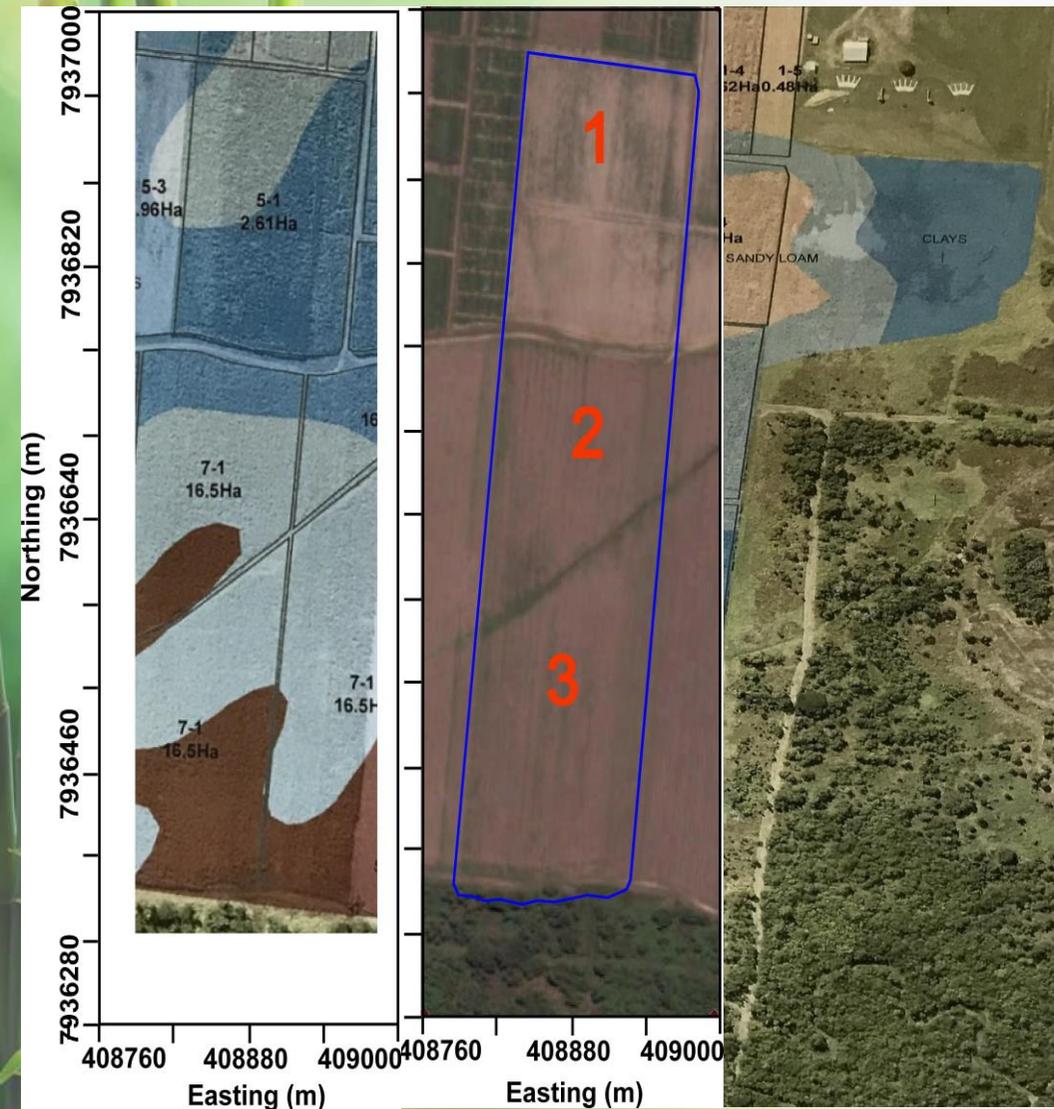
Infertility  
CEC (cmol(+)/kg)  
Apply

#### Gypsum



Sodicity  
ESP (%)  
Apply

# Management zones: Traditional/Field



## Herbert Sugarcane

Alluvial soil varies and has been mapped using Traditional Soil texture map

Clay

Silty Clay

Terrace Silt Loam

Best-practice requires knowledge of variation to max. yield and min. losses

When soil texture map is unavailable farmers use Field delineations

Field 1

Field 2

Field 3

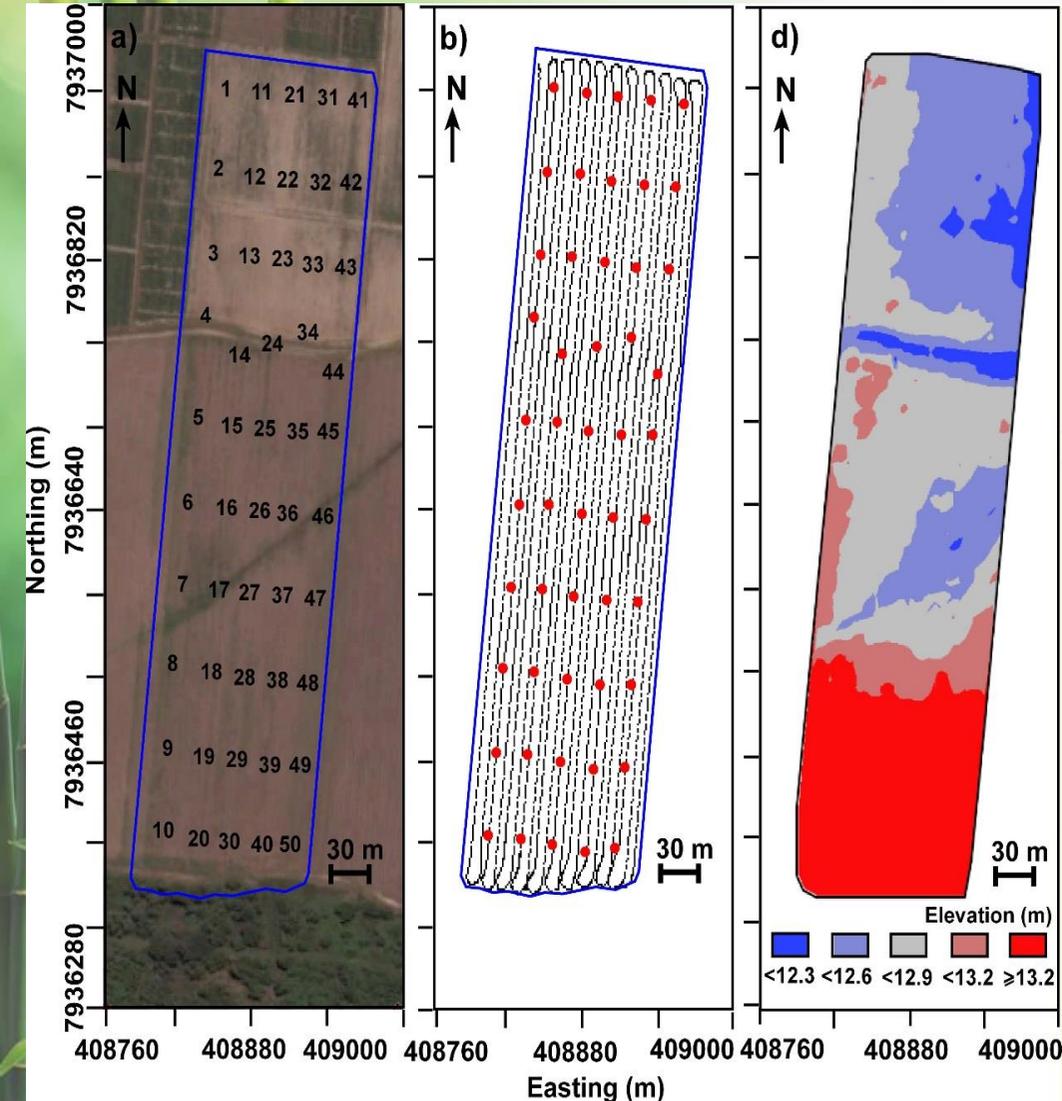
# Aim



## In multiple fields at HCPSL:

- a) Can we generate a **DSMs** of management zones to manage **Soil**;
  - i) **Infertility** (**CEC**) and
  - ii) **Sodicity** (**ESP**)using mathematical models and proximally sensed **Digital data**
  
- b) Which method of creating management zones is optimal
  - i) **DSM** (DEM,  **$\gamma$ -ray** and **EM**)
  - ii) **Traditional soil texture map**
  - iii) **Field delineations**

# Data collection: Digital & Soil

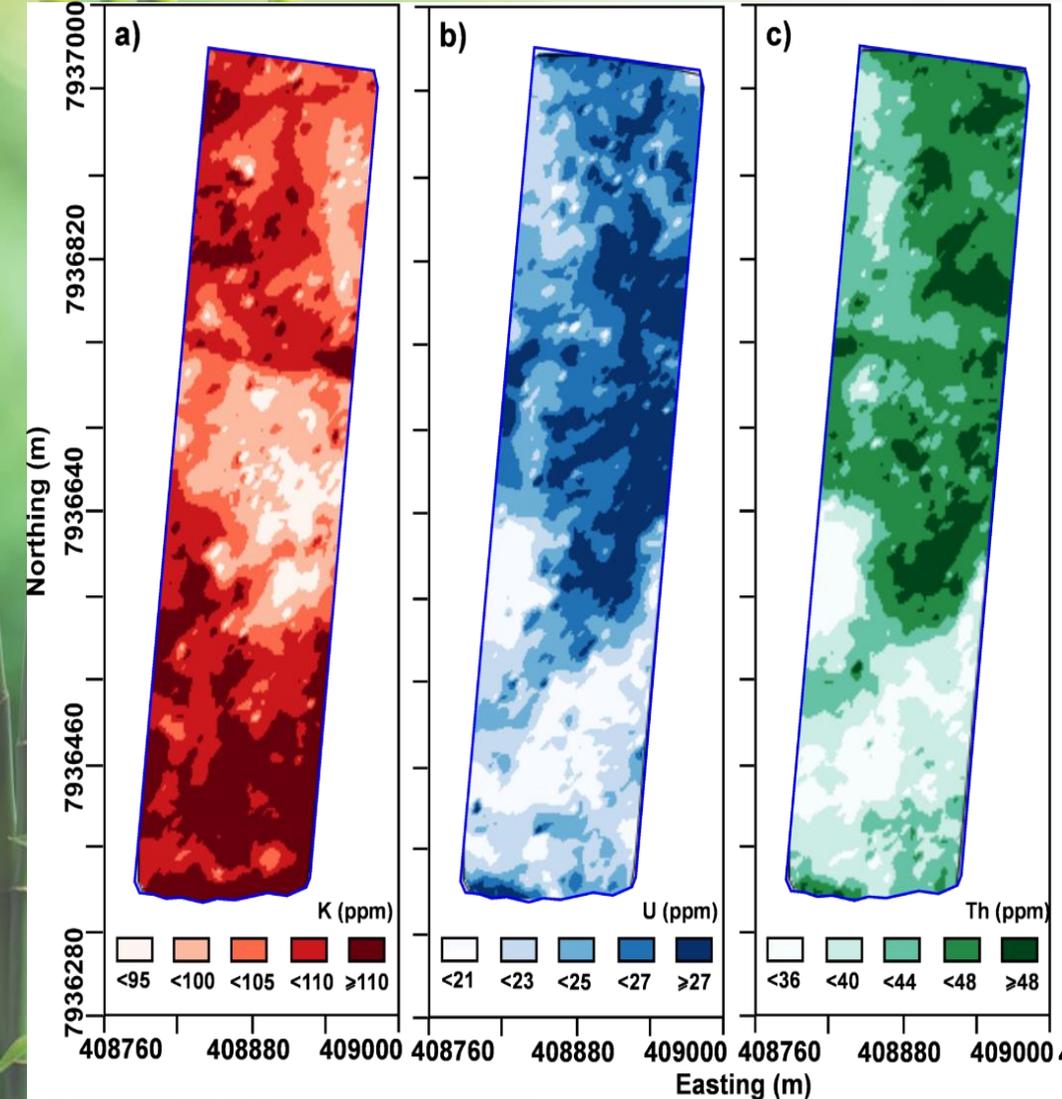


## Data collection and sampling

**Digital** data was collected from 21 transects (6 m apart) using  
**Digital Elevation Model**  
**γ-ray spectrometry**  
**Electromagnetic EM**

Soil samples were collected from  
**50 sites**  
**Topsoil (0-0.3 m)**

# Digital data

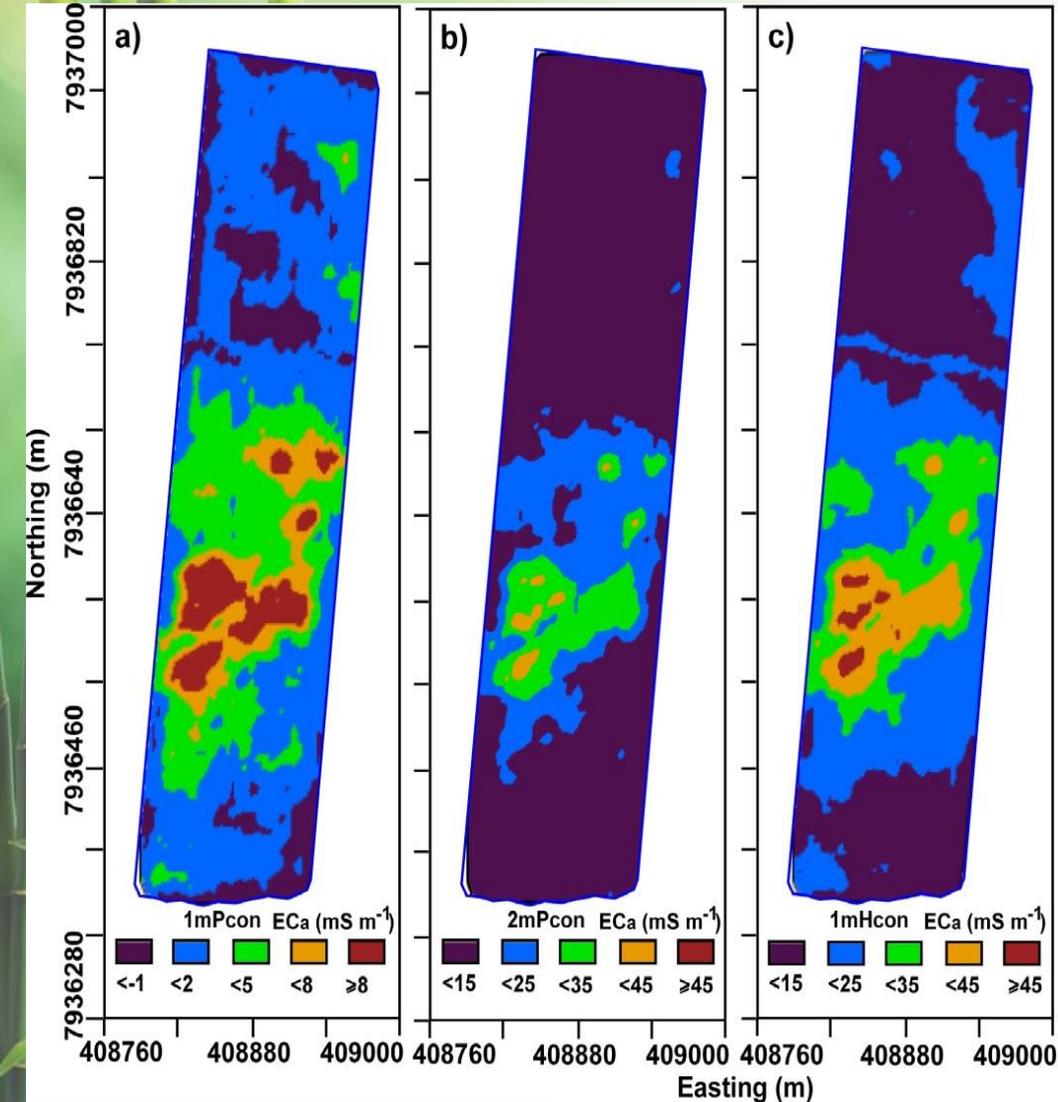


## Gamma-ray spectrometer- RS700

K,  
U and  
Th



# Digital data



## Electromagnetic induction: DUALEM-421

1mPcon,  
2mPcon and  
1mHcon



# Soil data



**Analysis: time consuming**

Chemical (**CEC** and **ESP**)

~24 hours

Washing

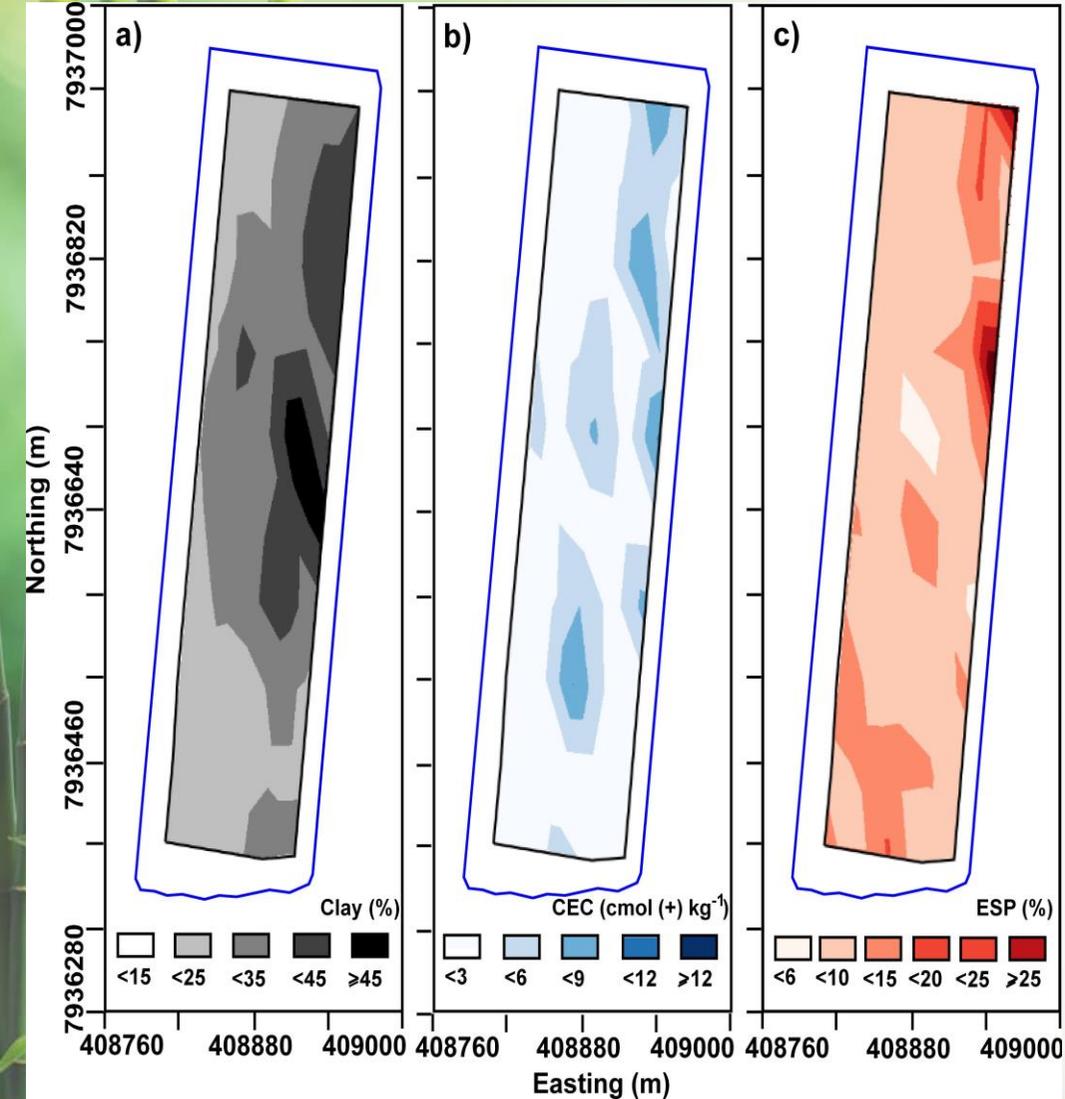
Extraction

Analysis

Calculations

\$180

# Soil data



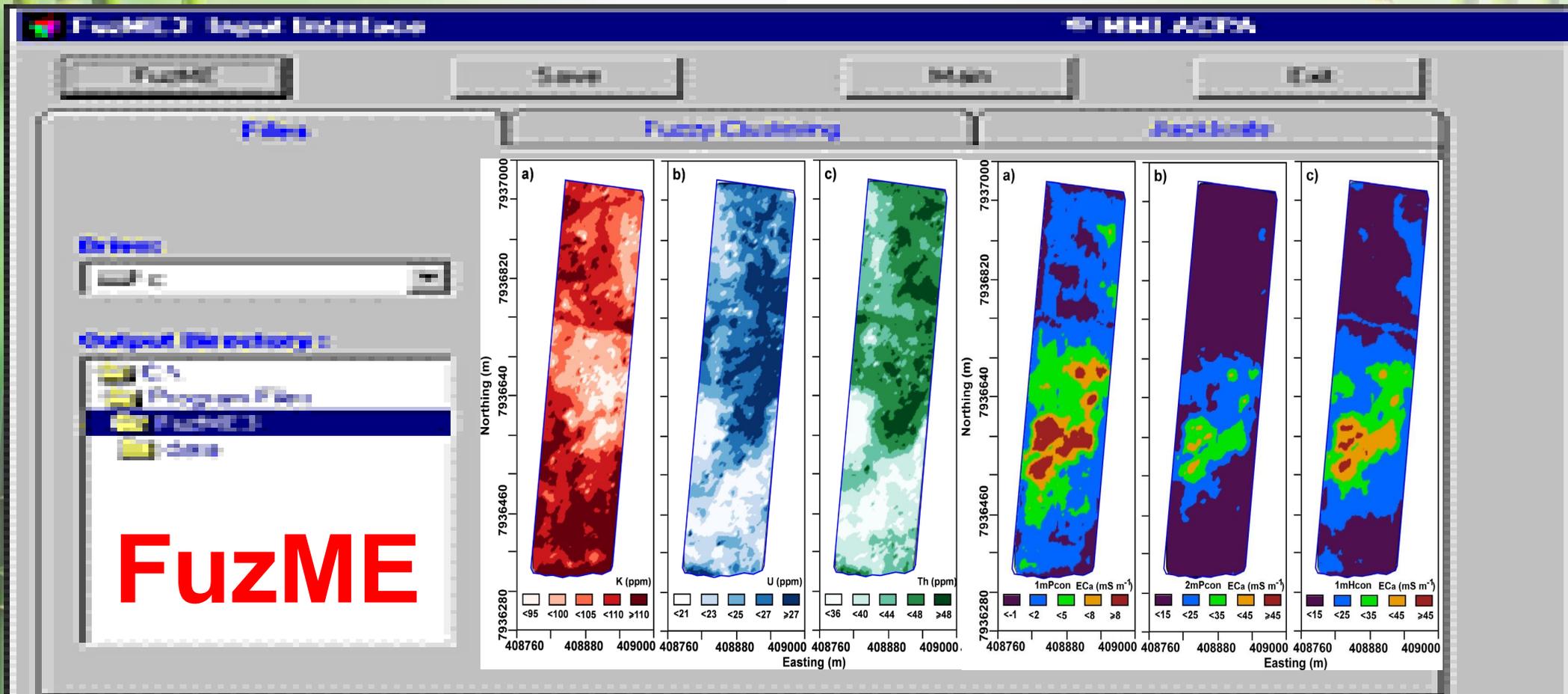
Test data to compare

Clay  
CEC and  
ESP

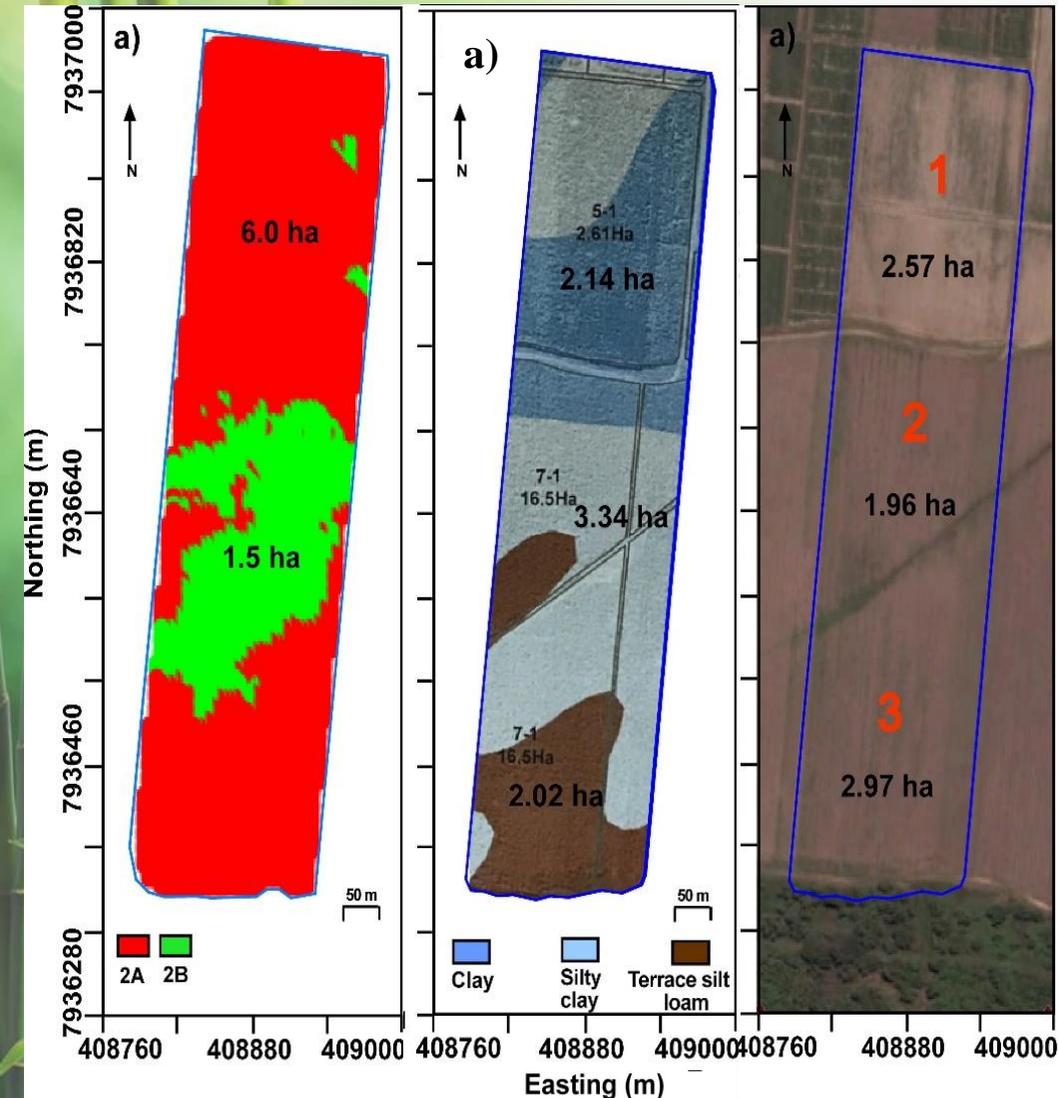


# Model: Clustering digital data

## DSM - zones



# Management zones

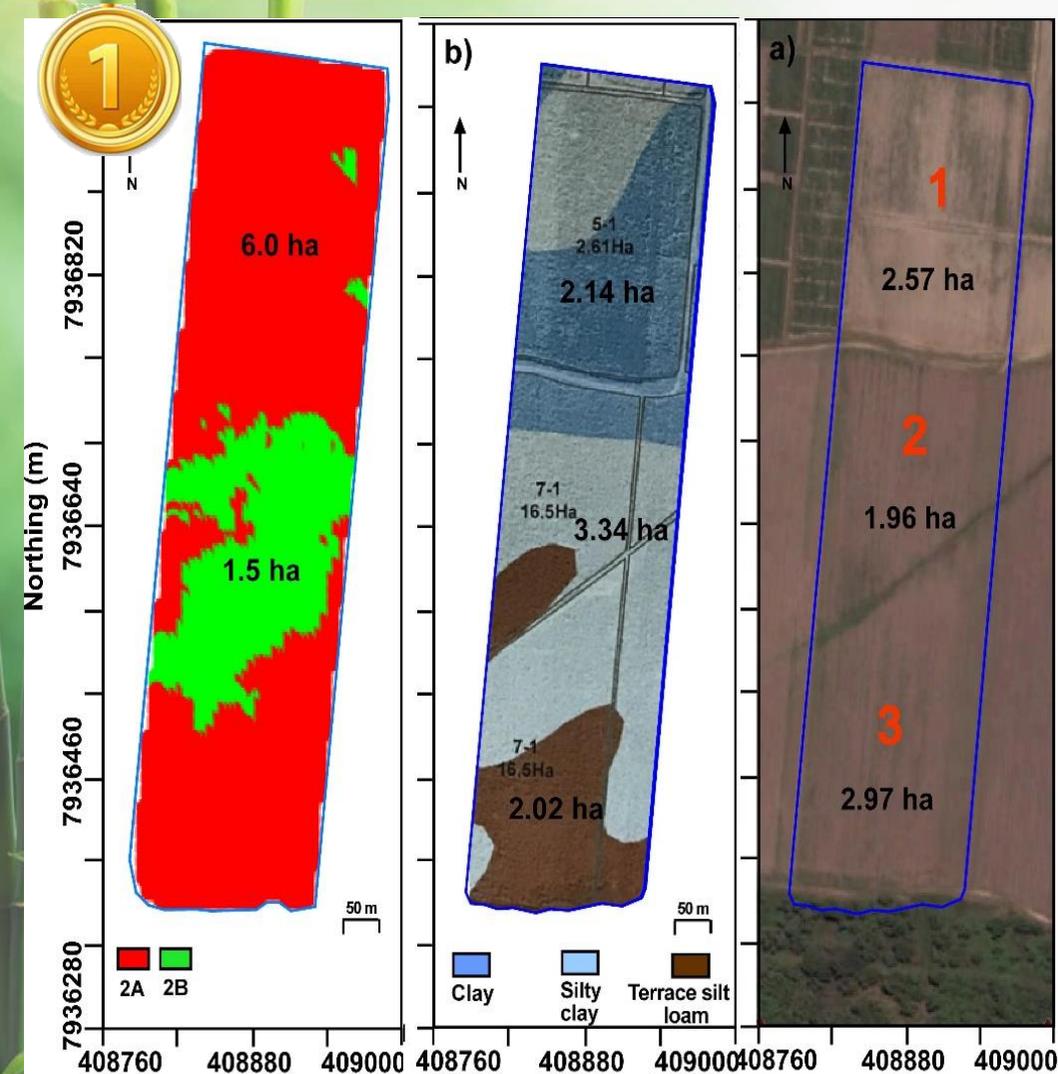


**DSM = Digital data + clustering**

**Traditional map = Soil Texture**

**Field delineation = 3 fields**

# Which one best to manage Soil infertility?

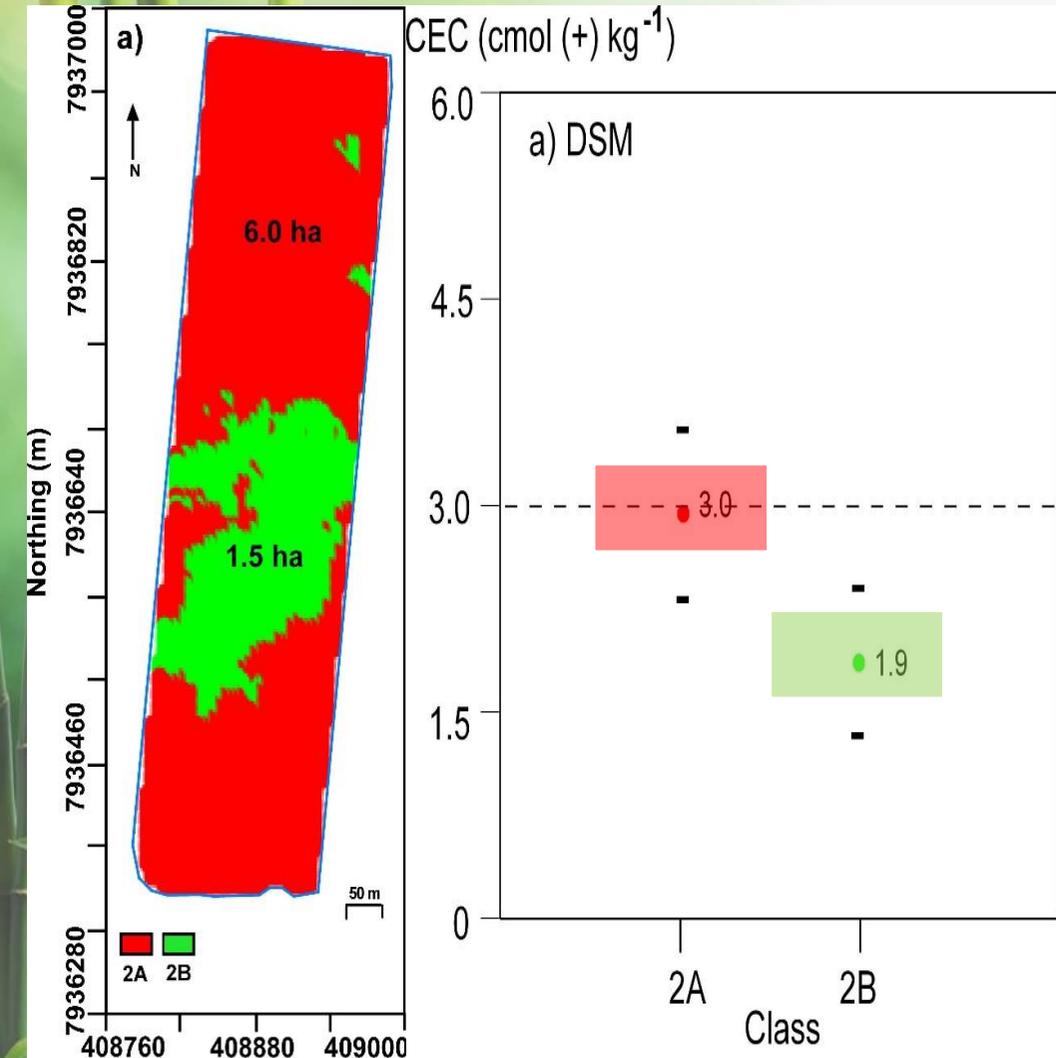


## Mean square prediction error (MSPE)

Properties	DSM k = 2	DSMk = 3	DSM k = 4	Traditional (k = 3)	Field (k = 3)
CEC ([cmol(+)/kg])	<b>2.20</b>	2.21	2.34	2.37	2.41



# Lime application rate to DSM



## Six-Easy-Step (Herbert Valley)

Infertility

CEC (cmol(+)/kg)

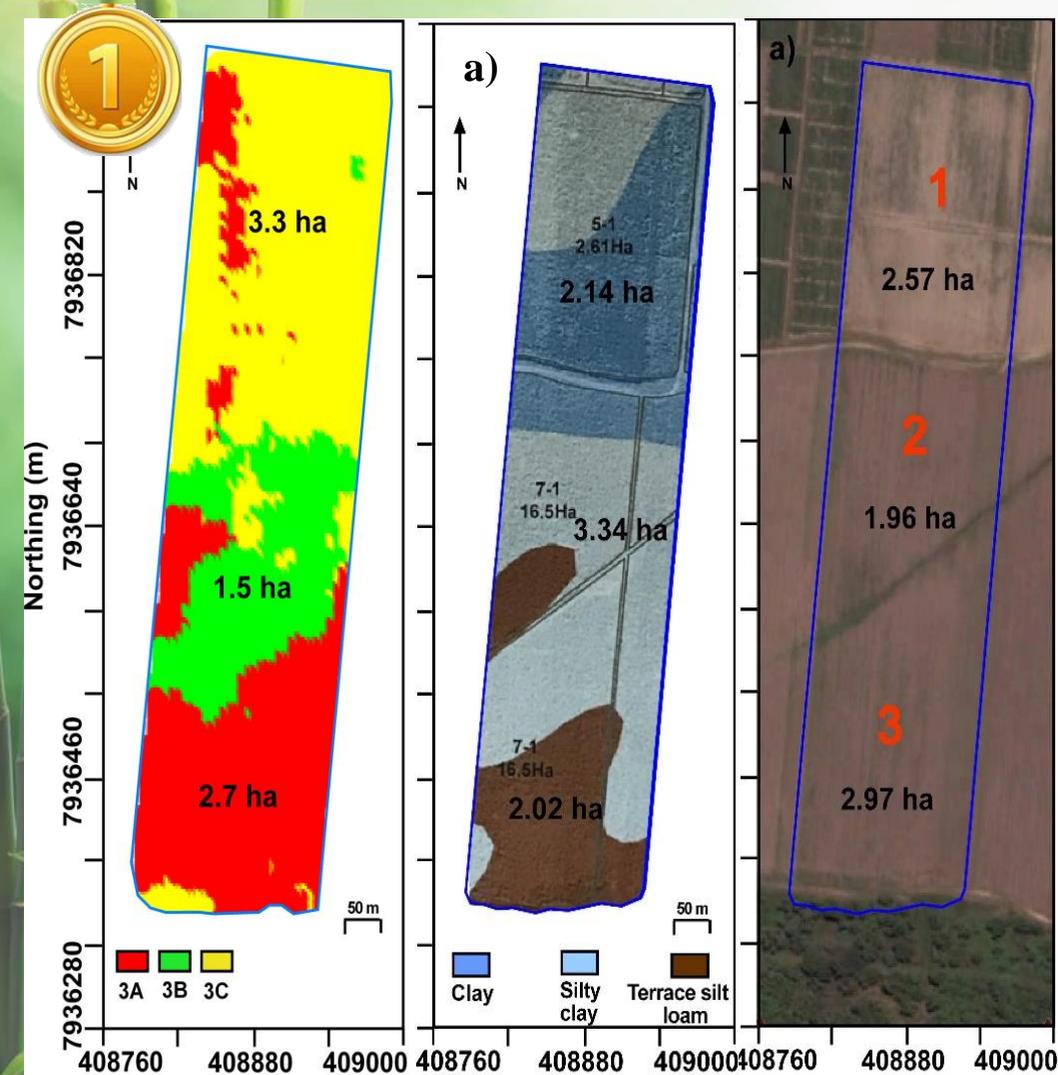
Apply



**Table 1 – Lime guidelines for acid soils (when pH water < 5.5)**

CEC (meq/100g)	Lime application (tonnes/ha)
< 3.0	2.25
3.0 – 6.0	4
> 6.1	5

# Which one best to manage Soil sodicity?

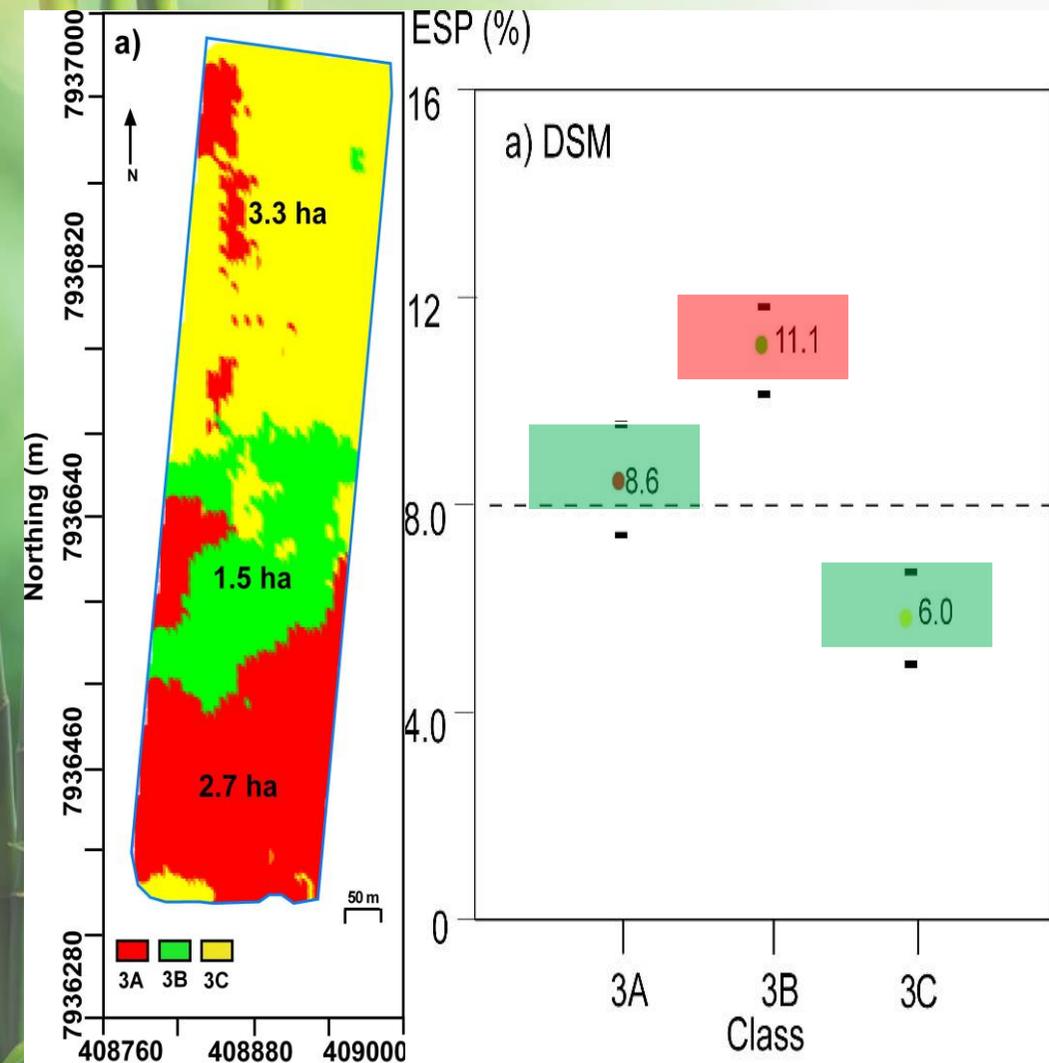


## Mean square prediction error (MSPE)

Properties	DSM k = 2	DSM k = 3	DSM k = 4	Traditional (k = 3)	Field (k = 3)
ESP (%)	5.76	5.60	6.91	7.04	6.2



# Gypsum application rate to DSM



## Six-Easy-Step (Herbert Valley)

Sodicity  
ESP (%)  
Apply



**Table 4 – Gypsum guidelines for sodic soils**

ESP (%)	Gypsum rate (tonnes/ha)
< 5	0
5 - 10	2
10 - 15	4
> 15	6



# Determining an optimal mathematical model, sample size and ancillary data for mapping **Exch. Ca** and **Mg**

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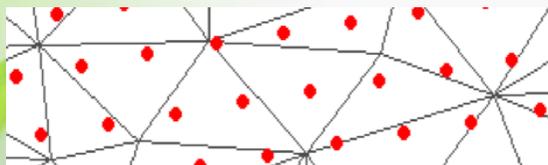
Nan Li,  
Michael Sefton, John Triantafilis



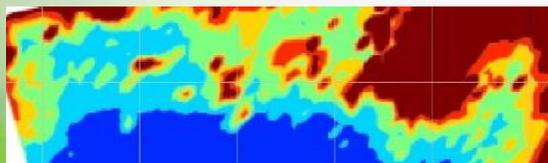
Introduction



Problem  
Definition



**Soil** sampling and  
**digital** data



Results and  
conclusion

# DSM – An innovative “Soil”ution?

DSM

Step 1: Meeting

Step 2: Measurement

Step 3: Modelling

Step 4: Mapping

Step 5: Management

Step 6: Monitoring

Burdekin – DAVCO Pty Ltd.

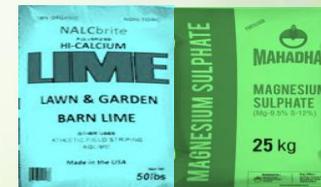
**Soil:** Calcium (Ca)  
Magnesium (Mg)

**Digital:**  $\gamma$ -ray spectrometry  
Electromagnetic EM

**Model:** Correlate Digital + Soil

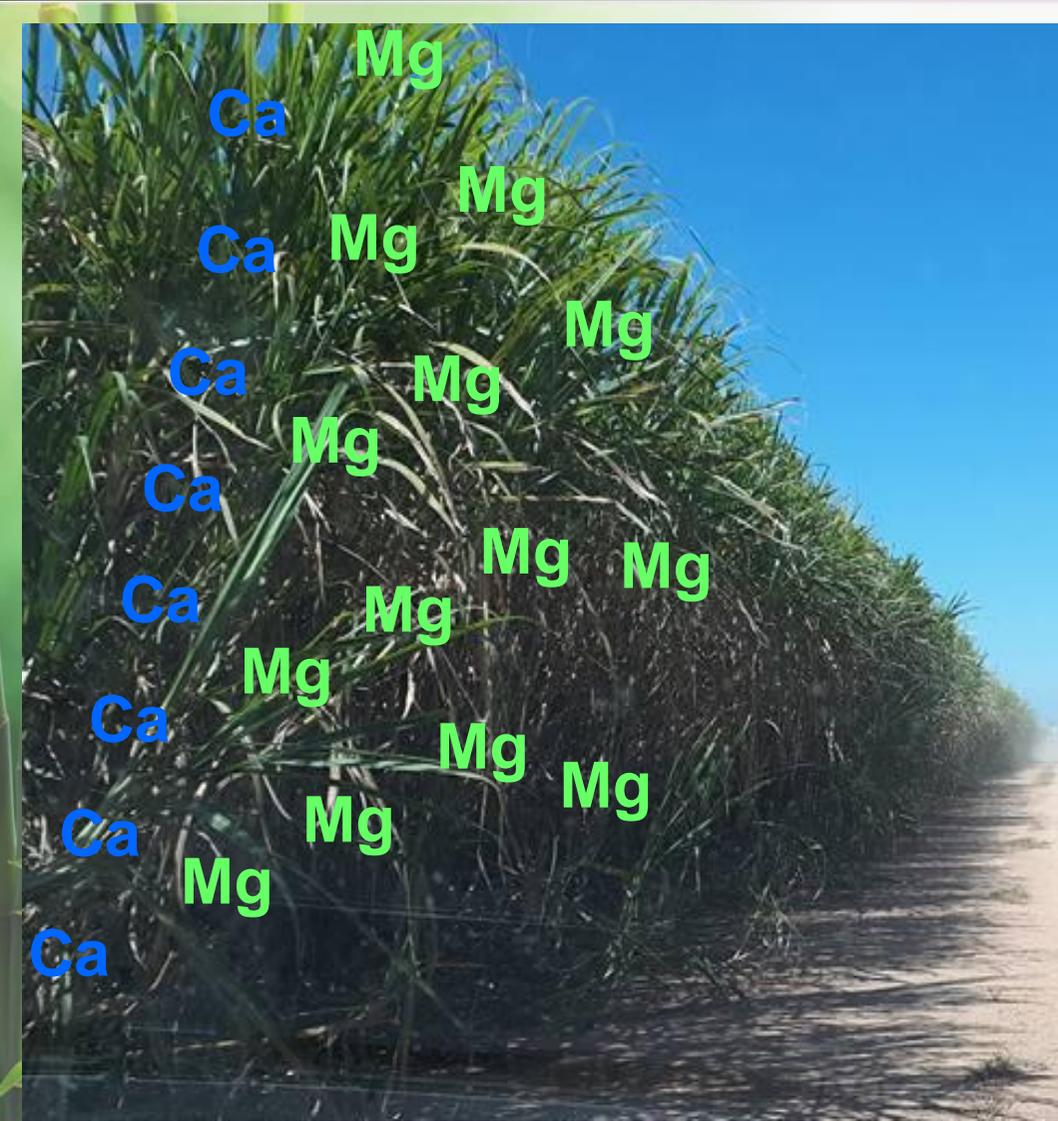
**Comparison:** LMM, RK,  
RF, SVM

Exch. Ca  
(cmol(+)/kg)  
Apply



Exch. Mg  
(cmol(+)/kg)  
Apply

# Introduction



## Why Ca and Mg

**Ca** is important:

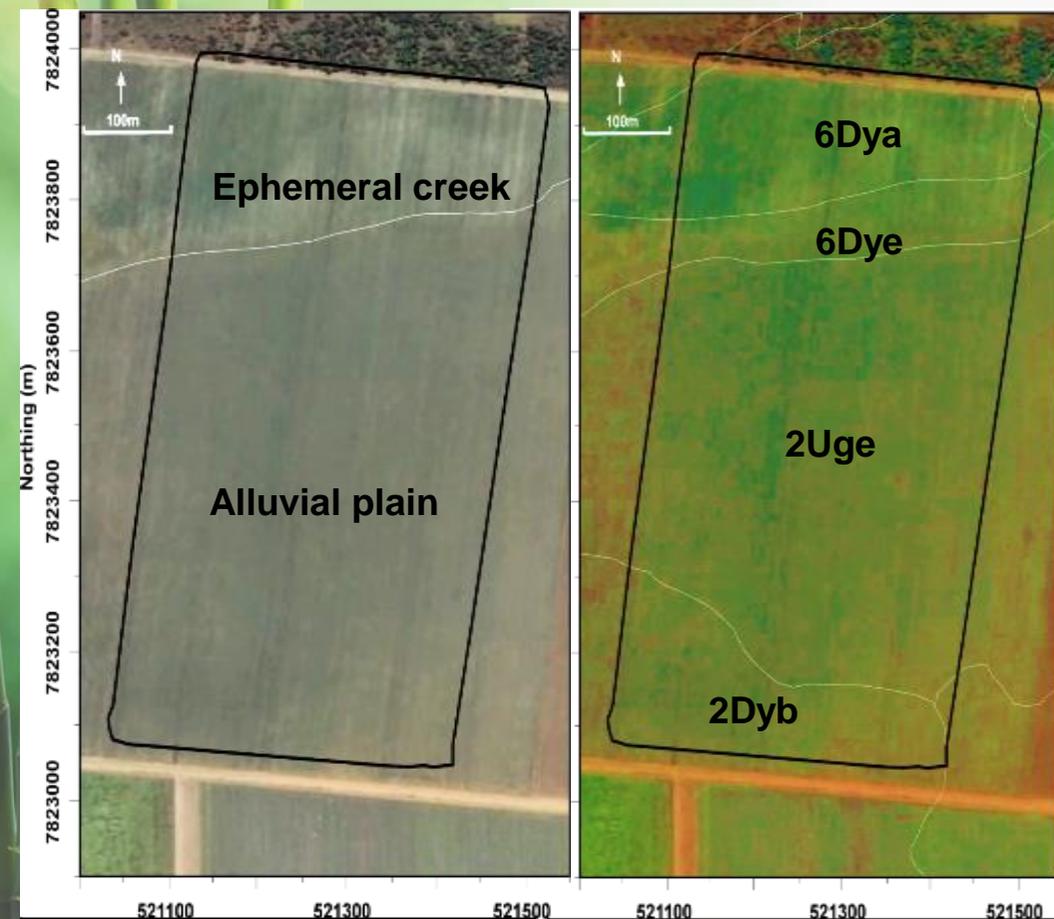
- i) plant roots and leaves
- ii) neutralize excess acid or alkaline soil

**Mg** is central component of chlorophyll

- i) drive photochemistry
- ii) harvest solar energy
- iii) major role in N uptake

Soil deficient in **Ca** and **Mg** leads to issues like chlorosis, necrosis, curling of plant leaves with ultimate cessation of plant growth

# Problem definition



## Burdekin Sugarcane growing area

Sugarcane farmers apply fertilisers for

Ca and

Mg

using “*One rate fits all*” approach.

It could be using ‘*One rate fits all*’ approach based on

Soil Order map

Lime guidelines based on Exch. Ca		Magnesium guidelines based on Exch. Mg	
Exch. Ca (meq/100g)	Lime (t/ha)	Exch. Mg (meq/100g)	Mg (kg/ha)
<0.2	3	<0.05	150
0.2-0.4	2.5	0.06-0.10	125
0.4-0.6	2	0.11-0.15	100
0.6-0.8	1.5	0.16-0.20	75
0.8-1.1	1	0.21-0.25	50
1.1-1.5	0.5	>0.25	0

In Burdekin, this is done using six-easy-steps nutrient management guidelines

# Problem definition



## Nutrient Management

Fertilizer application practice requires prior soil information about

Exch. Ca

Exch. Mg

Unfortunately, obtaining these information using traditional method is time-consuming and expensive

Moreover, information are required **across the field** to optimise yield and productivity

# Amis



In a sugarcane field in Burdekin Valley:

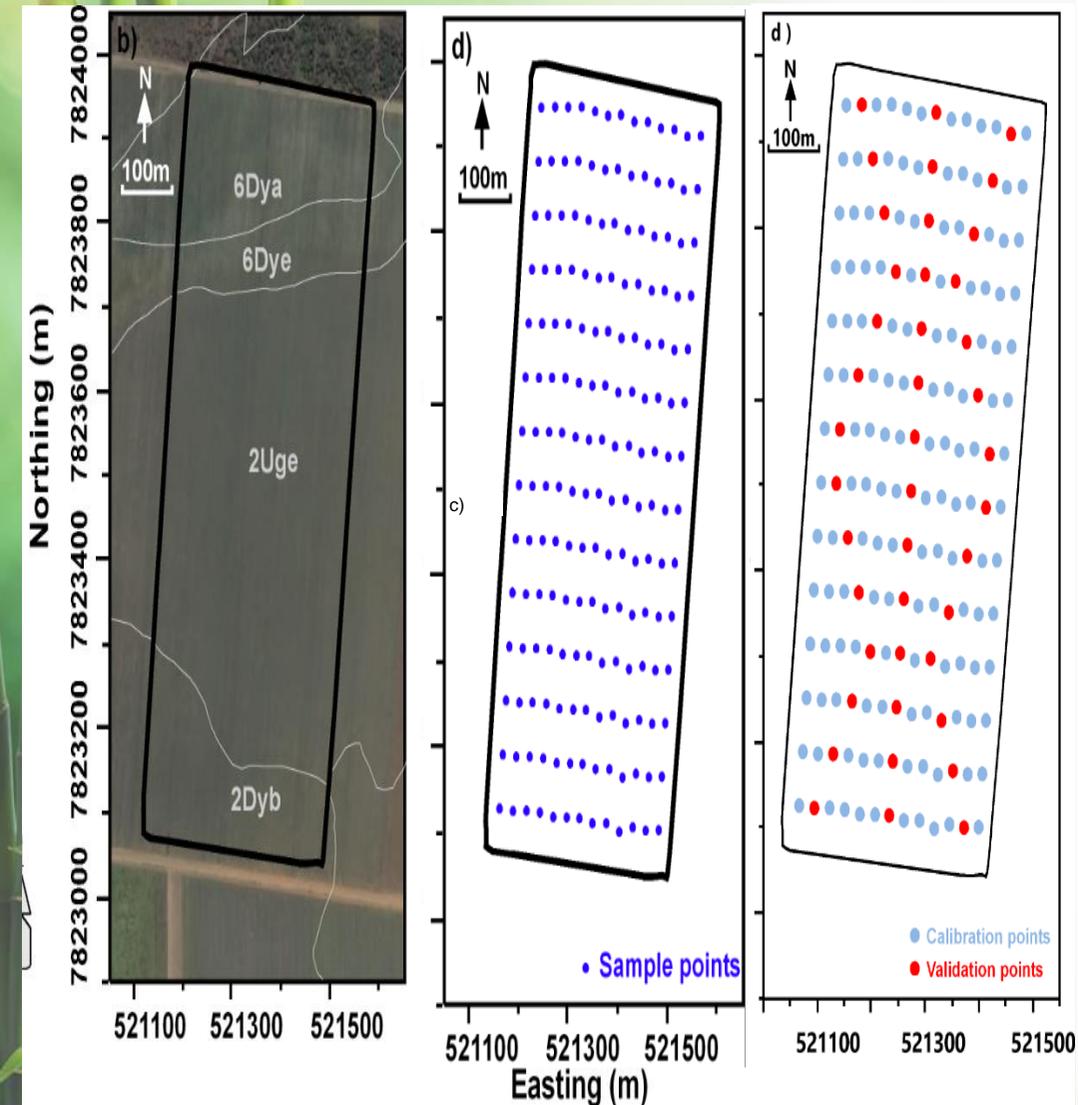
Generate **DSMs** of

**Exch. Ca** and

**Exch. Mg**

- 1) Which **mathematical model** is best?
- 2) How many **soil** samples do we need?
- 3) Which **digital** data is superior?

# Soil sampling and analysis



## Soil sampling and analysis

Soil samples 182

Calibration 140 samples

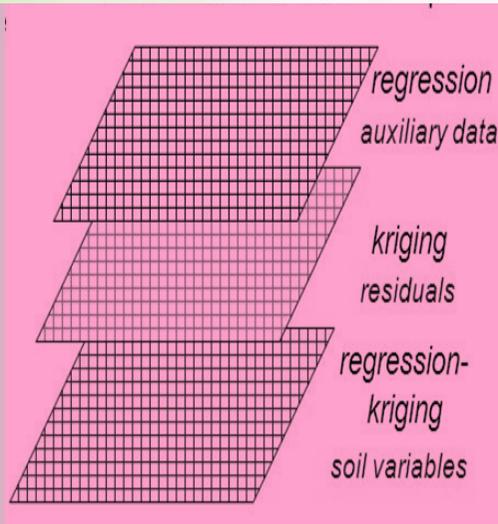
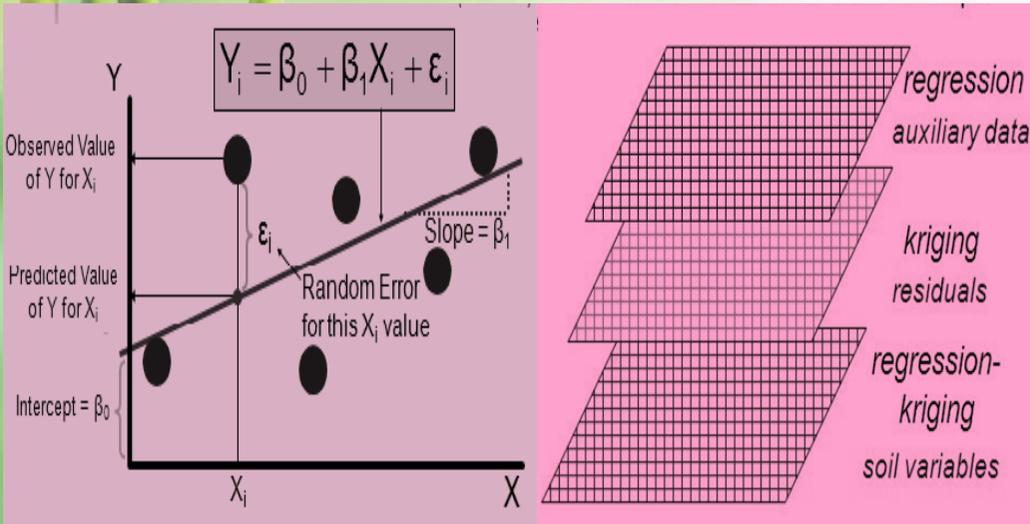
Validation 42 samples

Laboratory analysis

Tucker's method (1974)



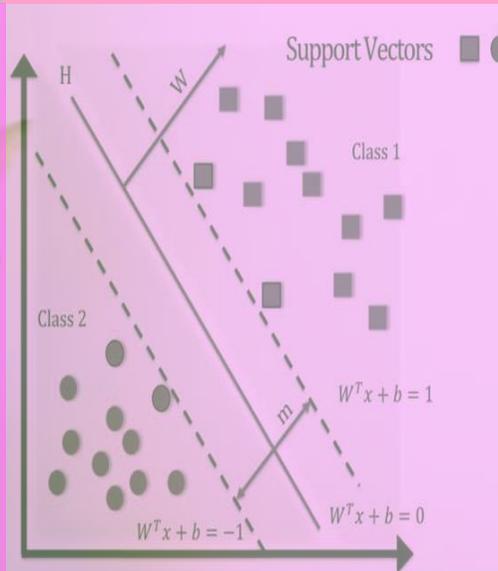
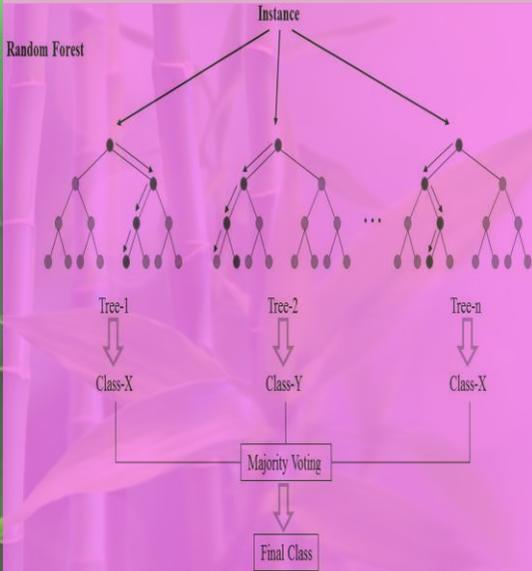
# 1) Which model is best?



## Mathematical models

Linear Mixed Model  
(LMM)

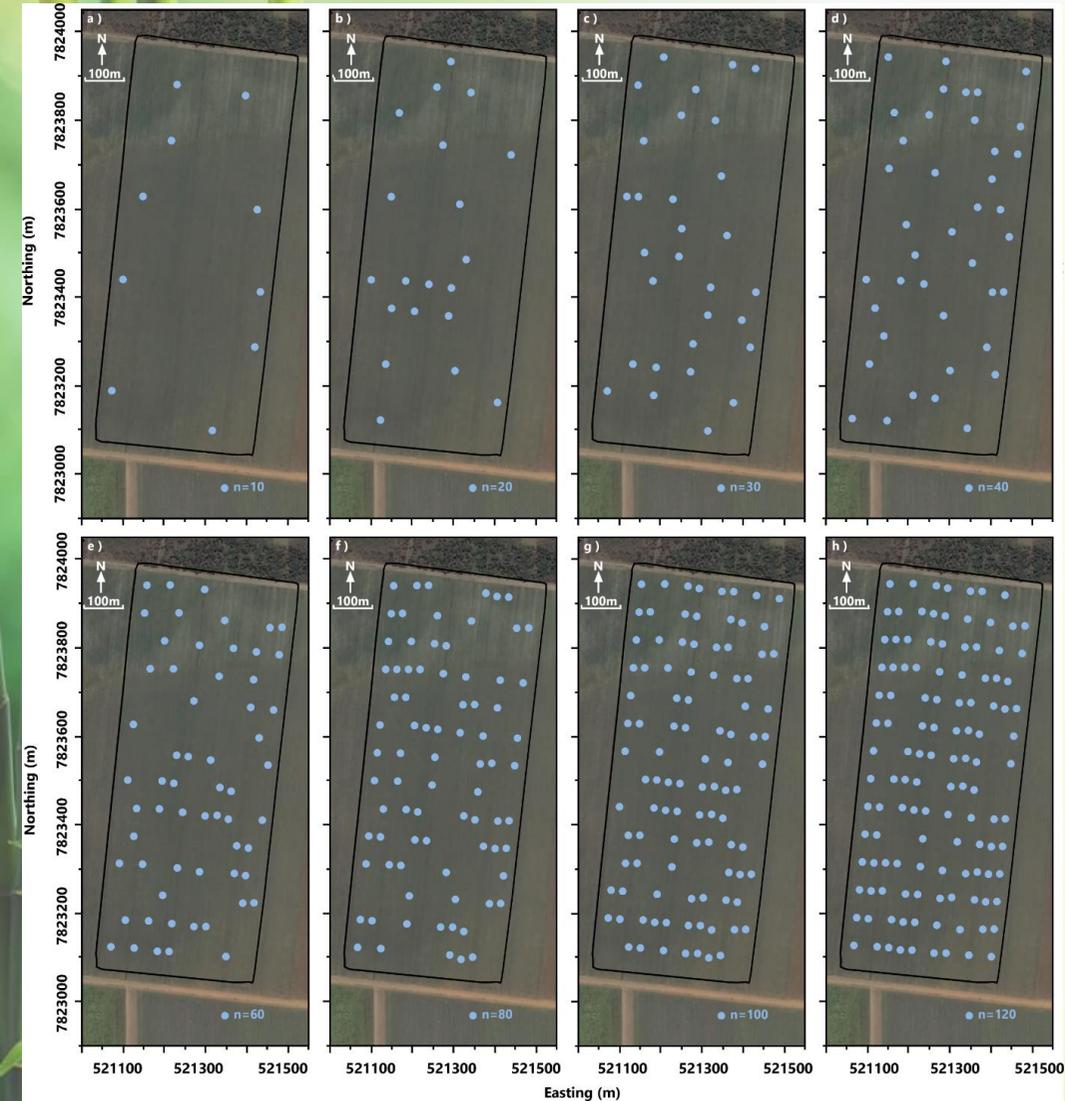
Regression Kriging  
(RK)



Random Forests  
(RF)

Supportive Vector Machine  
(SVM)

## 2) How many **soil** samples?



Conditioned Latin hypercube

10

20

30

40

60

80

100

120

# 3) Which digital data is best?



## Digital data

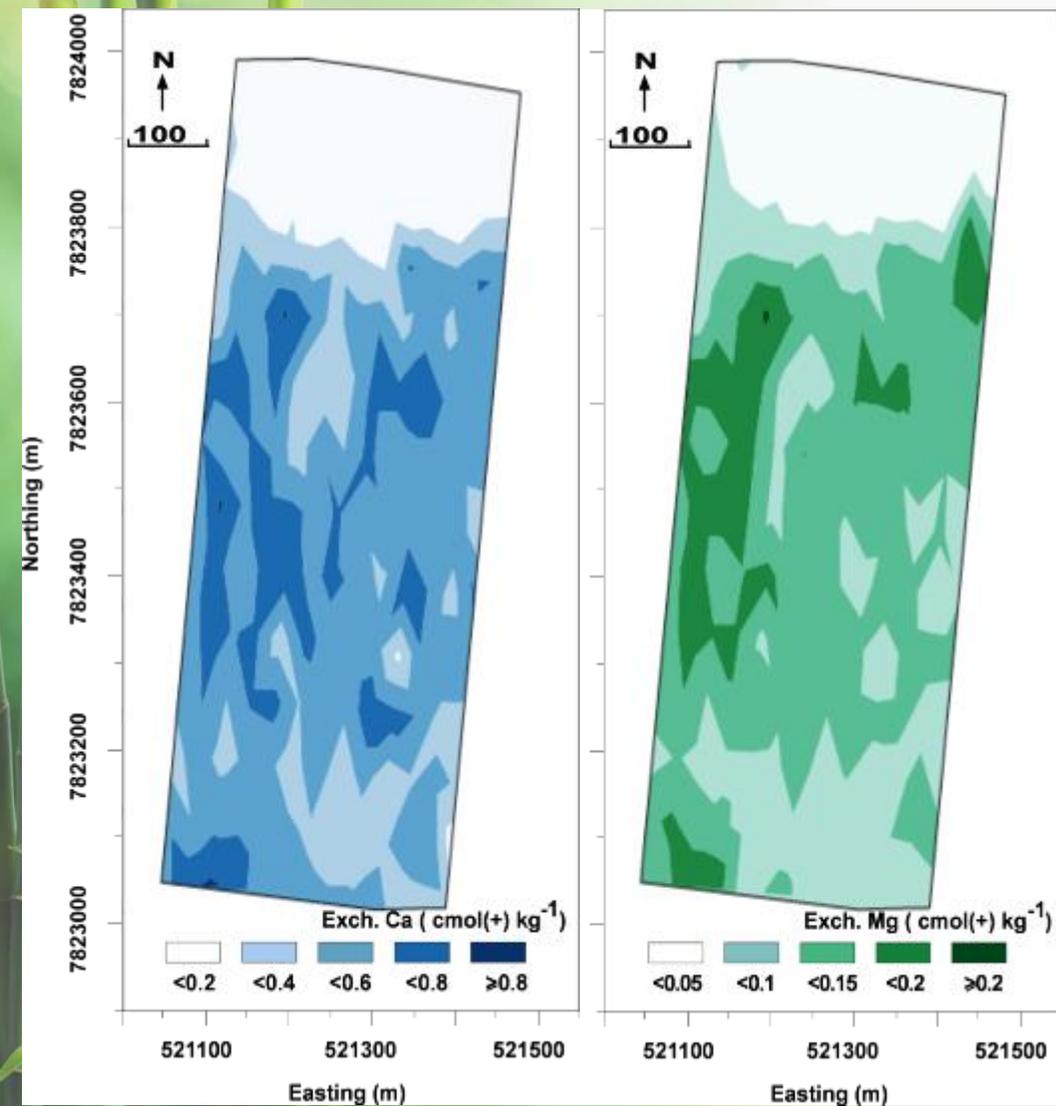
### Gamma-ray spectrometry: RS700

Potassium (K),  
Uranium (U),  
Thorium (Th) and  
Total count (TC)

### DUALEM-421

1mPcon (0-0.6 m)  
1mHcon (0-1.0 m)  
2mPcon (0-1.2 m)  
2mHcon (0-3.0 m)

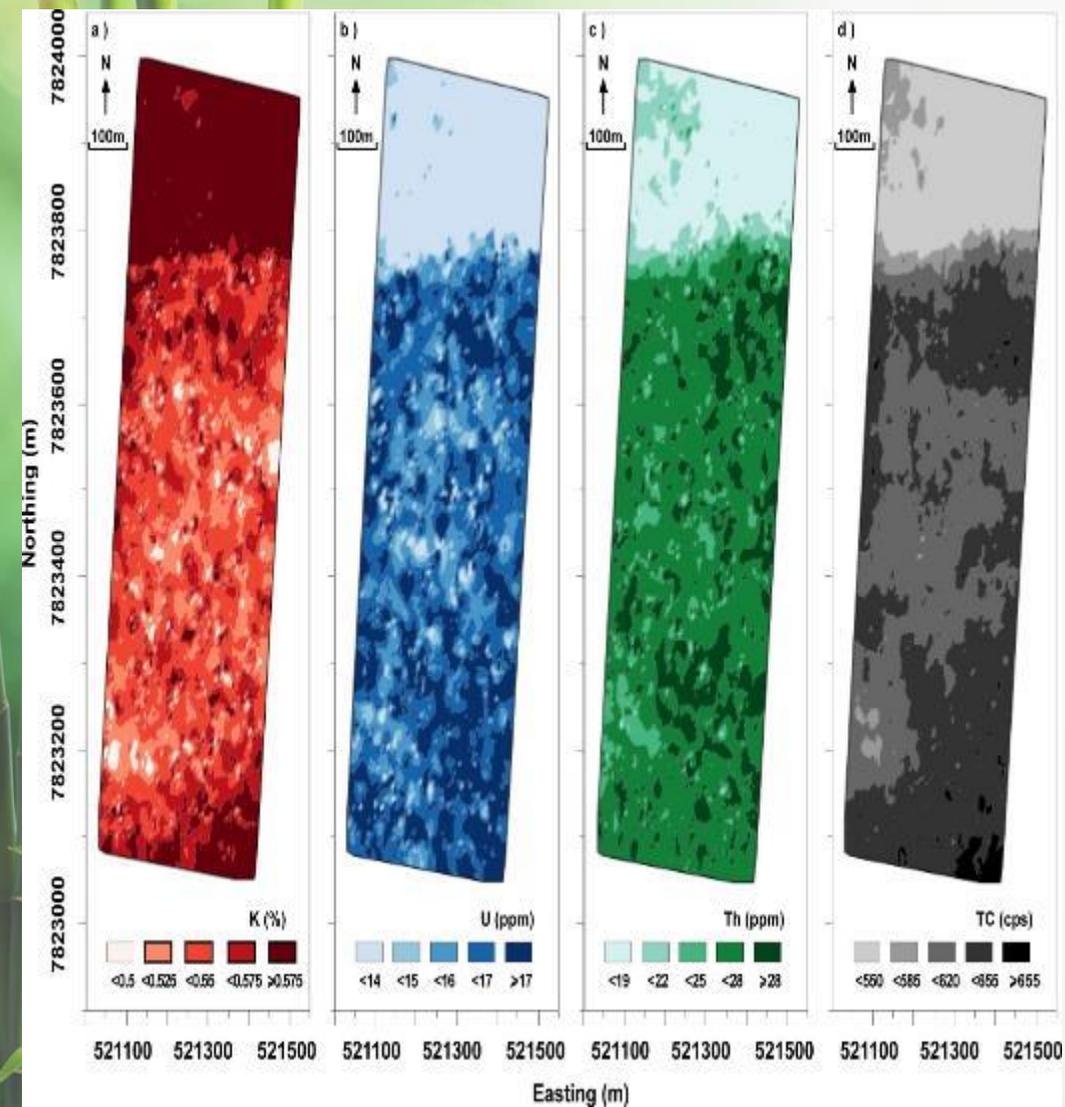
# Results: Soil data



Exch. Ca and Exch. Mg



# Results: Digital data ( $\gamma$ -ray)



## Gamma-ray spectrometry: RS700

Potassium(K),  
Uranium(U),  
Thorium(Th) and  
Total count(TC)

*Measures  $\gamma$ -rays in topsoil (0-0.45 m)*

# Results: Digital data (EM)



## Electromagnetic induction: DUALEM-421

### 1m coils

Measures  $EC_a$  in topsoil

1mPcon 0-0.6 m

1mHcon 0-1.0 m

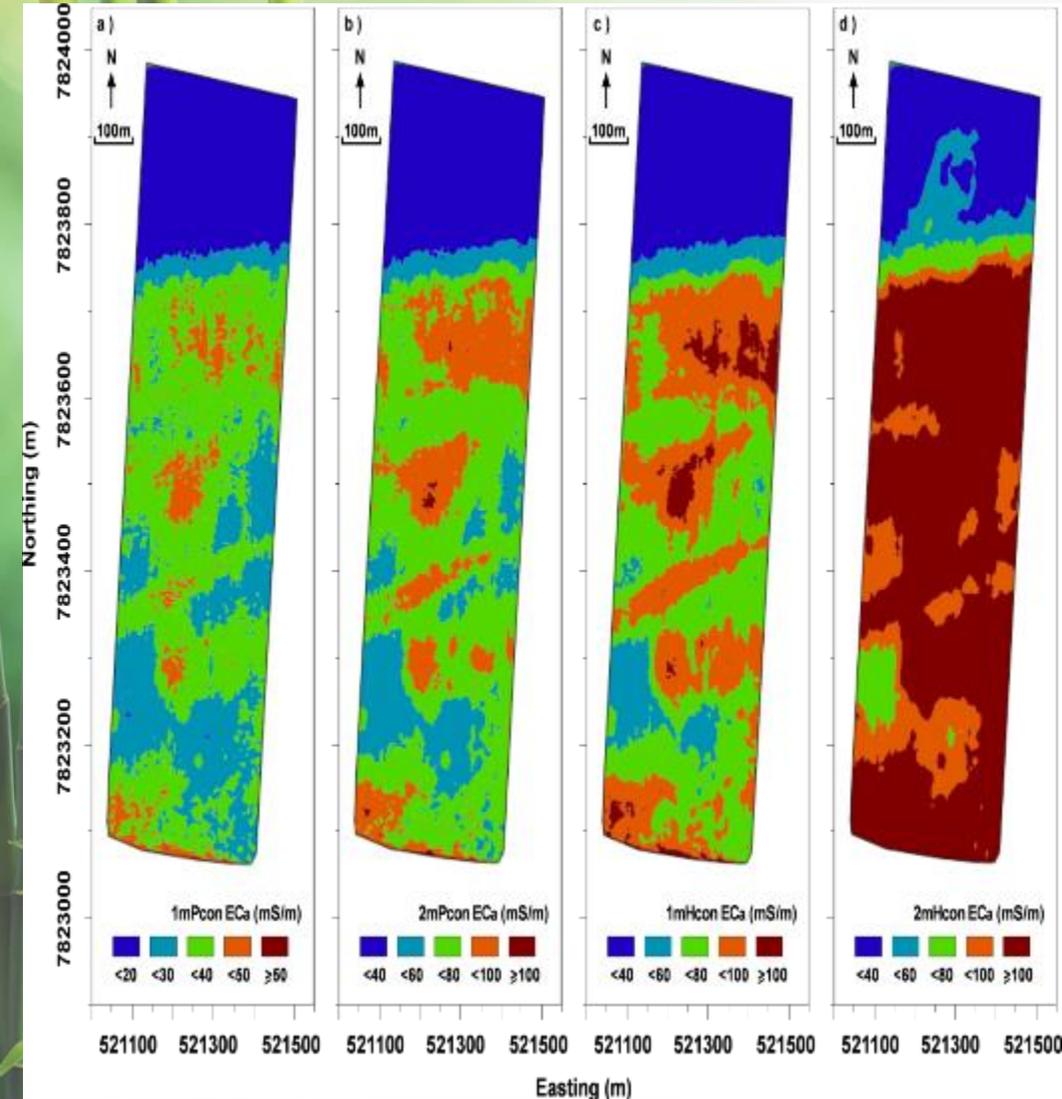
### 2m coils

Measures  $EC_a$  in subsurface

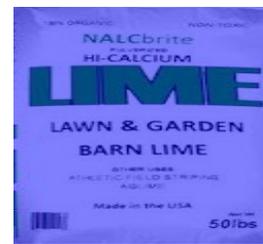
2mPcon 0-1.2 m

2mHcon 0-3.0 m

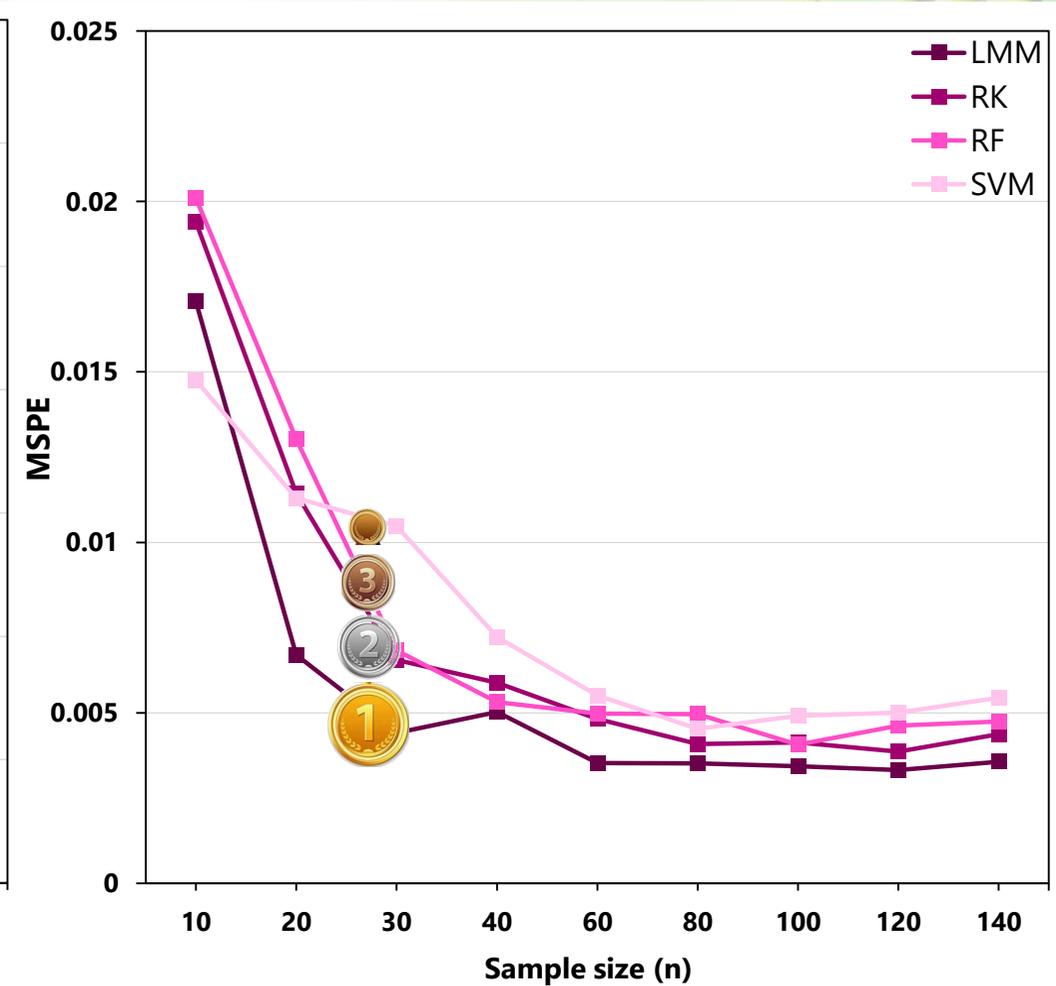
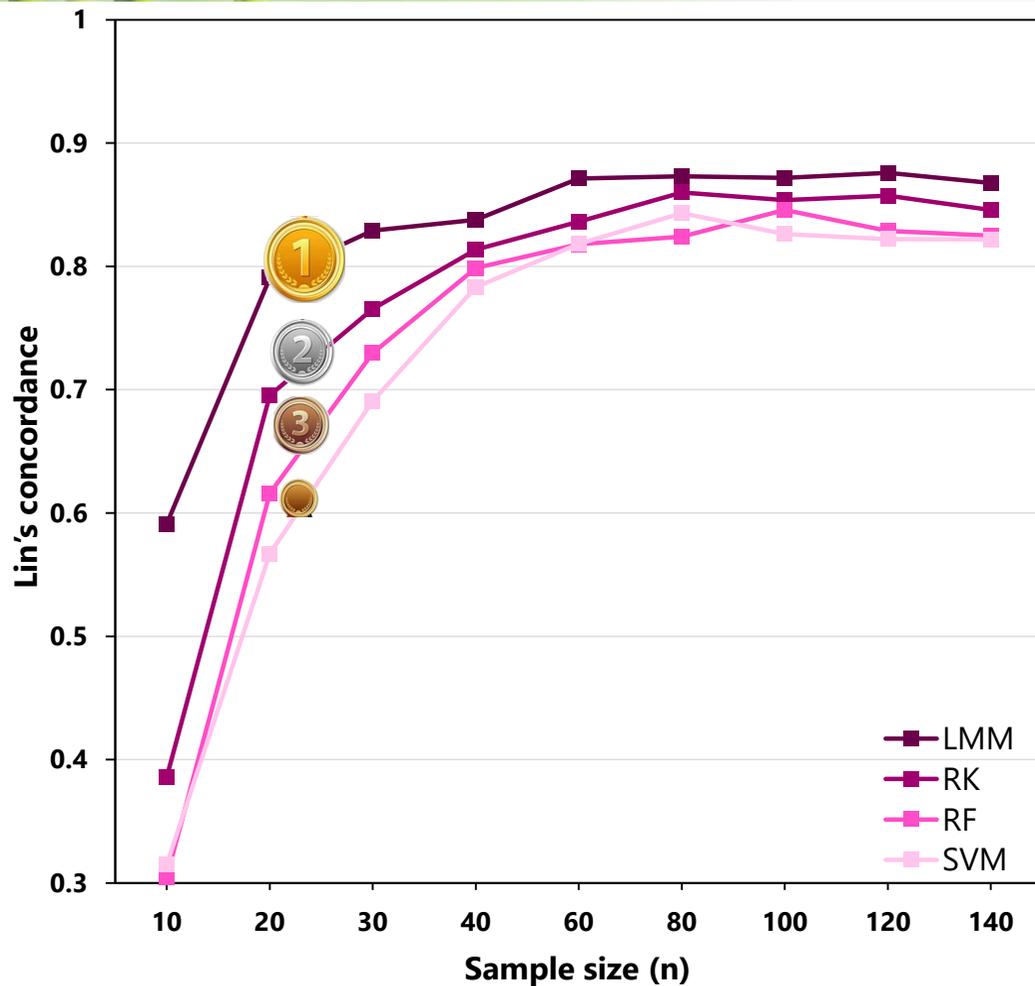
*Measures  $EC_a$*



# 1. Which model is best?



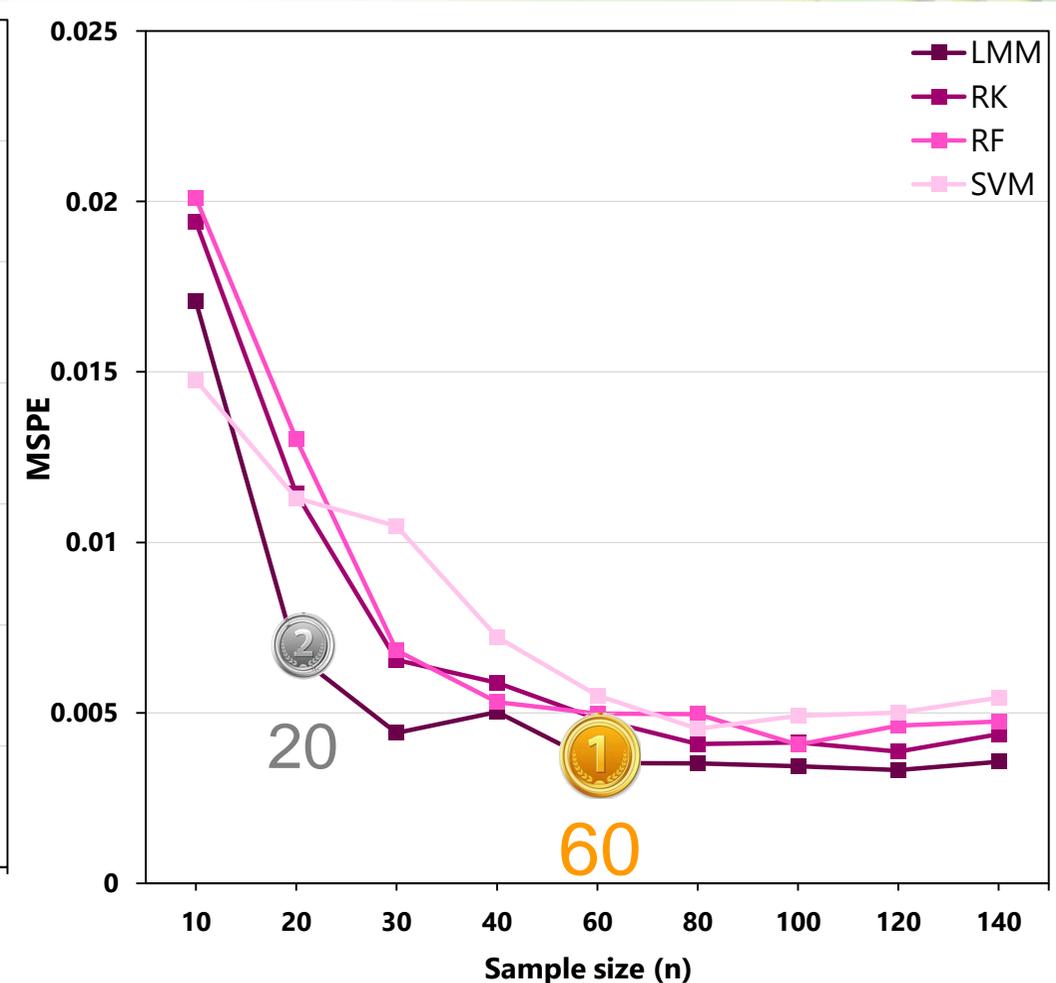
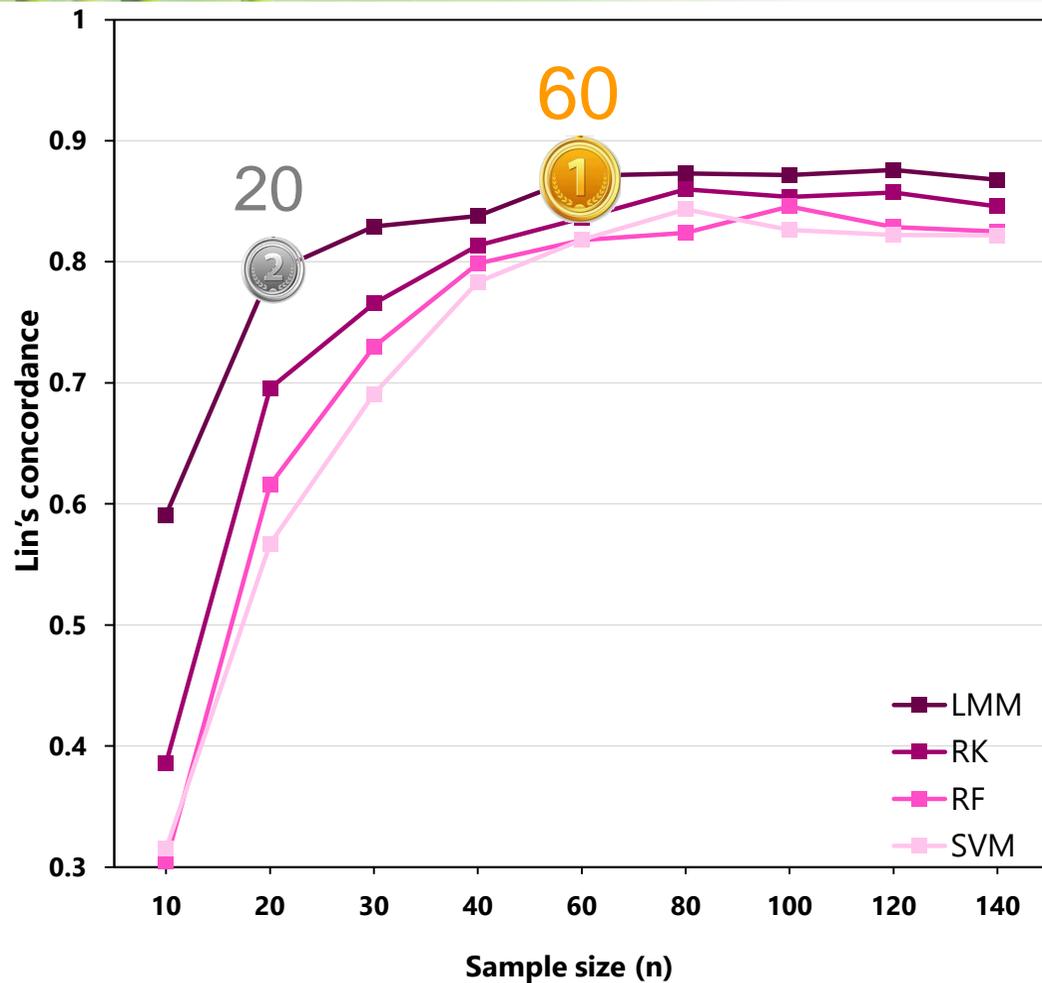
Exch. Ca: LMM



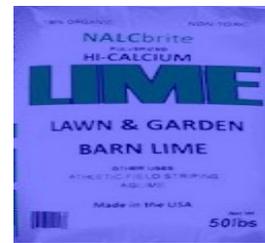
# 2. How many soil samples?



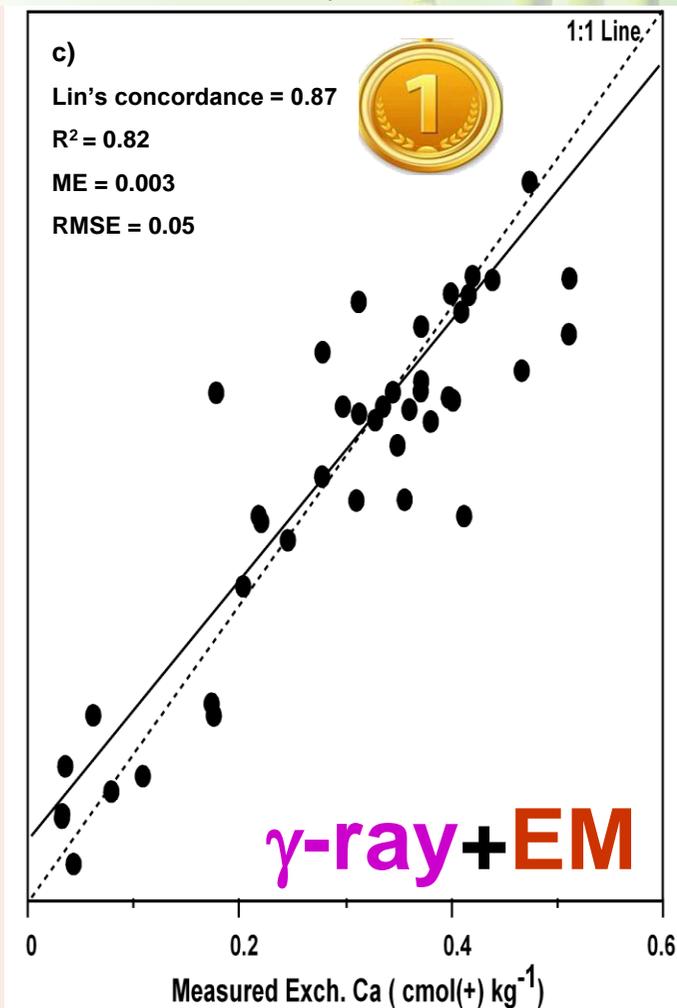
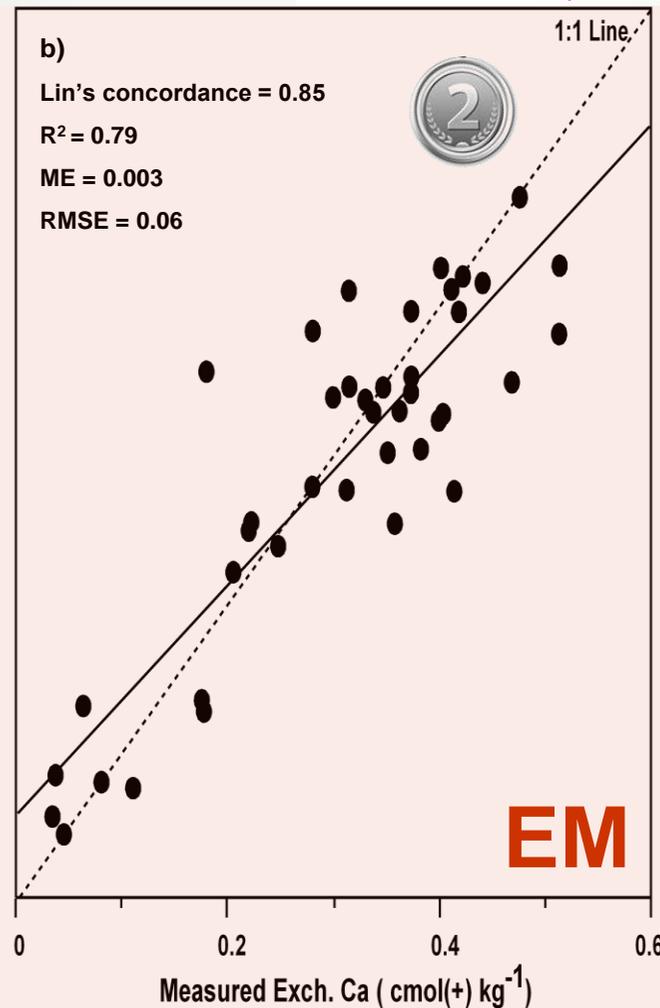
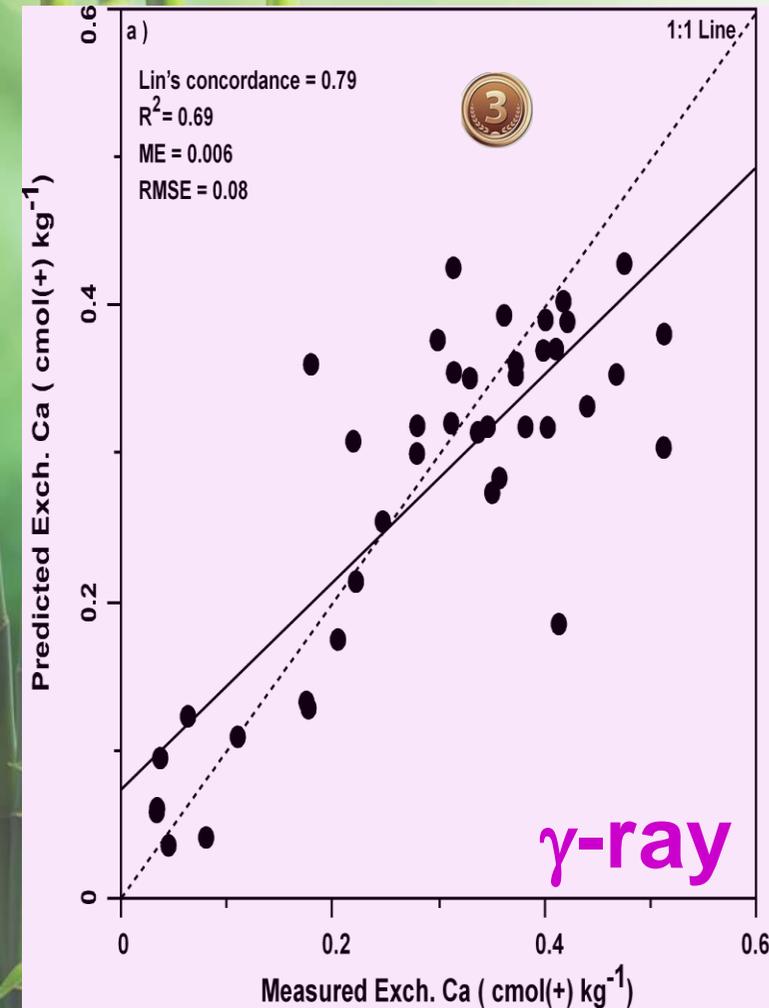
Exch. Ca: 60 / 20



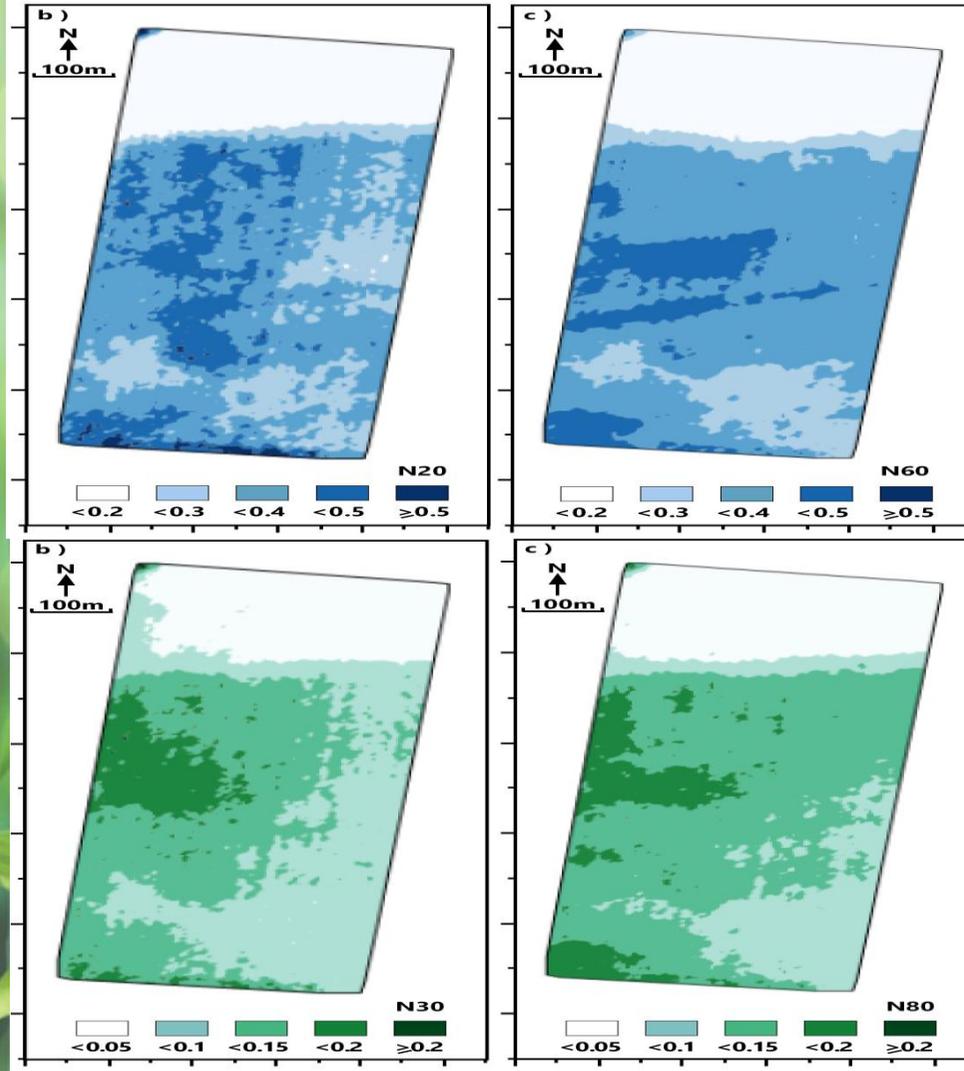
# 3. Which digital data: $\gamma$ -ray or EM



Exch. Ca:  $\gamma$ -ray+EM > EM >  $\gamma$ -ray



# Conclusions



## In a sugarcane field in Burdekin Valley:

We can generate DSMs of

- i) Exch. Ca and
- ii) Exch. Mg

using easier to acquire  $\gamma$ -ray and EM data

1) Which mathematical model is best  
LMM > RK > RF > SVM

2) How many soil samples do we need

Exch. Ca: 60 / 20+LMM

Exch. Mg: 40 / 30+LMM

3) Which digital data is superior

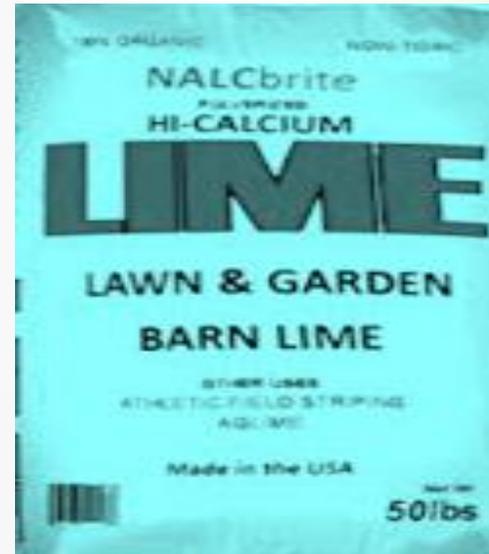
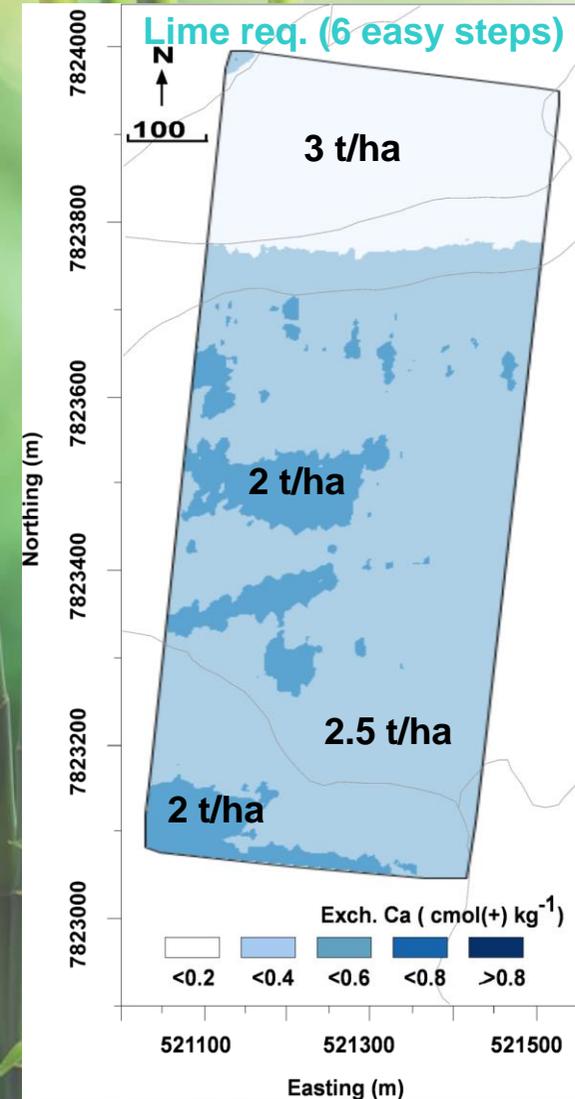
$\gamma$ -ray + EM 

EM 

$\gamma$ -ray 

# Conclusions

In a sugarcane field in Burdekin Valley:  
**Calcium (Ca)**



**Table 1 – Lime guidelines based on exchangeable calcium (Ca)**

Soil calcium (meq/100g)	Lime application (t/ha)
<0.2	3
0.2-0.4	2.5
0.4-0.6	2
0.6-0.8	1.5
0.8-1.1	1
1.1-1.5	0.5

# Conclusions

In a sugarcane field in Burdekin Valley:  
Magnesium (Mg)

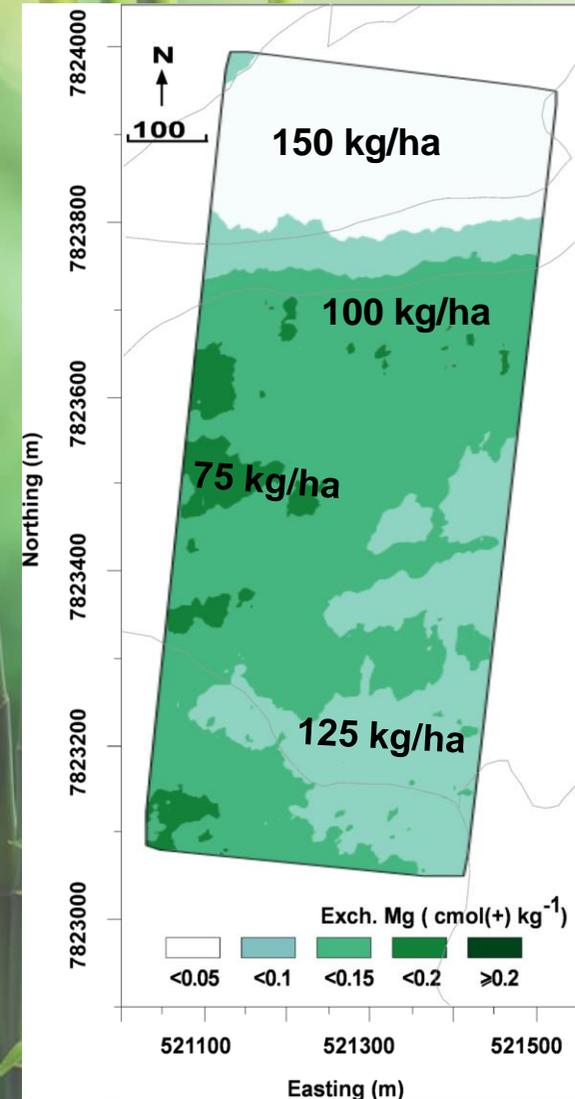


Table 2 – Magnesium guidelines based on exchangeable Mg

Soil Mg (amm-acet) (meq/100g)	Mg rate (kg/ha)
<0.05	150
0.06-0.10	125
0.11-0.15	100
0.16-0.20	75
0.21-0.25	50
>0.25	0

# DSM – An innovative “soil”ution?

What is working?

What do we still not know?

What constraints?

Immediate priorities?

## Conclusions

**DSM:** Management zone  
CEC and  
ESP

Individual soil properties  
Calcium (Ca) and  
Magnesium (Mg)

Whether this increases yield and has economic benefit? Cost-benefit of doing DSM and SIX-EASY-STEPS?

Yield data (satellite, airborne, proximal)?

Train and retain (international) students who understand needs of industry.

# Acknowledgements



# HCPSL

Herbert Cane Productivity Services Ltd.



Sugar Research  
Australia



554

#UNSWSoilScienceCentral 2019



UNSW  
SYDNEY

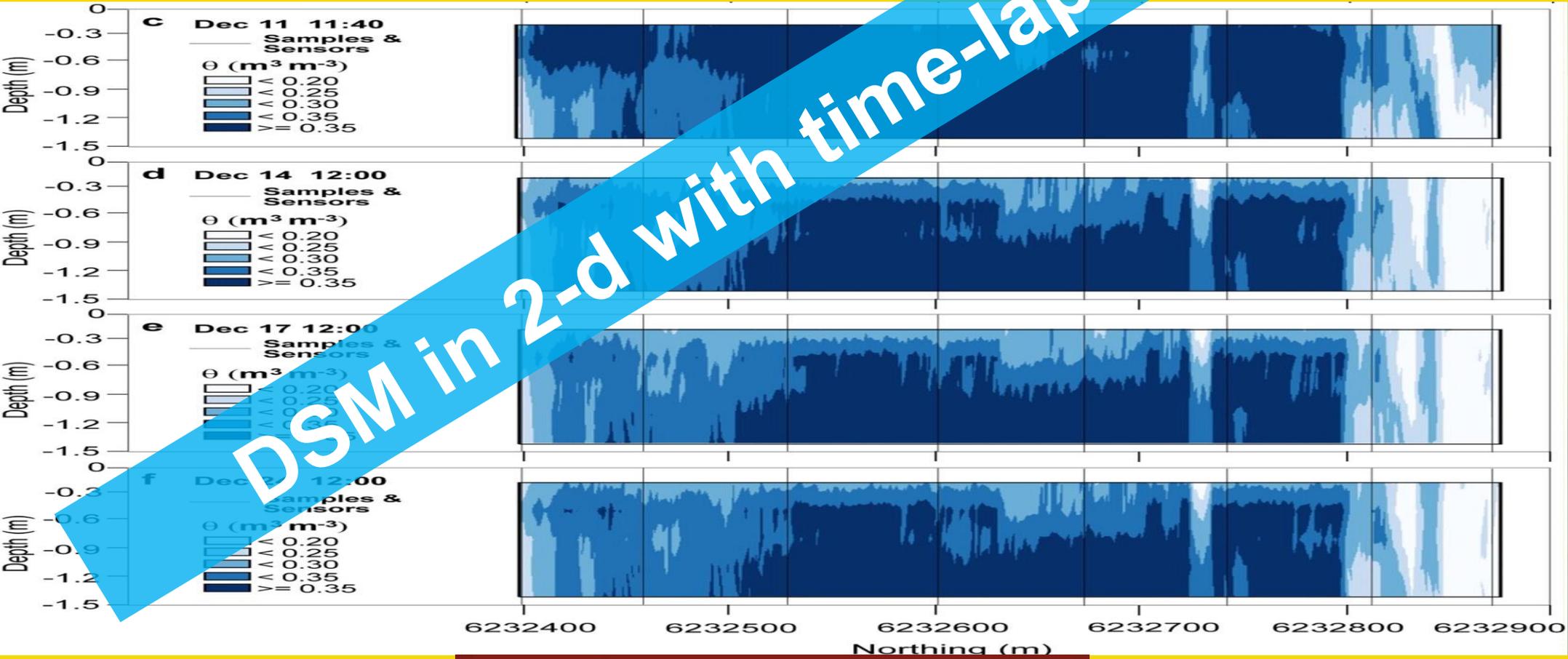
# Monitoring soil water dynamics using electromagnetic conductivity imaging and the ensemble Kalman Filter



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY

Jingyi Huang, Alex B. McBratney,  
Budiman Minasny, John Triantafyllis

DSM in 2-d with time-lapse ( $\theta$ )





**UNSW**  
SYDNEY

# 3-d regolith mapping of clay using inversion of EM38 and EM34

Zhao, X, Wang, J, Zhao, D, Li, N, Zare, E, Khongnawang, T,  
Muzzamal, M, Triantafilis, J.

**DSM in 3-d for mapping clay**

