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# UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TORINO

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Manure-derived biochars are richer in soil available nutrients than standard biochar.
- Nitrates and sulphates availability in soils is higher in biochar from manure than in standard biochar.
- Low temperature manure-derived biochars increase N<sub>2</sub>O emissions when compared with standard biochar (from gasification of wood chips).
- N<sub>2</sub>O emissions, as well as CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, were positively correlated with volatile matter and N content of biochars.
- Manure-derived biochars are less effective for C sequestration with respect to standard biochar, which does not show other important effects on nutrient.

**Greenhouse gas emissions and soil properties following amendment with  
manure-derived biochars: influence of pyrolysis temperature and feedstock  
type**

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**Keywords:** biochar, pyrolysis temperature, feedstock, greenhouse gases, C sequestration,  
nitrate leaching, physico-chemical properties

## Abstract

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3 Manure-derived biochars can offer a potential option for the stabilization of manure, while  
4  
5 mitigating changing climate through carbon sequestration and the attenuation of nitrous oxide  
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7 emission. A laboratory incubation study was conducted to assess the effects of four different  
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9 manure-derived biochars produced from different feedstocks (poultry litter and swine manure)  
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11 at different temperatures (400 or 600 °C). A commonly available standard wood chip biochar,  
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13 produced at a greater temperature (1000 °C), and non-amended treatments were used as  
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15 references. Two different soils (sandy and silt-loam) were amended with 2% (w/w) biochar on  
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17 a dry soil weight basis (corresponding to 20 Mg ha<sup>-1</sup>), with the soil moisture being adjusted to  
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19 75% saturation level. After a pre-incubation period (21 days), 170 kg N ha<sup>-1</sup> of NH<sub>4</sub>NO<sub>3</sub>  
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21 fertilizer was added. Measurements of CO<sub>2</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O, CH<sub>4</sub> emissions and soil N mineralisation  
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23 were carried out on different days during the 85 days of incubation. The net C mineralization  
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25 and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from both soils amended with poultry litter biochar at 400°C were  
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27 significantly greater than the other biochar treatments. Nitrate availability was greater in both  
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29 soils in which the manure-derived biochar was used instead of the standard biochar. All of the  
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31 biochars increased the pH of the silt-loam, sub-acid soil, but failed to improve the cation  
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33 exchange capacities (CEC) in either soil. Total C and N, P, K and Mg (except Ca) were  
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35 significantly increased in the manure-derived biochar amended soils, compared to the Control,  
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37 and were positively correlated to the biochar nutrient contents. This study indicates that the  
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39 soil application of biochar engenders effects that can vary considerably according to the  
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41 biochar properties, as determined on the basis of the feedstock types and process conditions.  
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43 Low-temperature biochar production from manure represents a possible way of producing a  
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45 soil amendment that can stabilize C while supplying a significant quantity of nutrients.  
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## 1. Introduction

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4 Biochar obtained from the thermo-chemical conversion of biomass is being promoted as a  
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6 potential solution to reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs) (Gaunt and Lehmann, 2008), and as a  
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8 beneficial soil amendment (Forbes et al., 2006). It has been claimed that biochar has the  
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10 potential to reduce the impact of agricultural systems on global warming through carbon (C)  
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12 sequestration and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) suppression (Sohi et al., 2010; Taghizadeh-Toosi et al.,  
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14 2011; Case et al., 2014; Van Zwieten et al., 2014; Gwenzi et al., 2015). The enhanced  
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16 physico-chemical properties of biochar amended soils are believed to be the result of  
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18 increased nutrient retention and availability, a greater water holding capacity, CEC and  
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20 surface area, and a rise in pH in acidic soils (Liard et al., 2010; Lehmann et al., 2011;  
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22 Anderson et al., 2011; Jeong et al., 2015). The improved biological properties are linked with  
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24 the increased microbial diversity along with the provision of a suitable aerated habitat for soil  
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26 flora and fauna due to the porous nature of biochar (O'Neill et al., 2009; Lehmann et al.,  
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28 2011). However, all of the aforementioned effects vary considerably according to the specific  
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30 properties of the biochar. Jeffery et al. (2015) and Gwenzi et al. (2015) have reviewed the  
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32 possible trade-offs between the expected biochar benefits, potential risks and associated  
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34 uncertainties, as this debate continues to grow among biochar researchers.  
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45 The stability of biochar in soils and its interaction with the soil micro-organisms that are  
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47 responsible for its decomposition depend on several factors, such as the nature of the biochar  
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49 feedstock, the type of process used for the biochar production (dry/wet pyrolysis, slow/fast  
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51 pyrolysis, gasification), and the operating conditions (temperature as well as residence time)  
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53 (Lehmann et al., 2011; Ameloot et al., 2013; Jeong et al., 2015). The microbial degradation of  
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55 biochar C in soil is often associated with labile organic compounds, such as alkanolic and  
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benzoic acids, and phenols, whose concentration falls with increasing pyrolysis temperature (Liang et al., 2010; Novak et al., 2010; Graber et al., 2010; Troy et al., 2014). Biochars produced from plant residues contain stable aromatic structures and are more resistant to microbial attack (Foereid et al., 2011; Ippolito et al., 2012; Case et al., 2014; Jeong et al., 2015).

The results of N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from biochar amended soils are not consistent. Some authors reported decreased N<sub>2</sub>O emissions (Rondon et al., 2005; Van Zwieten et al., 2010; Taghizadeh-Toosi et al., 2011; Jia et al., 2012; Nelissen et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2015), some reported no-effects (Clough et al., 2010; Nelissen et al., 2014), and yet others reported increased N<sub>2</sub>O emissions (Yanai et al., 2007, Scheer et al., 2011; Troy et al., 2013). Increased soil porosity, associated with soil biochar amendment, results in improved soil aeration, which ultimately suppresses N<sub>2</sub>O emissions (Richardson et al., 2009; Clough et al., 2013), whereas the anaerobic conditions, a more biochar labile C content, and conditions that favour a greater abundance of denitrifiers in the soil, due to biochar additions, can lead to increased soil N<sub>2</sub>O emissions (Cayuela et al., 2014; Kammann et al., 2012; Dalal et al., 2003). Therefore, the extent of N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from biochar-amended soils is greatly affected by the fertilizer types (Nelissen et al., 2014), biochar C:N ratio and the nature of C present (Troy et al., 2014; Zhu et al., 2014), biochar porosity, surface area and particle size (Jeong et al., 2015; Martin et al., 2015) and the response of denitrifiers (Van Zwieten et al., 2014). Despite many studies being conducted (both incubation and in field), there still remain substantial scientific doubts on the mechanisms by which biochar affects soil N<sub>2</sub>O emissions, thus seeking further investigation studies (Troy et al., 2013).

1 The modification of N dynamics on biochar amended soil has been suggested to have shift  
2 (either increase or decrease) on GHG emissions and the availability of other nutrients after  
3 fertiliser application (Clough and Condron, 2010; Clough et al., 2013). Enhanced crop  
4 growth, associated with increased efficiency in N use and reduced leaching in biochar-  
5 amended soils, has also been reported by some authors (Major et al., 2012; Schomberg et al.,  
6 2012). The immobilization of N can occur when a biochar with a large C:N ratio is amended  
7 in a soil with a smaller C:N ratio (Kuzyakov et al., 2009).

17 Pyrolysis may play a role in the manure processing chain, especially in EU regions where  
18 intensive livestock production exist, via energy production, nutrients recovery, and reducing  
19 both the manure volume and transportation costs (Cantrell et al., 2007; Hossain et al., 2011).  
20 Additionally, the deployment of biochars derived from the pyrolysis of locally available  
21 resources as a soil conditioner can be a strategically important option for soil fertility  
22 improvement and mitigation of GHG emissions (Steiner et al., 2007; Kimetu et al., 2008).  
23 While biochars derived from woody biomass and their effects on soil have been reported  
24 extensively, there have been fewer reports on the use of biochar derived from animal manures  
25 in which amendment effects in different soil types are compared.

42 A laboratory incubation study was undertaken, with two different soil types, to test the  
43 following hypothesis: (i) manure-derived biochars play a different role in amending the soil  
44 than wood-derived biochars, and could combine the agronomic advantages of manure and the  
45 environmental benefits of biochar (ii) the feedstock type and pyrolysis temperature can be  
46 used as a means to modulate the expected effects of manure-derived biochars on GHG  
47 emissions and soil properties; (iii) the effects of such biochars also vary according to the soil  
48 type. Therefore, the N<sub>2</sub>O and CH<sub>4</sub> emissions, the potential for C sequestration, nutrient



1 availability and the final soil quality (chemical) were measured, after amending two soils  
2 (sandy and silt-loam) with biochars from different feedstocks (poultry and swine manures) at  
3 two temperatures (400 or 600 °C), and were compared with a readily available standard  
4 wood-derived biochar.  
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## 7 8 9 10 **2. Materials and Methods**

### 11 12 13 *2.1. Soil collection and characterization*

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Two types of soil with contrasting characteristics were used in this experiment (Table 1): i) a less C content sandy soil with sub-alkaline pH, designated “Soil A”, and ii) a more C content silt-loam soil with sub-acidic pH, called “Soil B” (USDA, 2013). They were both collected from the top 20 cm of arable fields (NW Italy) in order to mimic the ploughed layer. They were subsequently air-dried and mechanically sieved to below 2 mm, using an electric auto-rotating sieving device (Neutron s.r.l., Autopack NTR 83). Both soils were less in N, P and K contents, but rich in Ca content (Table 1).

### 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 *2.2. Biochar production and characterization*

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Four different manure-derived biochars, produced from two different feedstocks (poultry litter and swine manure) at two different temperatures (400 or 600 °C), were used for this experimental study. The poultry litter biochars (“PL400” and “PL600”) were produced at the University of Limerick in Ireland, using a laboratory pyrolysis plant. The swine manure biochars (“SM400” and “SM600”) were supplied by ECN, (the Netherlands) ([www.ecn.nl](http://www.ecn.nl)). These manure-derived biochars were compared with the most widely available biochar i.e.

1 wood chip biochar produced at a greater temperature (1000 °C) (“WC”), and with another  
2 control treatment i.e. unamended soil (“Control”). The wood chip biochar was produced from  
3 kiwi fruit pruning residue via industrial gasification (1000 °C) at Agrindustria, Italy  
4 (www.agrind.it).  
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10 The biochars were analysed for their total C and N contents by means of elemental analysis  
11 (Vario El Cube CNS analyser, Elementar, Germany). The pH was measured in deionized  
12 water at a 1:10 biochar-water ratio using a pH electrode (Cyberscan 510 pH meter) after  
13 shaking the mixture for 18 hours. The moisture, ash and volatile matter (VM) contents were  
14 analysed according to the NSAI standard testing method (NSAI, 2009). Available P was  
15 extracted in a 2% formic acid solution and measured spectrophotometrically (Wang et al.,  
16 2012). Calcium, Mg and K were analysed by Atomic Absorption (Varian Techtron AA6),  
17 following acid digestion (Cantrell et al., 2012). The CEC of the samples was determined by  
18 means of sodium chloride adsorption and potassium nitrate displacement method (Silber et al.,  
19 2010). The surface acidity of the chars was determined by means of the base adsorption  
20 method reported by Cheng and Lehmann (2009). The surface area and porosity were  
21 determined according to the Brunauer, Emmet and Teller (BET) method, on the basis of the  
22 measurements obtained by N<sub>2</sub> adsorption at 77K using ASAP-2400 Micrometrics apparatus.  
23 Each sample was analysed in triplicate.  
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### 47 *2.3. Experimental incubation setup*

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52 The incubation experiment was carried out in a controlled climate (20 °C, 65% relative  
53 humidity) and set-up, as a randomised complete block design, with four replicates. Each  
54 experimental unit consisted of a cylindrical glass jar (volume = 3 L, diameter = 7 cm, height =  
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20 cm). Air-dried and sieved soil (1.5 kg for each jar) was manually mixed with each biochar type at 2% w/w, corresponding to an areal application rate of 20 Mg ha<sup>-1</sup>, given the filling height of 10 cm of the soil-biochar mixture inside the jar. All the soils were then moistened with deionized water in order to reach 75% saturation. The amount of deionized water that had to be added to each jar in order to reach the desired moisture level was calculated on the basis of soil porosity, and corresponded to 380 ml for Soil A and 430 ml for Soil B. The soil water content was adjusted every two days, both during pre-incubation and the subsequent incubation periods. The jars were pre-incubated until the initial CO<sub>2</sub> flux, due to soil rewetting, had subsided (21 days). All of the soil-biochar mixtures were then fertilized by applying a 170 kg N ha<sup>-1</sup> (maximum limit set by the Nitrate Directive) of ammonium nitrate solution onto the soil surface.

#### 2.4. Gas sampling and measurement

Gas samples were withdrawn from the jar headspace (1.8 m<sup>3</sup> for soil A, 1.9 m<sup>3</sup> for soil B, corresponding to 60.0% and 63.3% of total jar volume, respectively) twice per week during pre-incubation (before fertilization), daily during the week immediately after fertilization, three times per week during the following week, twice per week thereafter for the following four weeks and once a week for the final four weeks, for a total period of 85 days (21 pre-incubation and 64 incubation days).

During gas sampling, the jars were hermetically sealed with a lid equipped with two stopcocks. Gas samples were taken at 0, 8 and 16 minutes after closing the jars. Approximately 35 mL of gas was extracted from the jars using a polyethylene syringe (60 mL), and was replaced within the headspace by an identical volume of zero-grade air in order

1 to minimize any pressure reduction due to gas sampling. Of the 35 mL of gas sampled, 5 mL  
2 was used to flush the syringe needle and the remaining 30 mL was transferred immediately  
3 into pre-evacuated glass vials (EXETAINER<sup>®</sup>, 12 mL capacity, screw caps and butyl rubber  
4 septa). The temperature was recorded during each sampling event to calculate the actual gas  
5 concentration. The gas samples were analysed immediately after sampling, using a gas  
6 chromatograph (GC, Model 7890A, Agilent Tech., USA), equipped with an electron capture  
7 detector to quantify N<sub>2</sub>O, and thermal conductivity and flame ionization detectors to quantify  
8 the CO<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> concentrations, respectively. Fluxes were calculated from the linear or  
9 nonlinear (Hutchinson and Mosier, 1981) increase in concentration (selected according to the  
10 emission pattern) in the chamber headspace over time. The cumulative emissions of N<sub>2</sub>O,  
11 CO<sub>2</sub>, and CH<sub>4</sub> were calculated throughout the whole incubation period, assuming a linear flux  
12 change between each subsequent sampling event.  
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### 30 *2.5. Mineral N, PO<sub>4</sub><sup>3-</sup>, Cl and SO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup> measurements*

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35 A Rhizon soil moisture sampler (diameter = 2.5 mm, length = 10 cm; Rhizon SMS, product  
36 no. 19.21.25, [www.rhizoshere.com](http://www.rhizoshere.com)) was inserted horizontally into the soil column of each jar  
37 (one per jar) by drilling a hole (diameter = 3.5 mm) 1 cm above the base of the jar. Soil water  
38 extraction was undertaken every two weeks, creating a vacuum by means of a syringe (60  
39 mL) connected to the Rhizon sampler. The mineral N, phosphate (PO<sub>4</sub><sup>3-</sup>), chloride (Cl<sup>-</sup>) and  
40 sulphate (SO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup>) concentrations in the soil extracts were then analysed by means of ion  
41 chromatography (Dionex, Thermo Scientific ASE 150).  
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### 54 *2.6. Post incubation analysis*

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1 At the end of the incubation period, a complete chemical characterization of the soil-  
2 biochar mixtures was carried out. The soils were analysed for pH, total C, total N, available P  
3 and cation exchange capacity. Furthermore, soil mineral N (both  $\text{NH}_4^+$  and  $\text{NO}_3^-$ ) was  
4 analysed colorimetrically using a continuous flow auto-analyser (System Alliance Evolution  
5 II). For this analysis, 30 g of fresh soil was extracted with 150 mL of 1 M KCl (1:5 ratio), and  
6 the mixture was shaken for 30 minutes, using a mechanical shaker, and then filtered.  
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## 16 *2.7. Data processing and analysis*

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20 The data were analysed by two-way ANOVA (IBM SPSS statistics 20), considering the  
21 biochar and soil types as the main factors. Statistical significance was tested at  $p < 0.05$ . A  
22 Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to test normality of the data distribution, and  
23 homoscedasticity was verified with Levene's test. Log transformations of any data that did not  
24 fulfil the assumptions were carried out prior to the analysis. A Bonferroni post-hoc test was  
25 applied to investigate any differences between the biochar types, in terms of cumulative  $\text{CO}_2$   
26 and  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  emissions, mineral N concentration and soil chemical parameters. Moreover, a  
27 Pearson bivariate correlation analysis was performed on the different measured variables.  
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## 42 **3. Results**

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### 47 *3.1. Biochar characterization*

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52 A detailed physico-chemical characterization of the different biochars is presented in Table  
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54 1. The carbon content of these materials was greater (53–89%), and generally increased as the  
55 pyrolysis temperature increased. However, the manure-derived biochar had a lesser C content  
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(54%, on average) than the standard WC biochar (89% C). The opposite was observed for the N content, which ranged from 5.85% of PL400 to 1.79% of SM600, but was only 0.27% in the WC biochar. The C:N ratio of the WC biochar (335.4) was on average one order of magnitude greater than those of the manure-derived biochars, which ranged from 9.0 for PL400 to 32.4 for SM600. The WC biochar showed the smallest values for P ( $0.73 \text{ g kg}^{-1}$ ), K ( $2.6 \text{ g kg}^{-1}$ ), Ca ( $13.6 \text{ g kg}^{-1}$ ) and Mg ( $3.2 \text{ g kg}^{-1}$ ), and, with the exception of P ( $15.6 \text{ g kg}^{-1}$  P in SM600), the greatest values for these elements ( $58.8$ ,  $35.9$  and  $24.0 \text{ g kg}^{-1}$  of K, Ca and Mg respectively) was observed for PL600; all these nutrients were greater within each feedstock type as the pyrolysis temperature increased.

Volatile matter, ash, CEC and surface acidity were greater for the manure-derived biochars (VM: 29%, ash: 30%, CEC:  $32 \text{ cmol}_c \text{ kg}^{-1}$  and acidity:  $1.2 \text{ mmol H}^+ \text{ kg}^{-1}$ , on average) than for the WC biochar (VM: 15%, ash: 8% and CEC:  $15 \text{ cmol}_c \text{ kg}^{-1}$  and acidity:  $0.57 \text{ mmol H}^+ \text{ kg}^{-1}$ ) (Table 1). The VM, CEC and surface acidity decreased with temperature for the manure-derived biochars, while the opposite was observed for ash. Biochar pH increased slightly with temperature, from 9.5 of PL400 to 10.4 for both PL600 and SM600, while the standard WC biochar had the greatest pH (11.0). The results from the BET analysis showed that both the surface area (SA) and porosity were greater for WC (SA:  $187 \text{ m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$ , porosity:  $115 \text{ mm}^3 \text{ g}^{-1}$ ) than the manure-derived biochars (SA:  $7.1 \text{ m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$ , porosity:  $6.2 \text{ mm}^3 \text{ g}^{-1}$ , on average), and increased as the pyrolysis temperature increased.

### 3.2. Nitrous oxide and methane emissions

The nitrous oxide emissions were initially recorded on day 21, immediately after N fertilization, for all the treatments, with the exception of PL400 (in both soils) and PL600

(only in Soil B), where the emissions had already been observed before N fertilization (Supplementary Fig. S1). The peak N<sub>2</sub>O flux values ranged from 6.50 (WC in Soil B) to 189.4 μg N-N<sub>2</sub>O h<sup>-1</sup> kg<sup>-1</sup> soil (PL400 in Soil A) (Table 2). The statistical analysis showed significant differences between the type of biochar and the type of soil for the N<sub>2</sub>O peaks. Specifically, the PL400 peak (127 μg N-N<sub>2</sub>O h<sup>-1</sup> kg<sup>-1</sup>) was significantly greater than those of the control (14 μg N-N<sub>2</sub>O h<sup>-1</sup> kg<sup>-1</sup>) and of the other biochar treatments (18 μg N-N<sub>2</sub>O h<sup>-1</sup> kg<sup>-1</sup>, on average of PL600, SM400, SM600 and WC). Moreover, SM400 peak (28 μg N-N<sub>2</sub>O h<sup>-1</sup> kg<sup>-1</sup>) was greater than the control and WC (10 μg N-N<sub>2</sub>O h<sup>-1</sup> kg<sup>-1</sup>), while PL600, SM600 and WC were not significantly different from the control. The peaks were significantly greater in the sandy soil, Soil A, (29 μg N-N<sub>2</sub>O h<sup>-1</sup> kg<sup>-1</sup>) than in the silt-loam, Soil B, (18 μg N-N<sub>2</sub>O h<sup>-1</sup> kg<sup>-1</sup>).

The total cumulative N<sub>2</sub>O emissions, after 85 days of incubation, were affected significantly by the interaction between the biochar and soil type (Table 2). The greatest cumulative emissions were produced by PL400 in Soil A (72 mg N-N<sub>2</sub>O kg<sup>-1</sup>), and were one-order of magnitude greater than all the other values (between 4–7 mg N-N<sub>2</sub>O kg<sup>-1</sup>), followed by the same biochar (PL400) in Soil B (35 mg N-N<sub>2</sub>O kg<sup>-1</sup>). The smallest value was for WC in Soil B (1.85 mg N-N<sub>2</sub>O kg<sup>-1</sup>), and was significantly lesser than the PL400, PL600 and SM400 treatments in Soil B, which ranged 7–35 mg N-N<sub>2</sub>O kg<sup>-1</sup>. The N<sub>2</sub>O peak values and the cumulative N<sub>2</sub>O emissions were significantly positively correlated to both the N and VM contents of the biochars in both soils (Table 5a).

The N<sub>2</sub>O emission factor, calculated as the percentage of total N supplied through the NH<sub>4</sub>NO<sub>3</sub> fertilizer and biochar, ranged from 0.65 to 3.41% among biochar treatments (Table 2). The emission factor for PL400 (3.41%) was significantly greater in both soils than those of

1 the other biochar treatments, whose value ranged 0.65–1.29%, with the exception of the  
2 control.  
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6 For all the treatments in each sampling date, change in CH<sub>4</sub> concentration during jar enclosure  
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8 fell below the minimum flux detection limit determined for the GC, and thus produced an  
9 overall null emission (data not shown).  
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### 14 3.3. C mineralization 15 16 17

18 The total cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, after 85 days of incubation, were affected  
19 significantly by the interaction between the biochar and soil type (Table 2), and ranged from  
20 0.44 g to 2.02 g C-CO<sub>2</sub> kg<sup>-1</sup>. The emissions from the PL400 biochar treatments in Soil B were  
21 the greatest. These were followed by SM400 (1.26 g C-CO<sub>2</sub> kg<sup>-1</sup>) in Soil B and a group  
22 including PL400 in Soil A, PL600, SM600 and WC in Soil B. The smallest value was that of  
23 WC in Soil A. The cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were significantly positively correlated to both  
24 the N and volatile matter contents of the biochars, but negatively correlated with the biochar  
25 C:N ratios in both soils (Table 5a).  
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44 The net C mineralization, expressed as the percentage of C supplied through added  
45 biochar lost as CO<sub>2</sub> during the experiment, varied among treatments, with a significant  
46 interaction effect between the biochar and soil types. Values ranged between null to 9.91%  
47 (Table 2). The net amount of C mineralised was greatest for PL400 in Soil B, and this was  
48 followed by the same treatment in Soil A (4.49%). The smallest value was that of WC in Soil  
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### 3.4. Soil mineral N, $PO_4^{3-}$ , $Cl^-$ and $SO_4^{2-}$ evolution

The analysis of the mineral N in the soil water extracts collected in porous cups at different dates in all the treatments mainly consisted of  $N-NO_3^-$  (Fig. 1), while  $N-NH_4^+$  was below the detection limit for most of the treatments. Significant differences were observed between the biochars and soil types at different dates after the fertilization (Table 3). The effect of the interaction between the biochar amendments and soil types was found significant for the  $N-NO_3^-$  content in the soil for most of the dates, except for the last two dates (Day 82 and Day 100). The  $N-NO_3^-$  concentration increased from day 24 until day 53 for all the treatments, and then decreased. The  $N-NO_3^-$  content in the PL400 ( $235 \text{ mg kg}^{-1}$ , on average) treated Soil B was significantly greater than that of the Control and other biochar treatments ( $138 \text{ mg kg}^{-1}$ , on average) from day 24 until day 67 (Fig. 1 and Table 3). A significantly lesser  $N-NO_3^-$  concentration was observed for the WC treatment ( $97 \text{ mg kg}^{-1}$ , on average) than the Control, PL400 and SM400 treatments ( $181 \text{ mg kg}^{-1}$ , on average) from Day 24 until Day 67 in Soil B (Table 3).

Water soluble  $PO_4^{3-}$  was too less in Soil A, with values ranging  $3\text{--}12 \text{ mg } PO_4^{3-} \text{ kg}^{-1}$  for the manure derived biochar treatments, while the values were negligible in Soil B (data not shown). Both the  $Cl^-$  and  $SO_4^{2-}$  contents in the water extract varied to a great extent between treatments (Fig. 1). The  $Cl^-$  contents of SM400, 600 ( $630 \text{ mg kg}^{-1}$ , on average) and PL400, 600 ( $261 \text{ mg kg}^{-1}$ , on average) treatments were significantly greater ( $P<0.05$ ) than the Control and WC treatments ( $8 \text{ mg kg}^{-1}$ , on average) in both soils. Also, the  $SO_4^{2-}$  values of PL400 and 600 ( $220 \text{ mg kg}^{-1}$ , on average) were significantly greater ( $P<0.05$ ) than the Control and the other biochar treatments ( $39 \text{ mg kg}^{-1}$ , on average) in both soils. The  $Cl^-$  content ranged from 5

(on average for Control Soil A) to 686 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> (on average for SM600 treated Soil A) throughout the incubation period. Similarly, the SO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup> value ranged from 13 (on average for control Soil A) to 256 mg kg<sup>-1</sup> (on average for PL600 treated Soil B) (Fig. 1).

### 3.5. Post incubation analysis

The chemical properties of the biochar amended soils, at the end of the incubation experiment, are presented in Table 4. A significant interaction was found between the biochar amendments and soil types for all of the parameters, except for the total organic C and nitrate contents. The pH was significantly greater for all the biochar treatments (6.2 unit pH, on average) than for the Control (4.6 unit pH) for sub-acidic Soil B, while in sub-alkaline Soil A, only PL600 (8.8 unit pH) induced a greater pH value than that of the Control (8.0 unit pH). The pH of Soil A (7.7 unit pH) amended with PL400 was significantly lesser than the other treatments (8.3 unit pH, on average). Furthermore, in Soil B, the enhancement of pH, with respect to the Control, was more pronounced for PL600, and this was followed by SM600, SM400 and PL400, WC.

In both soils, the total organic C content of all the biochar treated soils (2% C, on average) was significantly greater than the Control (1% C). Among the biochar-amended soils, the greatest C content was measured for WC (2.4%) and the smallest for PL400 (1.85%). For Soil B, the total N content did not differ from the Control for WC or SM600, where the greatest values were those of the two poultry manure biochars (0.24%, on average), followed by SM400 (0.19%). The WC, SM400 and SM600 in Soil A were similar to the Control, with the greatest values being those of PL600 and PL400 (0.16 and 0.14 %), respectively. A significant negative correlation was found between the biochar C:N ratio and the total N content of the

1 final amendment mixture, while a positive correlation between the biochar C:N ratio and the  
2 C content of the final amendment mixtures (Table 5a). Similarly, biochar VM contents were  
3 significantly positively correlated with the total soil N contents, but negatively correlated with  
4 the soil C contents.  
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10 In contrast to both TOC and TN, the C:N ratio was greater in Soil A (15.4) than in Soil B  
11 (11.2), as was the case also observed for the initial soil characterization (Table 1). It was  
12 greatest for WC (21.5, on average) in both soils, and this was followed by the two swine  
13 manure biochars and finally by the two poultry manure biochars, which were not significantly  
14 different from the Control. The soil nitrate content of PL400 treatment (158 mg kg<sup>-1</sup>), at the  
15 end of the incubation, was significantly greater than that of the Control and WC treatments  
16 (93 mg kg<sup>-1</sup>, on average). The average nitrate content, over all treatments, in Soil B was 1.8  
17 times higher than in the Soil A. The ammonium content, while generally less in both soils,  
18 was greatest for the Control in Soil B (4.8 mg kg<sup>-1</sup>). There was a significant positive  
19 correlation between the N content of the biochars and the mineral N content of the final  
20 amendment mixture for Soil B (Table 5a).  
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40 Phosphorous was generally greater for the manure-derived biochars (124 mg kg<sup>-1</sup>, on  
41 average), while WC showed considerably lesser values that were comparable with the Control  
42 (22 mg kg<sup>-1</sup>, on average). Similarly, the K (604 mg kg<sup>-1</sup>, on average) and Mg (223 mg kg<sup>-1</sup>, on  
43 average) contents were greater for the both soils amended with poultry manure biochars, and  
44 this was followed by the swine manure biochar (286 mg kg<sup>-1</sup>, on average) and finally WC  
45 (112 mg kg<sup>-1</sup>, on average), thus reflecting the mineral contents of the original chars. As far as  
46 the Ca content is concerned, all the biochar treatments (1570 mg kg<sup>-1</sup>, on average) were  
47 significantly greater than the Control (1270 mg kg<sup>-1</sup>) in Soil B, while the greatest value in Soil  
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1 A was for the Control (1116 mg kg<sup>-1</sup>), followed by WC (998 mg kg<sup>-1</sup>). The CEC values of  
2 SM400 and SM600 (4 cmol<sub>c</sub> kg<sup>-1</sup>, on average) in Soil A were significantly lesser than the  
3 Control and WC (7.3 cmol<sub>c</sub> kg<sup>-1</sup>, on average), while the CEC did not vary significantly in Soil  
4 B but did in Soil A. The biochar- C, N, P, K and Mg contents were significantly and  
5 positively correlated to identical nutrients in the final amendment mixture at the end of the  
6 experiment, while a negative correlation for Ca emerged for both soils (Tables 5a and 5b).  
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#### 16 **4. Discussion**

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20 Biochars derived from two types of manure feedstock were selected for this experimental  
21 study on the basis of their availability and utilization potential. The pyrolysis of poultry litter  
22 offers a good option for manure management, as its relatively less moisture content makes it  
23 suitable for use as a feedstock, in terms of energy consumption. The drying of swine manure  
24 digestate is an important step for manure processing in Europe as it improves the possibility  
25 of using it for pyrolysis without any extra energy intake. The pyrolysis of wood residues is  
26 common practice on the biochar market in Italy and other countries, and it offers the  
27 possibility of using such biochar as a soil conditioner.  
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42 In this experiment, the biochar properties varied considerably, according to the feedstock  
43 type and pyrolysis temperature. The manure-derived biochars were richer in nutrients (both  
44 macro and micro) than the wood one. An increase in pyrolysis temperature led to a decrease in  
45 the N and VM contents, and consequently increased ashes and other nutrients (Hossain et al.,  
46 2011). The greater volatile matter content of the low temperature manure-derived biochars  
47 (PL400 and SM400) is mainly attributed to the increased fraction of labile carbon (Kammann  
48 et al., 2012). A smaller pyrolysis temperature results in a greater fixation of volatile  
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1 compounds in the aromatic structure (Fuertes et al., 2010). The smaller surface area and lesser  
2 porosity of the manure derived biochars can be explained by the presence of the organic  
3 molecules on the char surface, which obscure the biochar pores at smaller temperatures ( $\leq 600$   
4  $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) or could escape, through volatilisation, from the biochar pores at greater temperatures  
5 ( $1000\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), as can be seen from the values obtained for the WC biochar (Fuertes et al., 2010,  
6 Clough and Condron, 2010). These are recognised as important properties of the biochar and  
7 could be used to improve the environmental benefits after soil application (Budai et al., 2014;  
8 Jeong et al., 2015). Unfortunately, these properties did not appear to a significant extent in the  
9 manure-derived biochars. The lesser CEC and surface acidity values of the greater  
10 temperature manure-derived biochars can be attributed to the loss of the acidic functional  
11 groups with increasing pyrolysis temperature and are in line with the findings of other authors  
12 (Cheng et al., 2006; Sing et al., 2010, Jeong et al., 2015).  
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30 Generally, biochar addition results in a reduction of  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  from soils through several  
31 mechanisms, and modifies the microbial activity in the soil, the concentrations of available  
32  $\text{NO}_3^-$  and organic C, pH and soil aeration. Instead, in the present study, greater  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  emissions  
33 were observed from the soils amended with low temperature manure-derived biochars in both  
34 types of soil. The  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  emissions (0.65-3.41%) for the manure-derived biochar treatments in  
35 this study are greater than any previously observed values associated with wood or plant  
36 biomass derived biochars, which have a less N content (Zhang et al., 2010; Taghizadeh-Toosi  
37 et al., 2011; Jia et al., 2012). The possible concurrent causes of this behaviour are (i) the  
38 creation of a transitory anaerobic condition, (ii) a more labile C content (Zhu et al., 2014;  
39 Troy et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2015), (iii) the increased availability of mineral N from the  
40 biochar itself (Dalal et al., 2003; Kammann et al., 2012; Cayuela et al., 2014) and (iv) the  
41 greater relative abundance of denitrifiers (both bacteria and fungi) associated with increased  
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1 soil NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> availability within the system (Richardson et al., 2009, Cayuela et al., 2014; Van  
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Zwieten et al., 2014).

Our experimental conditions could have induced anaerobicity in the soil microsites, since a rather high soil moisture level (75% saturation) was chosen, and the biochar itself (<2 mm particle size) may have clogged the soil pores, thus leading to poor aeration (Troy et al., 2014). As a significant positive correlation was found between N<sub>2</sub>O emissions and the volatile matter content of the biochar in both soils, the greater percentage of volatile compounds present in the low temperature biochars may have been available as a potential substrate for the denitrifiers, thereby enhancing the N<sub>2</sub>O emissions (Troy et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2015). In addition to this, the greater mineralization, followed by rapid nitrification, in the PL400 and SM400 biochars, associated with more N content, may have resulted in the production of more N-NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>, that is, an easily available substrate for the denitrifiers. Similar conclusions were drawn by Cayuela et al. (2014). greater N<sub>2</sub>O emissions were observed for the alkaline sandy soil (Soil A with the PL400 treatment) than for the acidic silt-loam (Soil B). This result is in contrast with the findings of other authors (Simek and Cooper, 2002). It is possible that other conditions, such as the induced anaerobicity and greater labile C content of the biochars, might have dominated the influence of the pH in these cases.

On the other hand, the less N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from the WC biochar amended soils could be due to (i) the much lesser availability of mineral N from such a biochar (Nelissen et al., 2014; Van Zwieten et al., 2014), (ii) increased soil aeration, due to the greatly porous nature of the biochar (Downie et al., 2009; Jeong et al., 2015; Martin et al., 2015) and (iii) increased N-NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> retention on the biochar surfaces, due to its greater surface area (Cheng et al., 2006; Major et al., 2012). Increased porosity, associated with an increased pyrolysis temperature,

1 would increase soil porosity and this could eventually suppress N<sub>2</sub>O emissions, as  
2 corroborated by other authors (Van Zwieten et al., 2010, Yanai et al., 2007; Taghizadeh-  
3 Toosi et al., 2011). In the present study, the WC biochar significantly increased N-NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>  
4 retention in both soils after fertilization (Table 3). This short-term retention of N-NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> and the  
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6 subsequent reduction in N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from the larger surface area biochars confirm the early  
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8 findings of Karhu et al. (2011), Nelissen et al. (2014) and Van Zwieten et al. (2014).  
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16 Our findings show that the greater the pyrolysis temperature, the lesser the N<sub>2</sub>O and CO<sub>2</sub>  
17 emissions are, due to the lesser N and VM contents of the biochars (Nelissen et al., 2014;  
18 Jeong et al., 2015). In this study, a greater net C mineralization was observed from the soils  
19 amended with the low temperature manure-derived biochars (PL400 and SM400) than the  
20 other biochars. This result could be explained by (i) increased soil microbial respiration  
21 associated with soil available C (Martin et al., 2015), and/or (ii) C loss from the biochar  
22 through an abiotic process (Ameloot et al., 2014; Foereid et al., 2011). Triggered C  
23 mineralization, associated with low temperature biochars, has already been reported by other  
24 authors (Ameloot et al., 2013; Zimmerman et al., 2011; Troy et al., 2014). The positive  
25 correlation between the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and volatile matter content of the biochars suggests the  
26 consumption of labile biochar C by soil micro-organisms and further supports our study  
27 hypothesis (Kammann et al., 2012; Ameloot et al., 2013). The CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were also  
28 positively correlated to the N content of the biochars, which suggests that soil microbes could  
29 utilize N from biochars as an important food source to break down C. These results highlight  
30 the tendency of these biochars to sequester C in soils for long run. Therefore, the WC biochar  
31 has shown a greater sequestering tendency, while PL400 less.  
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1 The concentration of  $\text{NH}_4^+$  in the soil extract was below the detection limit, thus  
2 indicating that any produced or supplied  $\text{NH}_4^+$  was rapidly nitrified, immobilized or fully  
3 adsorbed on the soil-biochar surfaces (Clough and Condron, 2010; Clough et al., 2013). This  
4 property of biochar could also reduce the volatilization of applied  $\text{NH}_4^+$  via fertilization, and  
5 this mechanism suggests the need for further investigations. Reduced  $\text{N-NO}_3^-$  concentrations  
6 on WC biochar amended soils is mainly associated with an increased  $\text{N-NO}_3^-$  retention as a  
7 result of a greater surface area plus large C:N ratio (Schomberg et al., 2012; Van Zwieten et  
8 al., 2014; Jeong et al., 2015). This property of WC char offers a considerable opportunity to  
9 reduce the risk of  $\text{NO}_3^-$  leaching and to protect groundwater in nitrate vulnerable zones (Liard  
10 et al., 2010; Major et al., 2012), while, on the other hand, reduces soil available  $\text{NO}_3^-$  to the  
11 plants (Nelissen et al., 2014).  
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28 A greater  $\text{Cl}^-$  content was found in the manure-derived biochar amended soil extract. The  
29 large chlorine (Cl) content in biochar may be due to more salt content (e.g. sodium chloride)  
30 in the biochar feedstock, and it could have a salt toxicity effect on the crops as well as lead to  
31 the formation of toxic compounds, such as dioxin (Hale et al., 2012). These aspects need to  
32 be verified by growing crops on such biochar-amended soils. It was also found that both the  
33 PL400 and 600 biochar-amended soils had greater  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$  contents, related to the greater  
34 sulphur (S) content of these biochars. It has been pointed out that the S present on biochar  
35 surfaces as insoluble sulphide during pyrolysis could be altered by the native S present in the  
36 biochar-soil matrix after amendment and then become available (Cantrell et al., 2012). As S is  
37 an essential plant nutrient, plants could ultimately benefit from its uptake from such biochar-  
38 amended soils.  
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1 The post amendment transformation of biochar nutrients in soils for plant uptake is  
2 influenced a great deal by both biotic and abiotic factors (Berglund et al., 2004; DeLuca et al.,  
3 2006; Jeong et al., 2015). The presence of a greater mineral N content in the soils amended  
4 with low temperature manure-derived biochars (PL400 and SM400) is due to the fact that the  
5 N contained in these biochars is easily mineralizable and could be available for plant uptake  
6 (Troy et al., 2014). As pointed out by the significant, positive correlation between the  
7 mineral N content of the soil-biochar matrix and the N content of the biochars in the silt-loam  
8 soil, this unique property of the PL400 and SM400 biochars could fulfil the crop N demand  
9 and could also replace N-fertilizers. The mineral N content in the soil was found to decrease  
10 as the biochar C:N ratio increased, as already noted in another study (Kuzyakov et al., 2009;  
11 Nelissen et al., 2014). Nitrogen immobilization, associated with the larger C:N ratio biochars,  
12 has been reported by several authors (Ameloot et al., 2013; Major et al., 2012, Novak et al.,  
13 2010). In the present study, N immobilization via physicochemical adsorption seems to  
14 dominate over microbial immobilization for the WC biochar treatment, as it had a large C:N  
15 ratio plus greater surface area. This also supports the findings of Major et al. (2012).

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37 The greater soil C content of the WC treated soils at the end of the experiment could be  
38 explained by the presence of stable C, which is resistant to microbial degradation, as can be  
39 seen from its less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. It was here found that the post amendment soil C content  
40 increased as the pyrolysis temperature of the manure-derived biochars increased. This  
41 explains the increased stability of the biochar C content with increased temperature  
42 (Zimmerman et al., 2011; Cantrell et al., 2012; Jeong et al., 2015).

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54 The manure-derived biochars were also rich in P, K, Ca and Mg. The significant positive  
55 correlation between the nutrient contents of the biochars (P, K and Mg) and the available  
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1 fractions of identical nutrients in the final amendment mixtures suggests that the manure-  
2 derived biochars could provide essential plant nutrients (Singh et al., 2010; Hossain et al.,  
3 2011; Cantrell et al., 2012) and make them available for plant uptake. This could eventually  
4 be confirmed by growing crops in such treatments and considering several growth indicators.  
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6 Although all the manure manure-derived biochars were rich in Ca, the final availability of this  
7 element was only increased slightly in Soil B and decreased in Soil A.  
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16 The less available P content in the biochar amended acidic Soil B, compared to Soil A, is  
17 probably due to P fixation with Fe or Al, as has already been reported in several studies  
18 (Johnson and Loeppert 2006; Cui et al., 2011). Phosphorus is mainly found in the mineral  
19 fraction of biochars, with pH dependent reactions and the presence of chelating substances  
20 controlling its solubilisation (Joseph et al., 2010). These alkaline biochars could enhance P  
21 availability and uptake in acidic soils by adjusting the soil pH after a certain time, as reported  
22 by other authors (Nelson et al., 2011; Novak et al., 2009). Similarly, the lesser Ca availability  
23 in the biochar amended sandy soils (Soil A in this study), compared to silt-loam soils (Soil B),  
24 is due to the fixation of Ca, with P being supplied from the biochars on these soils; this result  
25 corroborates those of Cui et al. (2011). The relatively lesser exchangeable K in Soil B (for all  
26 the biochar treatments) than in Soil A clearly suggests the influence of pH on K availability.  
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28 The availability of K increases as the soil pH increases and becomes fully available at a pH  
29 above 6.5.  
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50 All the biochars significantly increased the pH of acidic Soil B. The liming potential of  
51 biochars, when applied to acidic soils, is well known (Ippolito et al., 2012; Sohi et al., 2010).  
52 In the case of alkaline Soil A, a lesser pH was observed for PL400 than for the other biochar  
53 treatments. The reason for this is not completely clear. However, it was hypothesized that this  
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could be due to more N content of the PL400 biochar and its strong mineralization potential, as can be confirmed from more mineral N content and soil NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> release with time. Furthermore, the acidic functional groups attached to such biochar surfaces, as observed from its greater surface acidity value, might have contributed to lowering the soil pH. Greater surface acidity of low temperature manure-derived biochars has also been recorded in previous studies (Singh et al., 2010; Cheng and Lehmann, 2009). Whatever the reason for this increase, it was able to reduce the pH of the alkaline sandy soil.

The post amendment CEC values of the SM400 and SM600 treated sandy soils were lesser than the Controls. No significant differences were observed in the CEC values in the silt-loam soil. This result is in contrast with the findings of Clough and Condon (2010); Cheng et al. (2006). The reasons for this difference are not fully understood. However, it is believed that the short-term effect of biochar CEC on soil may not be visible (Sing et al., 2010). Moreover, biochar often loses its acidic functional groups at temperature >500 °C (Jeong et al., 2015), but these could be replenished again over time as a result of biochar oxidation in soils, together with the adsorption of organic matter onto the biochar surfaces (Cheng et al., 2006; Glaser et al., 2002). In order to verify this, the long-term effects of biochar on soil CEC should be tested.

## 5. Conclusions

This study has shown that the N and VM contents of manure-derived biochars are both important characteristics, and that they decreased with increased pyrolysis temperature. These characteristics were positively correlated with both N<sub>2</sub>O and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from such biochar-amended soils. All the manure-derived biochars significantly increased the soil C

1 content, compared to the Control, at the end of the incubation, even though they were less  
2 effective in C sequestration than the standard WC biochar. The mineral N,  $\text{Cl}^-$  and  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$  were  
3 all greater in the manure-derived biochar amended soils, compared to the Control and  
4 standard WC biochar. Although more nitrates and sulphates can lead to agronomic benefits,  
5 large levels of  $\text{Cl}^-$  could be toxic to plants and needs to be further verified by growing crops  
6 on treated soils. A significant interaction effect was observed between the soil types and  
7 biochar treatments for most of the measured variables. A significant positive correlation  
8 between the contents of the nutrients (N, P, Mg and K) in the biochars and in the final  
9 amendment mixture suggests that low temperature manure-derived biochars not only behave  
10 like soil amendments, but also like fertilizers enhancing nutrient availability. On the other  
11 hand, the standard WC biochar showed a great potential for climate change mitigation, as  
12 pointed out by more C content enhancement, but also considerably reduced the  $\text{N-NO}_3^-$   
13 availability in the soil. The obtained results could thus be helpful to formulate specific  
14 guidelines in order to design new certification schemes for biochars and their associated  
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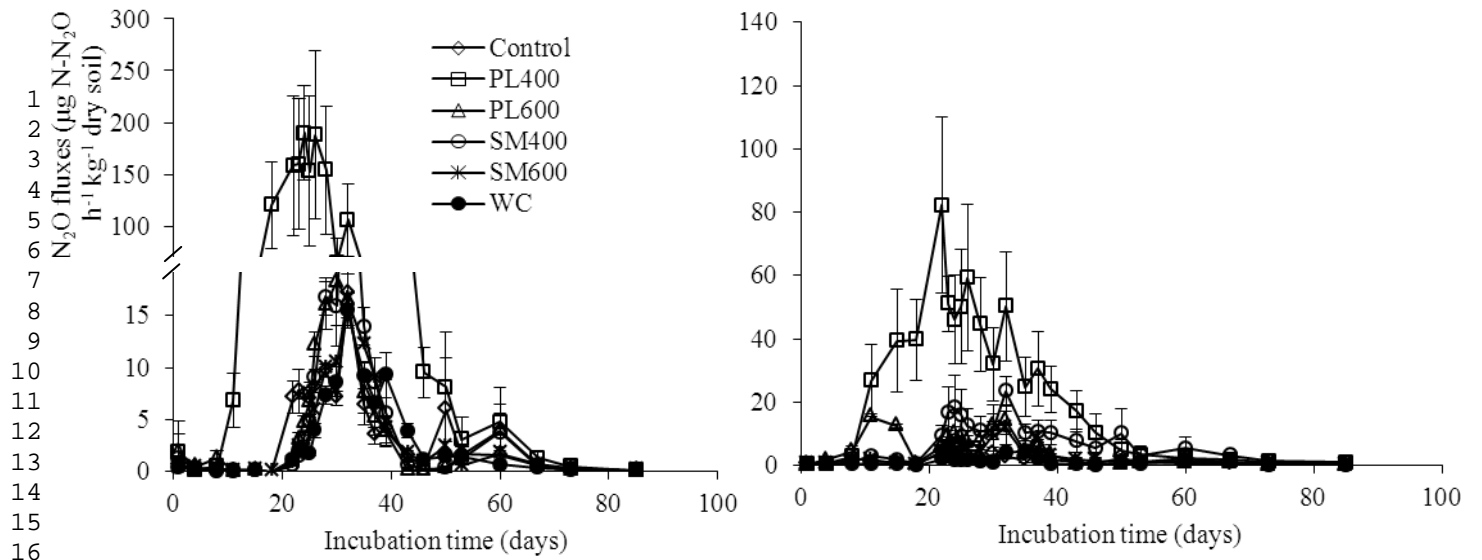
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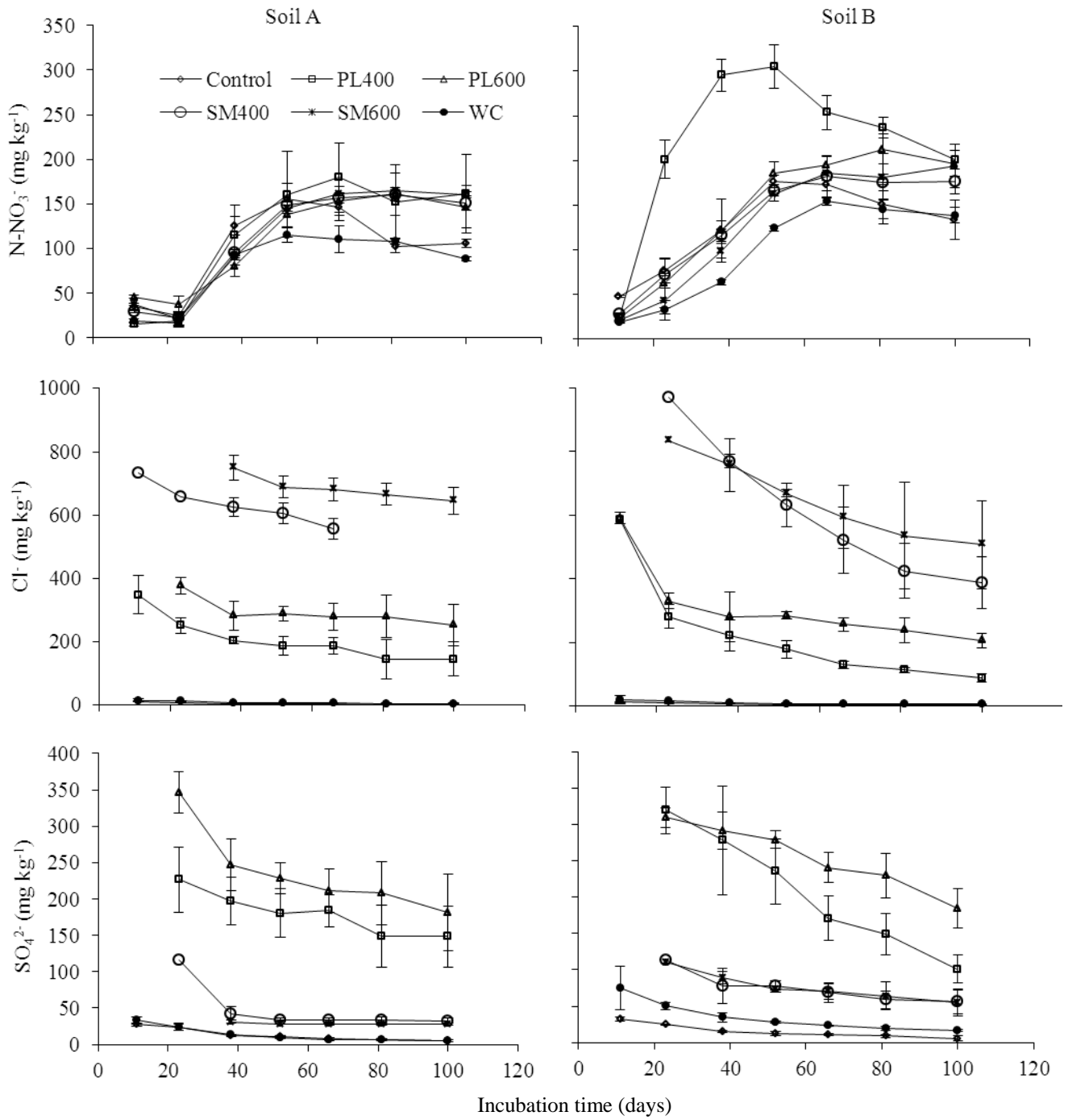
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**Supplementary Fig. S1.** Fluxes of N<sub>2</sub>O from soil A (graph on left) and soil B (graph on right) amended with different biochars over 90 days of incubation (Please not different scales of Y-axis). Ammonium nitrate fertilization was started after 21 days of incubation: PL400, PL600- poultry litter biochar at 400 and 600 °C; SM400, SM600- swine manure biochar at 400 and 600 °C; WC- wood chip biochar at 1000 °C. The error bars represent standard errors (n=4). Soil A- sandy soil, Soil B- silt-loam soil.





**Fig. 1.** Effect of the biochar treatment on N-NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>, Cl<sup>-</sup> and SO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup> evolution in sandy soil (soil A) and silt-loam (soil B). Fertilization with NH<sub>4</sub>NO<sub>3</sub> was started 21 days after incubation. The error bars represent standard errors (n=4) (Note different scales of Y-axis).

**Table 1**

Physico-chemical characteristics and elemental compositions (mean values, n=3) of two soils and different biochars utilized in the experiment.

Parameters	Soil A	Soil B	Biochar types <sup>a</sup>				
			PL400	PL600	SM400	SM600	WC
Texture	Sandy	Silt-loam	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
BD (g cm <sup>-3</sup> )	1.35	1.25	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
CaCO <sub>3</sub> (%)	15.3	0.4	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Porosity <sup>b</sup>	45.3	49.2	2.9	3.0	7.6	11.4	115.9
pH	8.3	6.1	9.5	10.4	10.0	10.4	11.0
CEC (cmol <sub>c</sub> kg <sup>-1</sup> )	5.4	12.4	30.2	27.5	52.5	18.6	14.8
TOC (%)	0.52	1.2	52.1	52.8	54.9	57.9	89.3
TN (%)	0.057	0.15	5.85	4.0	2.23	1.79	0.27
C:N	9.1	8.0	9.0	13.0	24.6	32.4	335.4
P <sup>c</sup> (g kg <sup>-1</sup> )	0.014	0.023	12.2	15.4	9.7	15.5	0.73
K <sup>d</sup> (g kg <sup>-1</sup> )	0.028	0.042	38.8	58.8	16.2	35.3	2.6
Ca <sup>d</sup> (g kg <sup>-1</sup> )	0.028	0.042	28.3	35.9	20.3	28.9	13.6
Mg <sup>d</sup> (g kg <sup>-1</sup> )	0.981	1.45	17.3	24	15.7	21.3	3.2
S (%)	ND	ND	0.79	0.8	0.24	0.39	0
Moisture (%)	ND	ND	3.2	4.6	3.8	2.9	6.8
VM (%)	ND	ND	44.9	24.7	29.9	17.8	15.3
Ash (%)	ND	ND	25.3	35.4	27.5	34.5	7.8
Acidity (mmol H <sup>+</sup> g <sup>-1</sup> )	ND	ND	1.91	0.72	1.12	0.98	0.57
Surface area (m <sup>2</sup> g <sup>-1</sup> )	ND	ND	5.4	6.3	5.8	10.6	178.3

Abbreviations: ND- not determined, BD- bulk density, TOC- total organic carbon, TN- total nitrogen, CEC- cation exchange capacity, VM- volatile matter, SA- surface area.

<sup>a</sup> Letters refer to feedstock material as poultry litter (PL), swine manure (SM) and wood chip (WC), numbers refer to pyrolysis temperature in °C, with addition to WC at 1000 °C.

<sup>b</sup> expressed as % in soil, and as mm<sup>3</sup> g<sup>-1</sup> in biochar.

<sup>c</sup> available P.

<sup>d</sup> Exchangeable cations in soil, while total in biochar

**Table 2**

The N<sub>2</sub>O (μg N-N<sub>2</sub>O h<sup>-1</sup> kg<sup>-1</sup> soil) peak, cumulative N<sub>2</sub>O (mg N-N<sub>2</sub>O kg<sup>-1</sup> soil) and CO<sub>2</sub> (g C-CO<sub>2</sub> kg<sup>-1</sup> soil) emissions at day 85, N<sub>2</sub>O emission factor (EF) (%) and net C mineralisation (%) at the end of the incubation experiment (n=4).

Source	N <sub>2</sub> O peak	Cum. N <sub>2</sub> O	N <sub>2</sub> O EF <sup>a</sup>	Cum. CO <sub>2</sub>	Net C min. <sup>b</sup>
Biochar type					
Control	13.7 c	3.85	2.68 ab	0.69	
PL400	127.6 a	54.14	3.41 a	1.44	6.74
PL600	20.5 bc	6.39	0.65 c	0.77	0.98
SM400	28.6 b	8.05	1.29 bc	0.96	2.45
SM600	14.9 bc	4.56	0.85 c	0.85	1.47
WC	9.91 cd	2.92	1.28 bc	0.65	-0.15
SEM <sup>†</sup>	0.16	0.13	0.47	0.04	0.16
P (F)	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Soil type					
Soil A	29.4 a	16.30	1.59	0.61	1.39
Soil B	18.1 b	10.60	1.28	1.21	3.57
SEM	3.09	0.07	0.33	0.02	0.10
P (F)	0.001	0.012	0.117	<0.001	0.012
Soil type x biochar					
Soil A x Control	18.4	5.27 cd	3.01	0.52 fg	
Soil A x PL400	189.4	72.7 a	4.56	1.02 bc	4.49 b
Soil A x PL600	20.4	5.75 cd	0.58	0.49 fg	-0.08 de
Soil A x SM400	34.1	6.87 cd	1.11	0.72 de	1.85 cd
Soil A x SM600	17.0	4.91 cd	0.92	0.62 ef	1.12 cde
Soil A x WC	15.2	4.58 cde	2.01	0.44 g	-0.37 e
Soil B x Control	10.2	2.81 de	2.38	0.95 cd	
Soil B x PL400	82.1	35.3 ab	2.56	2.02 a	9.91 a
Soil B x PL600	20.6	7.09 cd	0.73	1.19 bc	2.45 cd
Soil B x SM400	24.1	9.42 bc	1.52	1.26 b	3.26 c
Soil B x SM600	13.1	4.23 cde	0.79	1.15 bc	2.01 cde
Soil B x WC	6.50	1.85e	0.81	0.92 c	0.16 de
SEM	0.23	0.18	0.52	0.05	0.23
P (F)	0.342	0.009	0.124	0.029	0.005

<sup>†</sup>Standard error of the means.

Values in the same column followed by the same letters indicate no significant differences at the P<0.05 level.

<sup>a</sup>(N-N<sub>2</sub>O emitted)/(total N supplied from NH<sub>4</sub>NO<sub>3</sub> and biochar)\*100.

<sup>b</sup>(Cum. C-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of biochar treatment – Cum. C-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of Control)/(C supplied through biochar)\*100.

**Table 3**

Effects of amendments, soil type and their interaction on the soil  $\text{NO}_3^-$  concentrations throughout the experiment (n=4). Fertilization with  $\text{NH}_4\text{NO}_3$  was started at day 21.

Source	N- $\text{NO}_3^-$ (mg $\text{kg}^{-1}$ )						
	Day 12	Day 24	Day 40	Day 53	Day 67	Day 82	Day 100
Biochar type							
Control	41.1	53.0	132.3	175.5	168.1	120.2 c	114.2 b
PL400	19.8	121.3	205.1	237.3	224.5	196.6 a	173.2 a
PL600	34.7	67.5	127.1	163.1	182.2	199.1 a	174.1 a
SM400	28.9	50.2	108.3	159.8	172.1	167.7 b	161.5 a
SM600	29.2	42.5	98.9	155.5	176.1	182.6 ab	182.1 a
WC	20.2	29.8	78.4	118.6	138.5	130.1 c	111.3 b
SEM <sup>†</sup>	1.27	2.94	3.30	2.81	2.32	6.38	5.65
P (F)	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Soil type							
Soil A	29.9	27.6	105.2	150.3	160.3	145.4 b	137.1 b
Soil B	28.1	93.8	144.9	186.2	193.6	186.7 a	168.3 a
SEM	0.73	1.70	1.93	1.62	1.33	3.68	3.26
P (F)	0.071	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Soil type x biochar							
Soil A x Control	33.9 cd	25.1 ef	136.6 c	169.8 bc	158.2 e	102.6	106.0
Soil A x PL400	15.1 f	26.1 ef	123.9 cd	175.5 b	194.4 bc	162.4	156.7
Soil A x PL600	45.7 ab	43.1 de	91.7 e	149.3 cd	169.1 de	174.7	160.1
Soil A x SM400	29.0 cde	27.6 ef	95.1 e	149.1 cd	159.1 e	159.9	150.9
Soil A x SM600	37.3 bc	27.2 ef	90.8 e	144.9 d	160.8 e	164.8	160.4
Soil A x WC	18.7 f	16.2 f	92.7 e	113.2 e	120.0 f	108.2	88.5
Soil B x Control	48.2 a	80.9 b	128.1 cd	181.2 b	178.1 cd	137.9	122.4
Soil B x PL400	24.5 de	216.4 a	286.1 a	299.1 a	254.5 a	230.7	189.6
Soil B x PL600	23.7 ef	91.9 b	162.5 b	176.7 b	195.4 b	223.6	188.2
Soil B x SM400	28.8 cde	72.7 bc	121.6 cd	170.4 b	184.9 bcd	175.5	172.1
Soil B x SM600	21.1 ef	57.7 cd	107.0 de	166.2 bc	191.5 bc	200.4	203.9
Soil B x WC	21.7 ef	43.4 de	64.1 f	124 e	157.1 e	151.9	134.1
SEM	1.79	4.17	4.74	3.98	3.28	9.10	8.00
P (F)	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.120	0.391

<sup>†</sup>Standard error of the means.

Values in the same column followed by the same letters indicate no significant differences at the P<0.05 level.

**Table 4**

Effects of amendments, soil types and their interaction on the chemical properties of the soils at the end of the incubation experiment (n=4).

Source	Contents (%)		Mineral N (mg kg <sup>-1</sup> )			pH	Macronutrients (mg kg <sup>-1</sup> )				CEC (cmol <sub>c</sub> kg <sup>-1</sup> )
	TOC	TN	C/N	N-NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup>	N-NO <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup>		P <sup>a</sup>	K <sup>b</sup>	Ca <sup>b</sup>	Mg <sup>b</sup>	
<b>Biochar type</b>											
Control	1.01 d	0.11	9.5	4.78	95.1 b	6.33	21.5	67.7	1194.1	67.5	9.94
PL400	1.85 c	0.2	9.7	2.96	158.1 a	6.78	119.4	550.8	1218	206.2	7.91
PL600	2.07 b	0.19	10.8	2.76	126.6 ab	7.67	134.6	656.8	1099.2	240.9	8.15
SM400	1.89 bc	0.15	13.5	2.91	133.1 ab	7.13	120.9	260.6	1146.2	209.8	6.09
SM600	2.01 bc	0.14	14.7	2.85	114.1 ab	7.21	122.8	268.6	1165.9	183.4	7.83
WC	2.41 a	0.12	21.5	2.78	90.7 b	6.87	20.8	111.7	1298.2	80.3	9.6
SEM†	0.04	0.003	1.68	0.12	12.7	0.04	9.12	11.8	17.2	10.7	1.46
P (F)	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.006	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
<b>Soil type</b>											
Soil A	1.67 a	0.11	15.4	2.56	85.9 b	8.21	93.1	302.1	849.5	79.6	5.36
Soil B	2.08 b	0.19	11.2	3.79	153.4 a	5.79	87.7	190.8	1524.4	273.7	12.3
SEM	0.02	0.002	1.05	0.07	7.38	0.02	7.31	13.6	9.98	8.37	1.87
P (F)	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.072	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
<b>Soil type x biochar</b>											
Soil A x Control	0.84	0.08 f	10.8 cd	2.67 bc	65.5	8.01 bc	16.8 f	61.2 g	1116.5 d	29.2 e	7.31 b
Soil A x PL400	1.58	0.14 cd	11.1 cd	2.55 bc	90.3	7.71 c	123.1 bc	823.5 a	771.4 e	137.3 c	5.27 bc
Soil A x PL600	1.92	0.16 d	11.9 cd	2.45 c	97.8	8.81 a	149.9 a	830.1 a	617.7 f	137.7 c	5.78 bc
Soil A x SM400	1.62	0.11 e	15.5 b	2.55 bc	99.7	8.23 b	148.1 a	391.9 c	730.8 ef	131.6 c	3.22 d
Soil A x SM600	1.83	0.11 e	17.2 b	2.62 bc	95.9	8.24 b	139.3 cd	394.6 c	861.8 e	93.7 d	4.59 cd
Soil A x WC	2.17	0.09 ef	26.2 a	2.5 bc	66.3	8.21 b	17.6 f	117.5 e	998.5 d	37.5 e	7.21 b
Soil B x Control	1.18	0.14 cd	8.1 e	6.9 a	124.7	4.64 g	27.6 e	74.9 f	1271.4 c	155.8 c	13.53 a
Soil B x PL400	2.12	0.25 a	8.5 e	3.37 b	225.9	5.85 f	115.9 cd	368.4 c	1664.6 a	309.7 b	11.89 a
Soil B x PL600	2.21	0.23 a	9.7 de	3.07 bc	155.5	6.54 d	120.9 bc	519.7 b	1580.6 ab	421.5 a	11.46 a
Soil B x SM400	2.16	0.19 b	11.5 cd	3.27 bc	166.5	6.03 ef	98.7 d	173.3 d	1561.6 ab	334.6 ab	11.52 a
Soil B x SM600	2.16	0.17 bc	12.2 c	3.07 bc	132.2	6.19 e	108.4 ab	182.8 d	1470.0 b	359.1 ab	13.32 a
Soil B x WC	2.65	0.16 cd	16.8 b	3.07 bc	115.2	5.54 f	24.8e	106.2 e	1597.9 ab	172.1 c	12.76 a
SEM	0.06	0.005	1.93	0.17	18.1	0.06	10.83	12.3	24.4	11.7	1.96
P (F)	0.09	0.002	<0.001	<0.001	0.123	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001

†Standard error of the means.

Values in the same column followed by the same letters indicate no significant differences at the P<0.05 level.

<sup>a</sup> Available P (Olsen), <sup>b</sup> Exchangeable K, Ca and Mg.

**Table 5a**

Pearson bivariate correlations (n = 15) between the biochar and soil properties and emissions at the end of the experiment.

Soil type	Property	Biochar properties			
		C	N	VM	C/N
Soil A	C	0.729**		-0.766**	0.734**
	N		0.836**	0.529*	-0.642**
	N <sub>2</sub> O peak	-0.321	0.755**	0.836**	-0.306
	Cum. CO <sub>2</sub>	-0.559*	0.754**	0.864**	-0.563*
	Cum. N <sub>2</sub> O	-0.345	0.794**	0.865**	-0.331
Soil B	N <sub>min</sub> <sup>a</sup>	-0.367	0.115	0.002	-0.361
	C	0.889**		-0.561*	0.900**
	N		0.967**	0.815**	-0.666**
	N <sub>2</sub> O peak	-0.515*	0.800**	0.902**	-0.504
	Cum. CO <sub>2</sub>	-0.576*	0.879**	0.939**	-0.562*
	Cum. N <sub>2</sub> O	-0.508	0.693**	0.810**	-0.493
	N <sub>min</sub> <sup>a</sup>	-0.568*	0.722**	0.826**	-0.542*

\*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01.

<sup>a</sup> soil mineral N content.

**Table 5b**

Pearson bivariate correlations (n = 15) between the biochar nutrient contents, pH, CEC and the same for the soil-biochar matrix at the end of the experiment.

Variables	Biochar/soil properties					
	P	K	Ca	Mg	pH	CEC
Soil A	0.816**	0.883**	-0.730**	0.764**	0.475	-0.705**
Soil B	0.982**	0.906**	-0.091	0.954**	-0.191	-0.346

\*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01.