# Plant responses to simulated Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) $CO_2$ pipeline leakage: the effect of soil type.

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**Running Title**

**soil type and extreme $CO_2$**

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## Abstract

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) has been proposed as a bridging technology to enable the transition to an energy system based on renewable sources. Many high $CO_2$ emitting industries (e.g. power stations) are distant from potential carbon storage sites (such as offshore geological reservoirs) and therefore an infrastructure of $CO_2$ transportation must be developed to carry the $CO_2$ to safe storage. As such there is a need to understand the risks involved and the mitigation of potential leaks associated with CCS and dense-phase $CO_2$ transportation networks. Since 2012 a number of experimental studies have provided a mechanistic understanding of the risks posed to crops as a function of $CO_2$ leakage from CCS infrastructure. However, what remains largely unresolved is the role played by both soil type and soil structure in mitigating and/or enhancing plant stresses. In this study we provide an experimental framework to evaluate these effects. Wheat and beetroot were grown in four different experimental soils to test the effects of specific spoil attributes (organic, low pH; organic, open structure; organic, limed; loam, neutral pH) on crop performance when exposed to high levels (~40%) of $CO_2$ in the soil environment. Comparison between treatment and controls and across the soil types reveals little difference in terms of biomass or plant stress chemistry. From a stakeholder perspective these findings suggest that soil type may play only a minor role in mitigating or amplifying plant stress in response to the unlikely event of a $CO_2$ leak from CCS infrastructure.

The Don Valley Power Project is co-financed by the European Union's European Energy Programme for Recovery
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**Keywords** Carbon capture and storage, CCS, Crops, Extreme $CO_2$, Gas exchange, Roots, Soils

## 1. Introduction

Anthropogenic climate change is driven by the acceleration of the long-term carbon cycle via
51 the combustion of fossil fuel directly transferring carbon from the lithosphere to the atmosphere. Since the dawn of the industrial age this has resulted in atmospheric $CO_2$ increasing from ~280 ppm in the 1850s to 406 ppm in 2017
54 (https://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/ccgg/trends/monthly.html). This rise in $CO_2$ has seen a concomitant increase in global average temperature (http://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/global-temperature/). The Paris Agreement in 2015 COP21 climate treatise (ratified
57 November 2016) was designed to limit warming to "… 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognising that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change".
60 These ambitious goals require the development of multiple mitigation practices and eventually the removal of fossil fuel derived carbon from the energy system.

63 One potential mechanism identified as having a role in delivering these ambitious targets and which has been recognised as a bridging technology for transition from a fossil fuel carbon based energy system to a renewable energy infrastructure is the use of carbon capture and
66 storage (CCS). This mitigation technique essentially allows for energy to be extracted as the carbon is moved from one geological reservoir to another. Many high $CO_2$ emitting industries (e.g. power stations) in the UK are distant from potential carbon storage sites (such as
69 offshore geological reservoirs) and therefore an infrastructure of $CO_2$ transportation must be developed to carry the $CO_2$ to safe storage. As such there is a need to understand the risks involved and the mitigation of potential leaks associated with CCS and dense-phase $CO_2$
72 transportation networks into the environment. Whilst risks assessment studies have been undertaken, many have focused on marine benthic studies related to off-shore storage

reservoirs[1-4]. Of those undertaken in terrestrial environments, several have utilised natural
75 $CO_2$ vent sites, which are not comparable to a sudden or recent release of $CO_2$, as both the soil and biological components within have evolved over many years[5, 6]. Specific experimental systems include outdoor $CO_2$ gradient studies, which whilst giving a more
78 realistic scenario with comparable $CO_2$ and $O_2$ levels of leakage in soils, do not fully replicate particular scenarios such as soil type and focus largely on leakage detection methods rather than direct effects on soil or bio-components[7-10]. Studies with the aim of measuring the
81 effects of $CO_2$ leakage on soils have been undertaken, but have not specifically looked at different soil types under the same conditions[11], an exception is that of[12] who did investigate two soil types and the effect of $CO_2$ on microbial communities in a long-term mesocosm
84 study. The nearest equivalent study system is that of[13, 14] who did specifically measure vegetation responses, did not investigate different soil types.

87 Recent experimental work has highlighted that the effects of $CO_2$ leakage on agricultural land are highly localised[15, 16] as reviewed in[17] (e.g. these effects are also transient with recovery of vegetation close to complete after 12 months[17] and that this stress is induced by direct $CO_2$
90 exposure rather than as a function of $O_2$ depletion[18]. Further, using the system reported here we have recently demonstrated that the effects of impurities (specifically $SO_2$ and $H_2S$) within the $CO_2$ gas stream are limited. Within our experimental system there are no additive
93 toxicity effects when comparing plants gassed with a combination of $CO_2$ and $SO_2$ or $CO_2$ and $H_2S$ to control plants exposed just to $CO_2$[19]

96 However, what remains largely unresolved is the role played by both soil type and structure in mitigating and/or enhancing reported plant stresses. Closing this knowledge gap is an important step in the development and deployment of CCS transportation infrastructure as

any potential hazard requires full elucidation. This will aid the decision making process in where and how CCs technologies are deployed[20]. Typically sites suitable for the geological storage of $CO_2$ are distal to $CO_2$ emitters, consequently $CO_2$ pipelines will cross numerous soil types. To address this knowledge gap we build on our experimental protocols[17-19] to test for differences in plant stress/health as a function of soil type when exposed to high soil $CO_2$ concentrations that simulate $CO_2$ leakage analogous to the field based experiments conducted at the ASGARD (Artificial Soil Gassing And Response Detection) facility[17, 21].

## 2. Materials and methods

### 2.1 Experimental setup

Soil chambers were constructed of acrylic plastic with pipe inlets to allow $CO_2$ gassing of the soil environment exclusively. The experimental system was housed in a controlled environment growth facility (UNIGRO, UK) to standardise all other environmental variables: irradiance was 300 μmol $m^{-2}$ $s^{-1}$ (at plant height), day/night as 12/12 hours; temperature 21/18ºC day/night; relative humidity 60%. Gas was supplied from either an integral supply (pure $CO_2$) or a gas cylinder ($N_2$) and separated prior to entering each individual soil chamber by 2 flow rate step-down manifolds. Gas was delivered to each individual chamber at a rate of 30 (±15) mL $min^{-1}$ to maintain $CO_2$ and $N_2$ levels at steady state. Gases were exhausted to atmosphere via a separate manifold to prevent build up within the growth room.

### 2.2 Soils types

To simulate a wide variety of soil types (yet maintain standardised growth conditions) a series of commercially available potting media were chosen and/or manipulated to deliver a number of experimental soils. Soil experimental treatments are as follows: (I) Levington's no.3 (L3) compost to represent an organic soil with a low pH; (II) L3 plus sand (25% by

volume), was designed to simulate an organic rich soil with an open structure; (III) L3 plus lime: organic soil with lime (lime was added to raise the pH by 1 unit) was chosen to see if the addition of lime acted as a potential buffer of $CO_2$ induced acidity and finally (IV) John Innes no.3 (JI 3) compost was chosen to simulate a standardised loamy soil with a neutral pH. We stress that these soils are used as an experimental system. They are not meant to represent actual soil types, but are used as standardised media to determine the specific effects of $CO_2$ exposure across a range of plausible soil types/ structures and to measure explore these responses in standardised a consistent experimental setting.

To fully elucidate the effect of soil type each experiment consisted of an experimental treatment and three levels of control: (I) $CO_2$-gassed soil (the experiment); (II) $N_2$-gassed soil ($O_2$-depleted control); and (III) non-gassed soil (natural state control). In all experiments gas concentrations ($CO_2$ and $O_2$) were measured daily using the GEOTECH GA5000 gas analyser (Geotech, Warwickshire, UK). Each experimental run had the following replication, six chambers were exposed to $CO_2$, a further six chambers were exposed to $N_2$ and four chambers were used as non-gassed chambers (Fig. 1).

## 2.3 Soil pH

Soil samples were taken prior to and at the end of each experiment and dried at 40 ± 4°C. A solution of 0.01M calcium chloride dihydrate ($CaCl_2.2H_2O$ analytical grade) was dissolved in de-ionised water and added to a soil sample to give a final solid to solution ratio of 1:2.5. The mixture was placed on a magnetic stirrer and stirred for at least 5 minutes. The suspension was allowed to settle for 15 minutes and measured with a pH electrode (Hanna combination electrode and Jenway PHM6 meter, Fisher Scientific, UK) until readings were stable.

## 2.4 Crop species

In all experiments the crop plants used were spring wheat (*Triticum aestivum* v Tybault - a monocotyledon, grass) and beetroot (*Beta vulgares* v Pablo F1 - a dicotyledon, vegetable). The crops were sown and grown within an environmental controlled growth room (details above) for 1 to 2 weeks before being transplanted into the soil chambers. They were then left to allow sufficient root growth before gassing commenced (approximately 2 weeks later) with the gassing period lasting for up to 7 days. After that time, plants become pot-bound and performance becomes compromised via physiological changes, making direct comparison with field data (not pot-bound) problematic. Samples for biochemical analyses were immediately quenched in liquid nitrogen and stored at -80°C. Biomass (all above ground parts; leaves and stems) were measured as fresh weight (g).

## 2.5 Biochemical analyses

During harvest the plants were sub-sampled for analysis of the key biochemical compounds that are either necessary for functional integrity or associated with symptoms of stress. Chlorophyll content was measured following observational discolouration of leaves in field trials[17, 18]. Chlorophyll is a necessary compound for the ability of plants to photosynthesise efficiently and subsequently grow to produce a crop yield. A decrease in this compound would suggest that resources are diverted to produce compounds which enable a plant to mitigate stress. Build-up of anthocyanin is indicative of many stresses and is identified via a red discolouration of leaves and/or stems. In field studies it was observed[17, 18] that some leaves had turned red; consequently changes in this compound were investigated in this laboratory study. Phenylalanine lyase (PAL) is a compound which mediates the production of many stress compounds and is a generic indication that plants are suffering from environmental stress.

## 2.6 Chlorophyll analysis

Approximately 300 mg of fresh leaf material was ground in a pestle and mortar in 5 mL 80% acetone (volume to volume (v/v) with distilled water) solution and transferred to a 10 mL universal tube. The tube was covered with aluminum foil, stirred for 30 minutes, and then centrifuged for 15 minutes (at a speed of 3,000 rpm). The supernatant was transferred to a new tube, mixed thoroughly and pipetted into duplicate 1cm path length cuvettes. Absorbance of chlorophyll content was measured using spectrophotometry (Cecil 1100, manufactured by Camlab Ltd, Cambridge, UK) against 80% acetone as a blank.

Chlorophyll concentrations were calculated as follows:

$$Ca\ (mg/g) = [12.7xA663 - 2.69xA645] \times V/1000 \times W \text{ (Chlorophyll a)} \quad (1)$$

$$Cb\ (mg/g) = [22.9xA645 - 4.86xA663\ ] \times V/1000 \times W \text{ (Chlorophyll b)} \quad (2)$$

$$Ca+b\ (mg/g) = [8.02 \times A663 + 20.20xA645] \times V/1000 \times W \text{ (Chlorophyll a+b)} \quad (3)$$

Where A = absorbance wavelength, V = volume of the extract (mL), W = Weight of fresh leaves (g). Content is expressed as mg $g^{-1}$ fresh weight[22].

## 2.7 Anthocyanin content

Pre flash-frozen plant material was ground in a pestle and mortar in 5mL of 1% HCl in methanol (%v/v) solution to yield 4 x 1 mL samples for duplicate samples at pH 1.0 and pH 4.5. Assays were performed using 0.5mL of sample added to 2.5mL of each of the following buffers: Potassium chloride buffer: 0.025 M, pH 1.0 (1.86 g KCl added to 980 mL of distilled

water in a beaker, pH measured and adjusted to 1.0 with concentrated HCl and made up to 1 L with distilled water); and Sodium acetate buffer, 0.4 M, pH 4.5 (54.43 g $CH_3CO_2Na \cdot 3\ H_2O$ added to 960 mL distilled water in a beaker, pH adjusted to 4.5 with concentrated HCl, and made up to 1 L with distilled water). The appropriate dilution factor for the sample was determined by diluting with potassium chloride buffer, pH 1.0, until the absorbance of the sample at the vis-max is within the linear range of the spectrophotometer (i.e. for most spectrophotometers the absorbance should be less than 1.2). The final volume was divided by the initial volume to obtain the dilution factor. In order to not exceed the buffer's capacity, the sample did not exceed 20% of the total volume. Two dilutions of the sample, one with a potassium chloride buffer, pH 1.0, and the other with sodium acetate buffer, pH 4.5, were prepared by diluting each by the previously determined dilution factor. Duplicates of each were pipetted into 1cm path length cuvettes. Dilutions were equilibrated for 15 minutes. Both are read at 510 and 700nm against a blank of distilled water on a spectrophotometer (Cecil 1100, manufactured by Camlab Ltd, Cambridge UK).

Anthocyanin content is expressed as mg $g^{-1}$ Gallic Acid equivalent and is calculated as follows:

$$A = (A533 - A700)pH\ 1.0 - (A533 - A700)pH\ 4.5 \quad (4)$$

## 2.8 Phenylalanine lyase (PAL)

50 mg of plant material was ground in a pestle and mortar in 2 mL 100mM Tris – HCl buffer with 12 mM mercaptoethanol (supplied by Fisher, UK), transferred to an eppendorf and centrifuged at a speed of 16,000 rpm for 5 minutes. The sample supernatant was used in the assay. A 500 µL sample, 450 µL 100mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.8) and50 µL 100mM phenylalanine

was placed in a water bath for one hour at $37^0$ C. The reaction was then stopped by the addition of 50 µL 5 M HCl. Change in absorbance was measured on a spectrophotometer (Cary 50 UV-Visible Varian, manufactured by Northstar Scientific, UK) at 290 nm in 1 cm light path cells against blanks containing 50 µL 5 M HCl before the addition of 50 µL 100mM phenylalanine. The amount of PAL present is expressed as nmol *trans*-cinnamic acid $gram^{-1}$ plant tissue $hour^{-1}$.

### 2.9 Biomass (shoot and root)

Plants were harvested between days 5 and 7 after gassing commenced. Shoots were taken from each plant, washed and dried at 80°C for 2 days. Biomass was measured as fresh and dry weight. Roots were carefully removed from the chambers, washed, patted dry, weighed and dried for 4 days at 50°C. They were then re-weighed. The beet (storage root) was separated from the lateral roots from the beetroot plants and analysed independently. Beets were dried until the constant dry weight was measured. The wheat roots were measured as dry weight only. All statistical analyses were carried out using Minitab v 12 (USA).

## 3. Results and discussion

This suite of experiments designed to simulate the unlikely event of a $CO_2$ leak from CCS infrastructure, set out to test whether established stress responses observed in earlier studies[17,18, 23-25] were alleviated or magnified when crop species were grown in different soils. Mean gas concentrations in both the $CO_2$ and $N_2$ gassed chambers show that reductions in $O_2$ level were comparable both across and between the soil treatments in both crop species (Table 1). $N_2$ gassed chambers were generally slightly lower in $O_2$ concentration than the $CO_2$ chambers. $CO_2$ and $O_2$ data are higher than those found in test sites such as the Otway Project in Australia at 10% $CO_2$ maximum[26] However, they are comparable to values

249 measured in both outdoor field facility ASGARD[17, 18] and the higher $CO_2$ levels in the gradient site reported by[9]. Laboratory based systems show similar levels to those reported[12-14].

252 ## 3.1 Biomass

Different soil types influenced the level of biomass decrease in both species (Fig. 2) with a mean decreases in biomass of ~40% - comparable to field grown counterparts for both crops 255 indicating that biomass (and potentially yield) are affected within the first few days of exposure to $CO_2$ in the soil. The $N_2$-induced $O_2$ depletion also impacted on biomass, leading to a ~10% mean decrease. This corroborates evidence that both elevated soil $CO_2$ and $O_2$ 258 depletion have an effect on vegetation[18], but that soil gassed with $CO_2$ exerts a greater impact and is responsible for the majority of the reduced biomass.

261 Specific soil differences reveal that plants growing in L3 had a greater reduction in biomass than those grown in JI3 when gassed with $CO_2$. A decrease in biomass, however, is still evident in JI3, with wheat showing a greater impact than beetroot. The addition of lime 264 ($CaCO_3$) to L3, produced the largest effect in terms of biomass reduction in both species (Fig. 3). This large reduction in biomass with the addition of lime was an unexpected result, as it was reasoned that liming the soil would provide a buffer against $CO_2$-induced acidity at the 267 root interface. This finding suggests that acidification of soil pores through the interaction of $CO_2$ with water to produce carbonic acid is not a major factor responsible for the observed reduction in biomass, but rather that the amount of lime may have exceeded that suitable for 270 the crops used in this soil type. The addition of sand to L3 produced an anomalous result (when compared to the other soil type experiments) as there was no statistically significant loss in biomass when comparing the $CO_2$ gassed wheat or the beetroot to their non-gassed 273 control plants (Fig. 3and Table 2). The L3 compost supplemented with sand was used to

simulate a soil with a more open structure. The more open structure of this soil may have provided a better growing medium for these plants thus they might have been buffered from the stress effects of high concentrations of $CO_2$ in the root zone. This may be the explanation for the beetroot as the non-gassed control has the highest biomass (Fig. 3). However this does not appear to provide an explanation for wheat as there was no increase in biomass in this soil treatment when compared to other non-gassed controls with the exception of L3 and the lime treatment that shows a reduction in biomass (Fig. 3). It is possible that the open soil structure could have minimised $CO_2$/root contact time in this set up. Yet, the similarity in $O_2$ and $CO_2$ concentrations across soil types (Table 1) suggests this is unlikely and at the moment we are unable to explain these intriguing findings. In general the analysis of root biomass from both wheat and beetroot indicates a dramatic reduced root growth of >60% under $CO_2$ gassed soil when compared to controls. The reduction in root biomass provides a mechanism for the inability of plants to access sufficient nutrients and water. This response was investigated in more detail and found to be a whole plant response affecting the water status of the plant[27].

The majority of the findings of this short-term study (a reduction in above and below ground biomass when $CO_2$ treatments are compared to controls) reflect those conducted on more long-term field trials such as work at the ZERT (Zero Emission Research and Technology) centre Montana, USA[2] and the ASGARD facility[23-25].

### 3.2 Soil pH

For wheat plants in the L3 experiment with $CO_2$ and $N_2$ gassed treatments the soil pH was not significantly different, but both have a significantly different soil pH when compared to the L3 non-gassed control ($p = <0.001$) (Fig.4). There is no difference in soil pH between treatments in L3 and sand. $CO_2$ gassed soils in the L3 and lime experiment are not

significantly different to $N_2$ gassed and non-gassed control, but $N_2$ gassed is significantly higher than control ($p = 0.015$). $CO_2$ and $N_2$ gassed JI3 are not significantly different, but both are higher than control ($p = 0.03$, $p = 0.003$ respectively).

In beetroot, L3 has the lowest pH (organic acidic soil). Added lime and JI3 have similar values between pH 6.0 and 7.0 under all treatments. There is no statistical difference between treatments on pH of L3 or L3 with lime. pH of L3 and sand under $N_2$ gassing is significantly lower than non-gassed control soil ($p = 0.005$) but not $CO_2$ gassed soil. pH of $CO_2$ and $N_2$ gassed soil in JI3 are both significantly lower than the non-gassed control soil ($p = 0.003$, $p = 0.012$). Both $CO_2$ and $N_2$ gassing does have the potential to reduce pH compared to controls in JI3 and with the addition of sand. This suggests that different soil types do interact differentially with gasses in respect of acidity. Wheat exhibits a different result to beetroot. Plants are known to exude compounds that stabilise pH levels around the roots. Wheat appears to be more efficient in this process, as the pH levels in gassed plants are higher than the controls, except in L3, a soil that wheat prefers the least. There is no correlation between soil pH and biomass in either wheat or beetroot across all experimental soil types.

### 3.3 Plant biochemistry

Biochemical analysis was undertaken to test for plant stress as a function of treatment and to determine if soil type mitigated or amplified the plant stress response. Data shows both specific treatment effects (Table 3) and differences between soil types (Table 4). Results are presented by stress compound and subdivided by crop.

### 3.4 Chlorophyll

Chlorophyll analysis was undertaken to test for overall plant photosynthetic health, as a reduction in chlorophyll content would indicate plants reallocating resources from maintaining photosynthesis to stress mitigation. For wheat chlorophyll content in the L3 soil, the treatment ($CO_2$) is not significantly different from either the $N_2$ (oxygen depletion control) or non- gassed control; in the L3 and sand combination the treatment ($CO_2$) is significantly higher than the control, but not significantly different to $N_2$ control; which is suggestive of an $O_2$ depletion effect[18]. In the combined L3 and lime experiment the treatment ($CO_2$) is not significantly different from either control and this finding is repeated in the JI3 treatment (Table 3). Comparison between soils for a $CO_2$ effect indicates that the L3 treatment produces statistically lower chlorophyll levels than all other soil types; L3 and sand ($p = 0.005$), L3 and lime ($p = 0.044$) and JI3 ($p = 0.007$) [Student's t-test] in wheat (Table 4).

Analysis of the beetroot chlorophyll data shows that in the L3 experiment chlorophyll concentrations in the $CO_2$ treatment are not significantly different from either the $N_2$ control or non-gassed control and these findings are repeated in the L3 and sand experiment. In the L3 and lime experiment chlorophyll concentrations in the $CO_2$ treatment are significantly lower than both controls and in the JI3 experiment there is no statistical difference between the treatment and control (Table 3). Comparison between soils for a $CO_2$ effect indicates that there are no statistical differences in chlorophyll content between the soil types (Table 4).

### 3.5 Anthocyanin

Anthocyanin analysis was undertaken to test for generic plant health as anthocyanin up-regulation is a precursor to numerous plant stresses. For wheat the following was observed with anthocyanin content: In the L3 and L3 and sand experiment there was no statistical difference between the $CO_2$ treatment and the $N_2$ control or non-gassed control. In the L3 and

lime and the JI3 experiment the anthocyanin concentration was significantly lower than both controls (Table3). Comparison between soil types shows that the anthocyanin content in the L3 and sand experiment has statistically higher levels of anthocyanin than in the L3 and lime ($p = 0.005$) and JI ($p = <0.0001$) experiments [ Student's t-test] (Table 4).

For the beetroot anthocyanin content there was no significant difference observed between treatment and either level of control in the L3, the L3 and sand and the L3 and lime experiments. In the JI3 experiment anthocyanin levels where significantly higher in the $CO_2$ treatment than the non-gassed control but not different to the $N_2$ control (Table 3). Comparison between $CO_2$ treatment and different soil types shows that in the L3 and sand experiment the anthocyanin content is statistically lower than the JI3 ($p = 0.001$) and that anthocyanin content in the L3 and lime experiment is statistically lower than JI3 ($p = <0.000$) [Student's t-test]. Data indicate that only $CO_2$-gassed plants grown in JI3 have a higher anthocyanin content than control plants ($p = <0.0001$) (Table 4), this could be an indicator of early onset of stress in this specific treatment when compared to other soil treatments.

### 3.6 Phenylalanine lyase (PAL)

PAL analysis was again performed to test for generic plant health as PAL up-regulation is a precursor to numerous plant stresses. In wheat there were no significant differences in PAL context between the $CO_2$ treatment and the controls in any of the soil type experiments (Table 3). Comparisons of PAL data from $CO_2$ treatments across the soil experiments shows that in the L3 and sand experiment PAL expression is statistically lower than in the L3 and lime soil ($p = 0.04$) and the JI3 soil experiments ($p = 0.019$) [Student's t-test] (Table 4).

372 Analysis of beetroot PAL levels indicates no significant differences between the $CO_2$ treatment and either set of controls in any of the soil type experiments (Table 3). Comparisons of PAL data from $CO_2$ treatments across the soil experiments shows that PAL
375 concentration in the L3 and sand experiment is statistically greater than L3 and lime ($p = 0.029$), JI3 ($p = 0.009$) experiments, while L3 and lime is greater than the JI3 experiment ($p = 0.001$) and in the L3 experiment ($p = 0.034$) [Student's t-test] (Table 4).

378

Overall, there is little change in stress biochemistry with treatment ($CO_2$ compared to non-gassed control). Comparing our pot studies to those of our longer-term field studies[17]
381 indicates leaves change colour (an indication of the up-regulation of stress compounds) approximately ten days after the initiation of $CO_2$ treatment[17]. The concentration of $CO_2$ in the soil of our pot experiments exceeds that found in our field experiments[17]. Consequently
384 this lack of a stress response can't be explained purely as a function of $CO_2$ concentration. It is possible that the more stable environmental conditions in the plant growth room could have acted as a buffer to the specific $CO_2$ stress delaying the onset of stress. However, the short
387 duration of these pot experiments may offer an alternative explanation for the lack of an observed stress. We did find clear differences in non-gassed control plants in different soil types (Table 5), showing that soil type will influence biochemical composition regardless of
390 the presence of an experimental stress.

The similarity in $CO_2$ concentration between our field and laboratory data is important as
393 field based experiments to manipulate soil type would be prohibitively expensive. Moving to a laboratory based system that broadly matches field manipulations allows for the analysis of more specific soil attributes with adequate experimental replication whilst minimising costs.
396 We have previously demonstrated[18] a similar response to chamber experiments and field

trials undertaken at the ASGARD site in comparable soil types. Consequently we are confident that the results presented in this lab study are transferable to field situations when soil types are similar to those used in our experimental set up.

Via funding from the National Grid, UK and the European Union Energy Programme for Recovery (EEPR) under the COOLTRANS research programme we have developed an experimental programme designed to understand the impact on crops of $CO_2$ leakage from CCS infrastructure. This programme focussed either on catastrophic failure[28] or small scale leakage[17-19]. Synthesising these findings reveals that although there are noticeable effects on crops these affects across all experiments are minimal when placed into the context of farm scale agriculture. For example in field trials where biomass and yield decreased, the area of vegetation that was affected was small, between 0.2 and 0.3 $m^2$ in spring barley and grass/clover and ~0.5$m^2$ for spring oilseed rape and autumn barley. In the context of an average arable field size in the UK of 12 ha, this represents an area of 0.00006% ha, with yield losses corresponding to 0.0003% ha.

## 4. Conclusions

The loss of biomass is broadly consistent across soil types for both species investigated, the exception being L3 and sand. From a stakeholder perspective these findings suggest that on the whole soil type does not amplify plant stress in response to the unlikely event of a $CO_2$ leak from CCS pipelines. Intriguingly our data suggests that plants in a sand rich soil might be less susceptible to $CO_2$ induced stress. But the reasons behind this reduction in susceptibility are currently unknown so these findings should be interpreted with caution. Looking more broadly across our work linked to $CO_2$ leakage from CCS infrastructure the impact of crop plants again appears to be localised.

## Acknowledgements

JAL was funded by National Grid, UK and the European Union Energy Programme for Recovery (EEPR) under the COOLTRANS research programme. The European Union is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.

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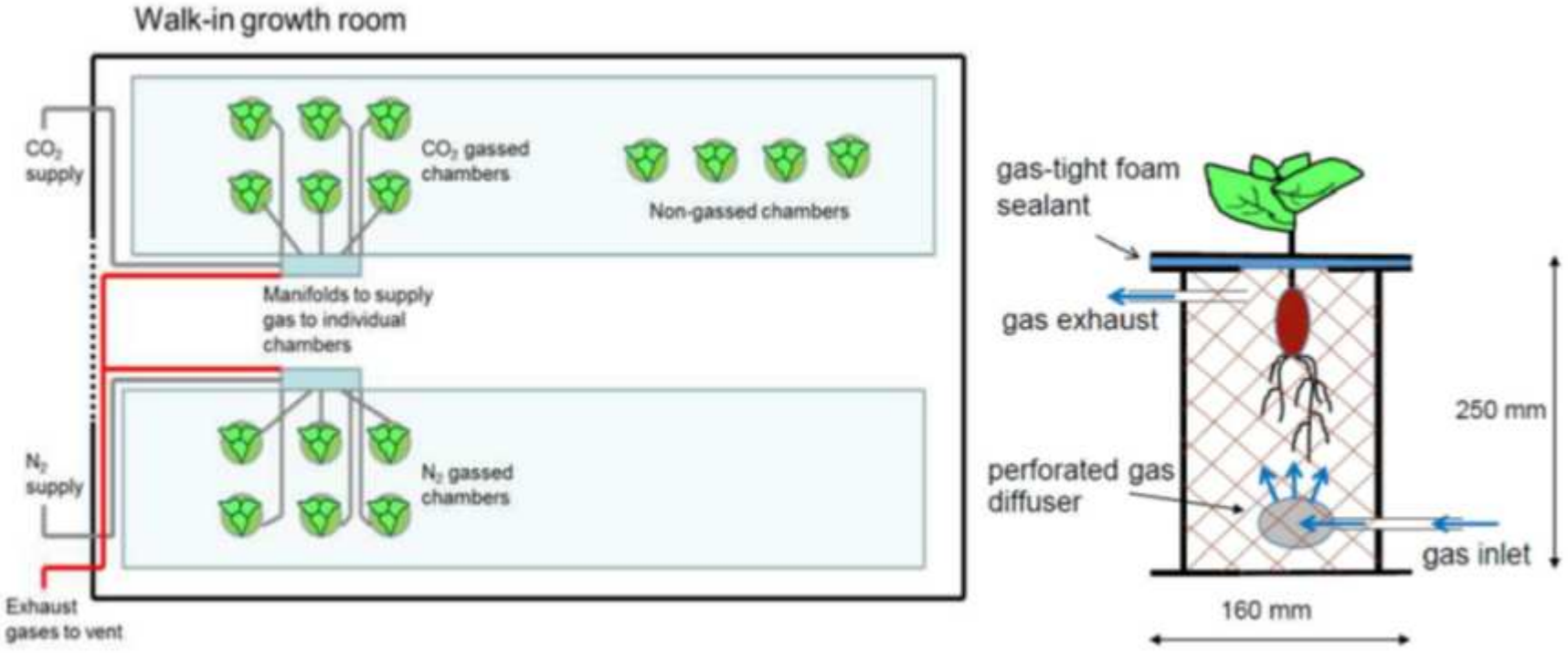
**Figures**




3 **Fig. 1.** Schematic representation of the experimental arrangement within a walk-in controlled environment facility and a soil chamber with a beetroot plant. Gases were exhausted to atmosphere via a separate manifold to prevent build up within the growth room.

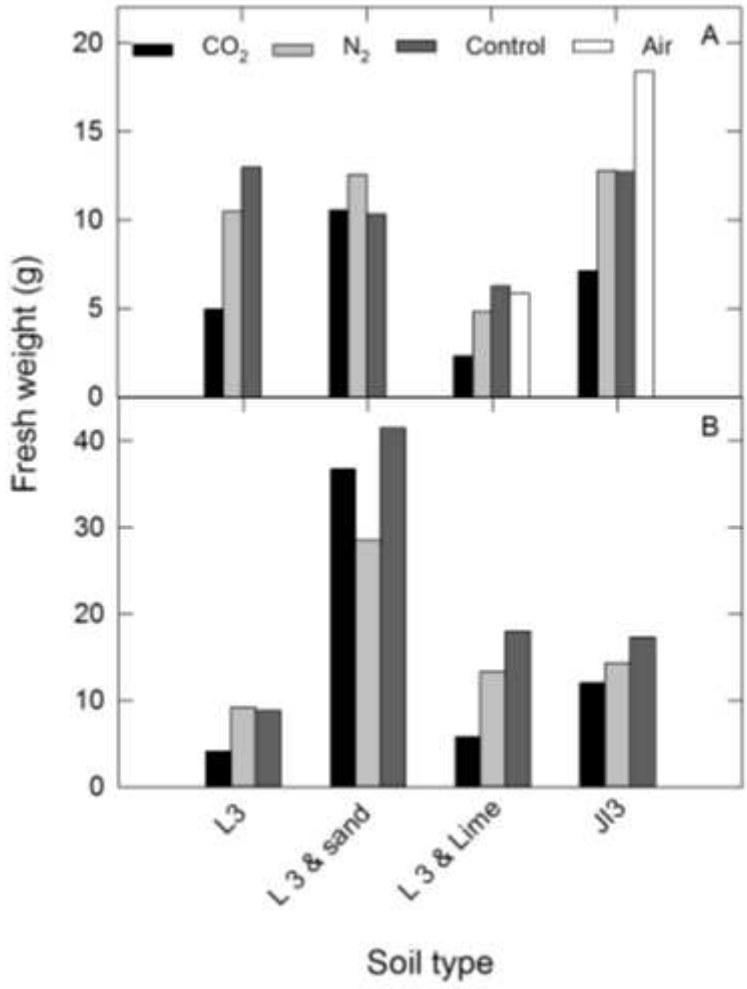



**Fig. 2.** Fresh weight biomass at harvest across experimental treatment and soils type. (A) Wheat and (B) beetroot. A full statistical break down of results is given in the text. See materials and methods for experimental set up.

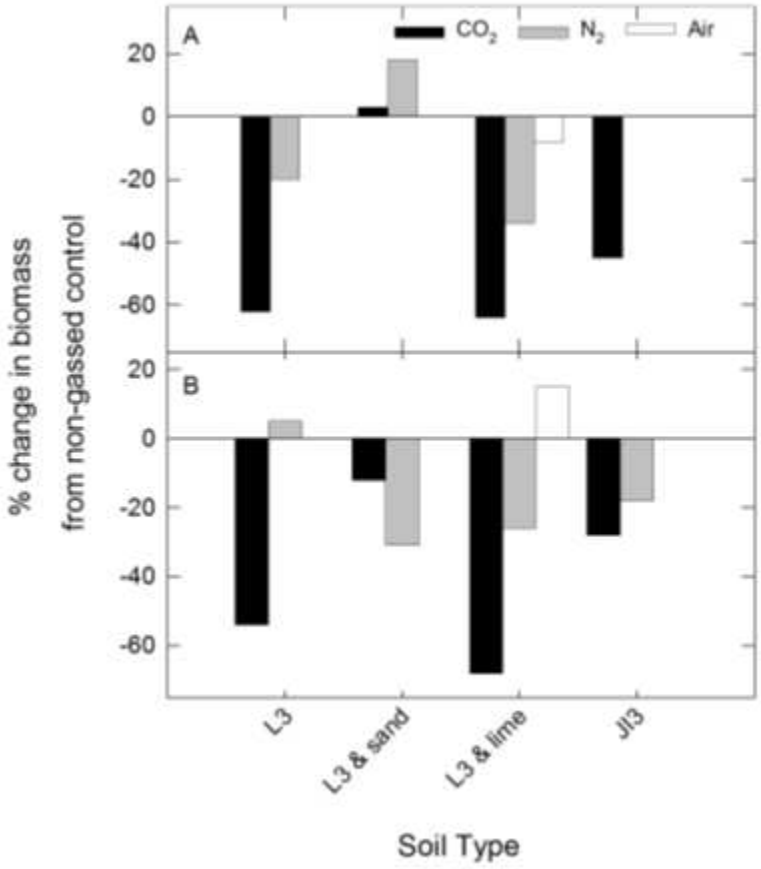
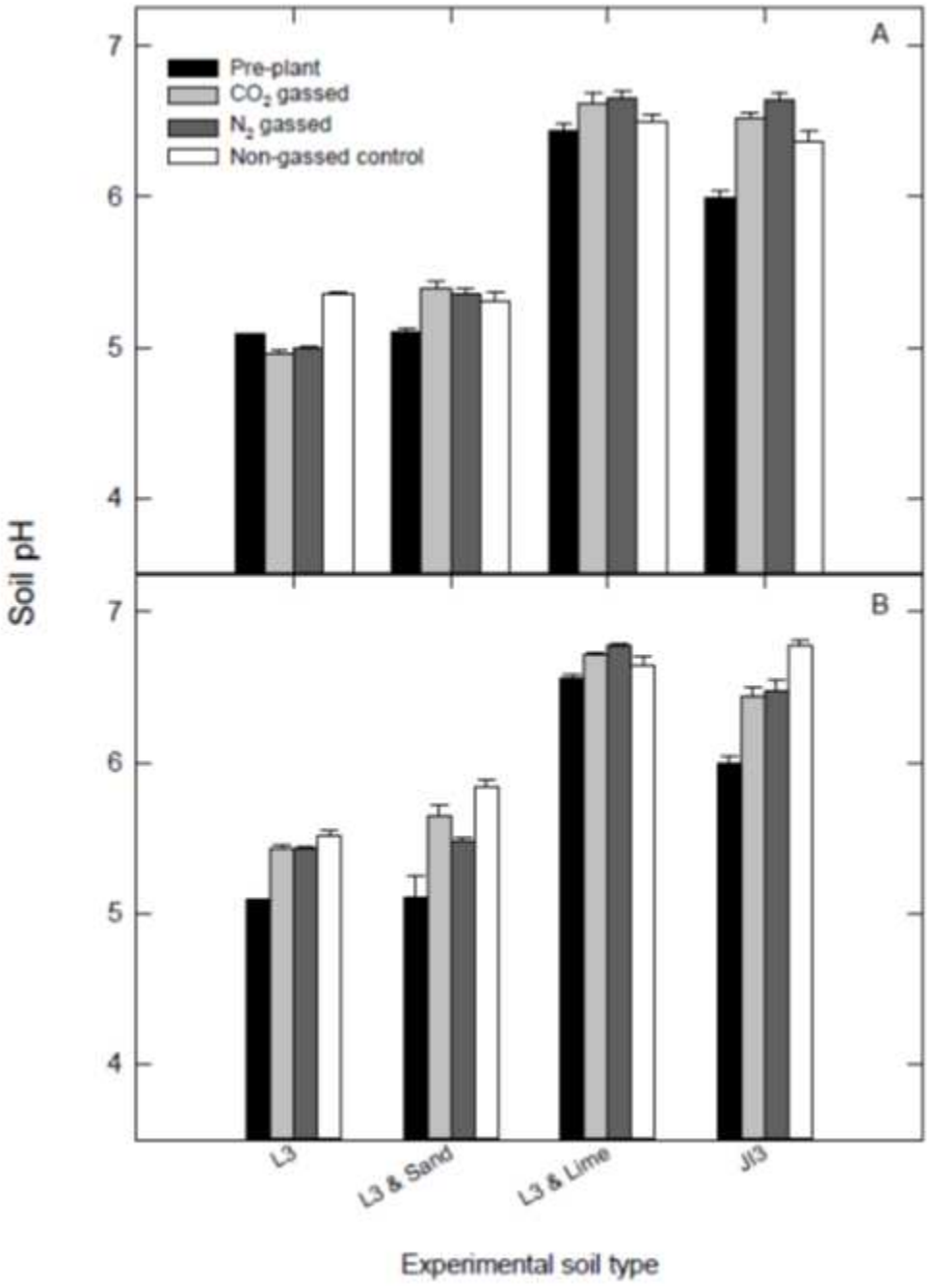



**Fig. 3.** Percentage change in biomass across experimental treatment and soils type relative to controls. **(**A) Wheat and (B) beetroot. See materials and methods for experimental set up.




3 **Fig. 4.** Comparison in soil pH across the different soil treatments. (A) Wheat and (B) beetroot. A full statistical break down of results is given in the text.

6

## Tables

**Table 1**. Mean gas concentrations measured as % $CO_2$ and % $O_2$ (v/v) within the soil chambers.

| Crop & soil type | $CO_2$ concentration (%) | | $O_2$ concentration (%) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **$CO_2$ gassed** | **$N_2$ gassed** | **$CO_2$ gassed** | **$N_2$ gassed** |
| **Wheat** | | | | |
| L3 | 48.4 (12.9) | 0.15 (0.2) | 9.57 (2.7) | 8.67 (3.9) |
| L3 plus sand | 40.5 (0.6) | 0.14 (0.05) | 11.83 (0.09) | 9.18 (0.4) |
| L3 plus lime | 42.03 (3.2) | 0.24 (0.3) | 12.15 (0.4) | 10.2 (3.2) |
| JI3 | 44.14 (5.9) | 0.95 (0.03) | 11.48 (1.5) | 10.1 (1.7) |
| **Beetroot** | | | | |
| L3 | 48.0 (4.9) | 0.60 (0.5) | 8.97 (1.5) | 8.76 (1.7) |
| L3 plus sand | 51.9 (4.9) | 0.17 (0.02) | 8.81 (0.7) | 6.74 (0.5) |
| L3 plus lime | 32.0 (17.2) | 0.60 (0.4) | 13.68 (0.4) | 9.04 (1.9) |
| JI3 | 32.81 (4.2) | 0.59 (0.2) | 12.08 (1.4) | 12.59 (1.1) |

[n = 5; (SEmean)]

**Table 2.** Percent change in biomass for wheat and beetroot grown in different substrates and gassed with either $CO_2$, $N_2$ or air compared to non-gassed (control).

| | **Wheat** | | | **Beetroot** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Soil type** | **$CO_2$** | **$N_2$** | **Air** | **$CO_2$** | **$N_2$** | **Air** |
| L3 | -62 | -20 | n/a | -54 | 5 | n/a |
| L3 & sand | +3 | +18 | n/a | -12 | -31 | n/a |
| L3 & lime | -64 | -34 | -8 | -68 | -26 | 15 |
| JI 3 | -45 | 0 | n/a | -28 | -18 | n/a |

**Table 3.** Treatment effects on biochemical compounds associated with stress. Values given are the content of each compound found in $CO_2$ gassed leaves. Statistical comparison is between treatments ($CO_2$ gassed) are compared to non-gassed control plants within each soil experiment.

| | | Soil pH and significance level (difference from control) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | treatment | | | | |
| **Treatment** | **pre-plant** | **$CO_2$ gassed** | | **$N_2$ gassed** | **non-gassed control** | | |
| **Crop** | **Soil type** | **pH** | **pH** | ***p* value** | **pH** | **p value** | **pH** |
| **Wheat** | L3 | 5.09 | 4.96 | <0.001 | 4.99 | <0.001 | 5.35 |
| | L3 & sand | 5.10 | 5.39 | NS | 5.35 | NS | 5.31 |
| | L3 & lime | 6.44 | 6.62 | NS | 6.66 | 0.015 | 6.5 |
| | JI3 | 5.99 | 6.52 | 0.03 | 6.64 | 0.003 | 6.36 |
| **Beetroot** | L3 | 5.09 | 5.43 | NS | 5.43 | NS | 5.51 |
| | L3 & sand | 5.10 | 5.65 | NS | 5.48 | 0.005 | 5.84 |
| | L3 & lime | 6.56 | 6.72 | NS | 6.77 | NS | 6.64 |
| | JI3 | 5.99 | 6.44 | 0.003 | 6.48 | 0.012 | 6.78 |

**Table 4.** Soil type effects on biochemical compounds associated with stress. Statistical comparisons are between treatments ($CO_2$ gassed) across each soil type.

| | | | **Biochemical Compound and significance level** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Crop** | **Soil type** | **Chlorophyll** (mg $g^{-1}$) | **p value** | **Anthocyanin** (mg $g^{-1}$ GA equivalent) | **p value** | **PAL** (nmol trans-CA $g^{-1}$ $hr^{-1}$) | **p value** |
| Wheat | L3 | 15.84 | <0.05 | 5.56 | NS | 133483.1 | NS |
| | L3 & sand | 22.49 | NS | 9.84 | <0.05 | 88453.7 | <0.05 |
| | L3 & lime | 22.15 | NS | 4.94 | NS | 72428.7 | NS |
| | JI3 | 22.16 | NS | 2.99 | NS | 118975.4 | NS |
| Beetroot | | | | | | | |
| | L3 | 16.92 | NS | 27.8 | NS | 75463.3 | NS |
| | L3 & sand | 18.06 | NS | 4.50 | 0.001 | 198100.7 | NS |
| | L3 & lime | 16.27 | NS | 4.06 | <0.0001 | 81539.4 | NS |
| | JI3 | 19.51 | NS | 10.91 | NS | 54079.8 | <0.05 |

[mean values of 4 to 6 replicate plants]

**Table 5.** Comparison of biochemical analysis of non-gassed controls only in all soil types. Influence of soil type alone.

| | | Biochemical Compound (non-gassed control only) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Crop** | **Soil type** | **Chlorophyll** (mg $g^{-1}$) | **Anthocyanin** (mg $g^{-1}$ GA equivalent) | **PAL** (nmol trans-CA $g^{-1}$ $hr^{-1}$) |
| **Wheat** | | | | |
| | L3 | 19.92 | 10.75 | 116857.2 |
| | L3 & sand | 22.30 | 10.63 | 94030.9 |
| | L3 & lime | 22.33 | 10.01 | 104607.0 |
| | JI3 | 22.33 | 8.47 | 95222.4 |
| **Beetroot** | | | | |
| | L3 | 16.91 | 17.55 | 81463.3 |
| | L3 & sand | 20.1 | 3.72 | 287984.2 |
| | L3 & lime | 21.96 | 7.01 | 25080.9 |
| | JI3 | 16.98 | 3.09 | 72205.8 |