



# UP FARMING



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Erasmus+

PIEMONTE - GALICIA

PART 4

Updating sustainability  
application & communication  
in the livestock farming sector



Erasmus+



PIEMONTE - GALICIA

PART 4

COMMUNICATE  
SUSTAINABILITY

# DAVIDE BIAGINI



Dipartimento di Scienze Agrarie,  
Forestali e Alimentari (DISAFA)

**ULF - Produzioni Animali**

tel. 011-6708711

e-mail: [davide.biagini@unito.it](mailto:davide.biagini@unito.it)



**UNIVERSITÀ  
DI TORINO**

Dipartimento di  
Scienze Agrarie,  
Forestali e Alimentari





# A NEW PRODUCTIVE PARADIGM

Sustainability is a general **new** productive **paradigm**

Farms carried out "**green**" activities, but the intensive **agriculture** is **perceived** from the public opinion as a "**grey**" activity, and highly polluting as the industrial sector

As in commercial communication, also for **communicate** the **sustainability** is a key tool the active **involvement** of the **stakeholders**

**Communicate** sustainability is important also for the "green" activities and **require** some fundamental **steps** following detailed and described by key words



# 1st KEY WORDS: KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

Agriculture and **livestock** (and meat) has been the subject of **ideological debate** and **misinformation** for a long time

**Attacks** so **widespread** and **pervasive** as to rise **doubts** about the real risk of these anthropic activities



But these attacks are...

- ✓ often **generic**
- ✓ **not** supported by serious or verifiable **scientific evidences**
- ✓ moved from **extremist** positions (supported by persons with extreme intransigent positions and not inclined to confrontation and debate)

# THE INFORMATION

GREENPEACE



The weight of the meat



Pandemic and biodiversity loss



The hidden cost of meat

# TESTIMONIAL

INTERVISTA

Luca Mercalli: “La produzione di carne aggrava i problemi del clima”

di Federica Giordani

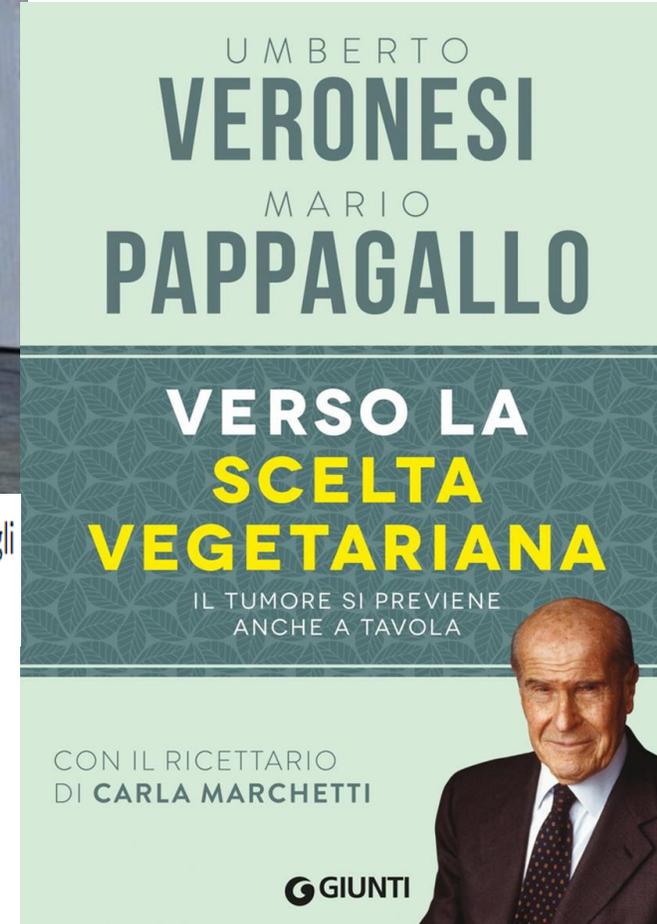
Tempo di lettura: 1 MINUTO



Luca Mercalli a “Che tempo che fa”: la riduzione delle emissioni passa dai trasporti (prima che dagli allevamenti)



Davide Biagini



# KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

Like **any human activity**, agriculture **uses resources** and **produces waste** but is not the main cause of Earth pollution and climate change

Certainly, it is the **cause** of some **specific pollution**

Agriculture has already **done a lot** and is still doing a lot **to reduce** its **impact** and increase sustainability

Example:

- Production of *GHG* and global warming
  - Water footprint
  - Antibiotic resistance
  - Health hazard
  - ...

# GLOBAL WARMING

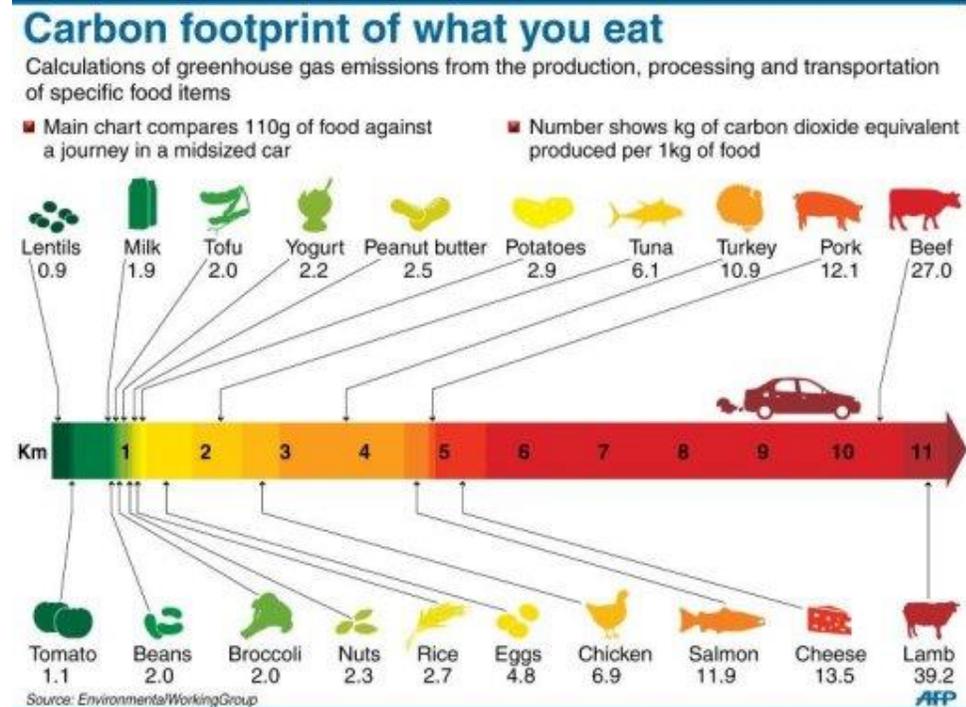


This calculation considers the **product life cycle**  
"From the cradle to the grave"

In the case of **beef** from **feed production** (the cradle) to the final consumer (the grave)

In this comparison for the car the production life cycle is neglected

## CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent produced per kg of product



Presented in this way it seems that cattle are the cause of gases emission

# THE REAL EMISSIONS WEIGHT OF ITALIAN LIVESTOCK



According to all **official institutions** (EU, EEA, ISPRA, etc.)

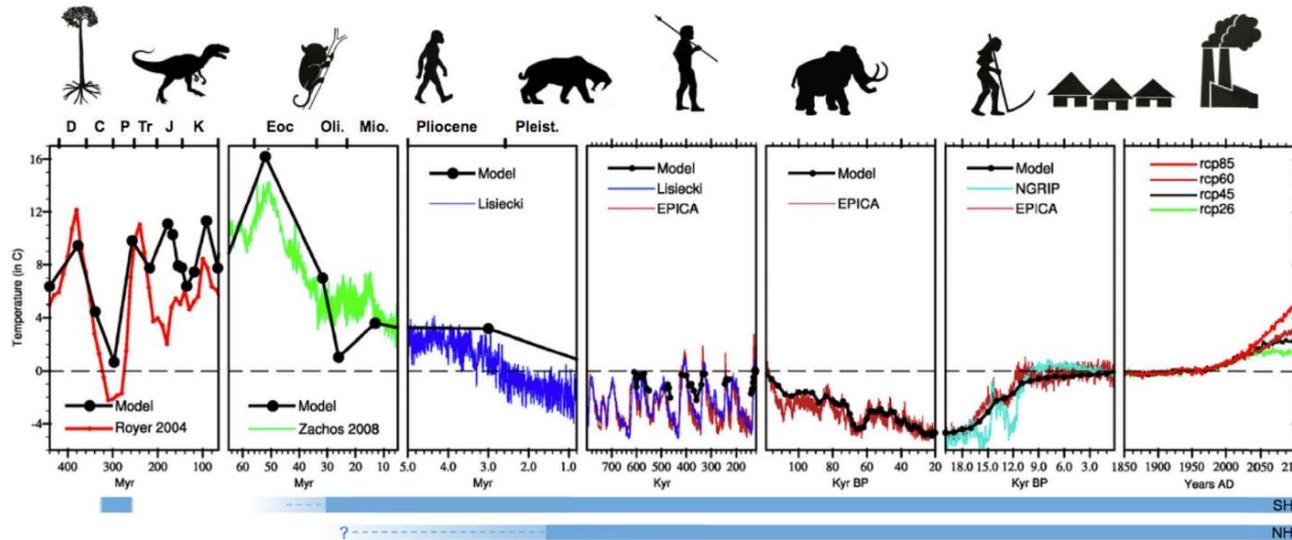
it does **not appear**, as stated by many parties (Greenpeace, etc.), that livestock emits more GHG than other sectors

Worldwide, the emission of these gases would be close to that of wild ruminants before domestication

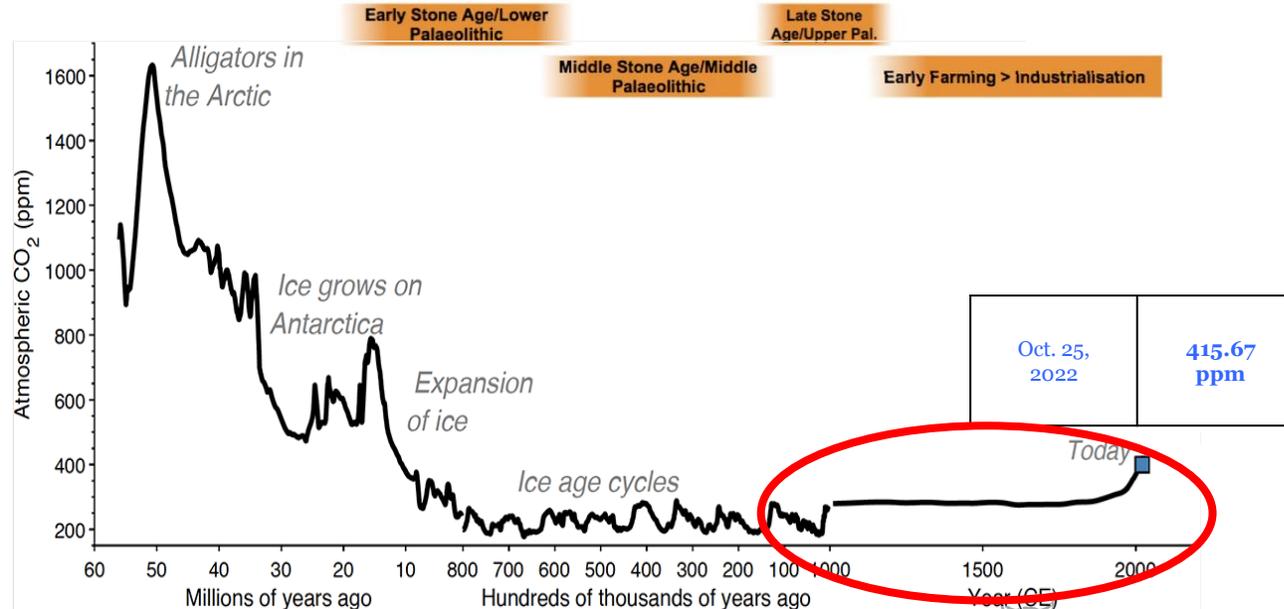
(Hirstov, 2012; Hirst, 2019)

# THE GLOBAL WARMING

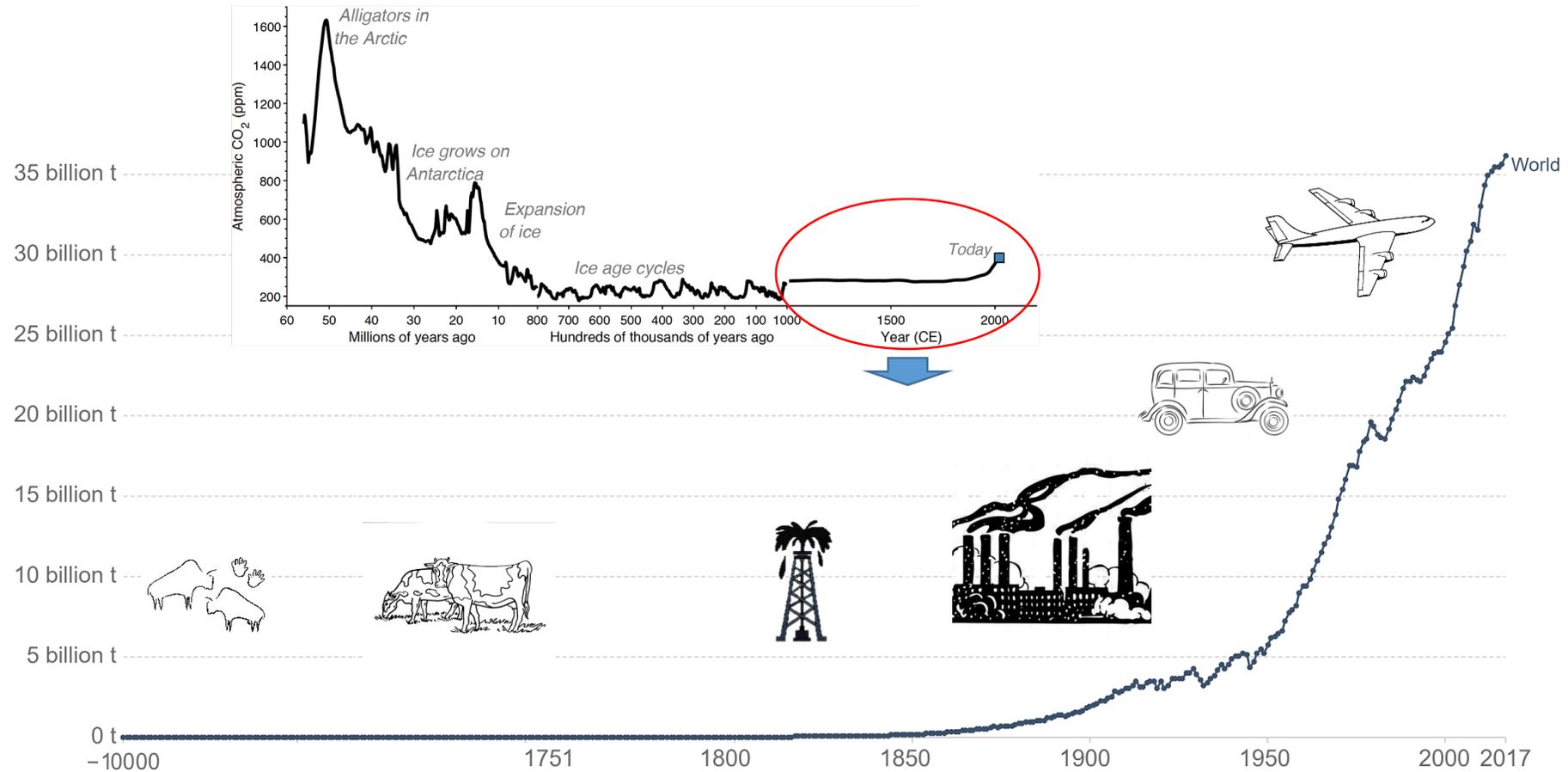
Earth temperature (°C)



Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentration (ppm)

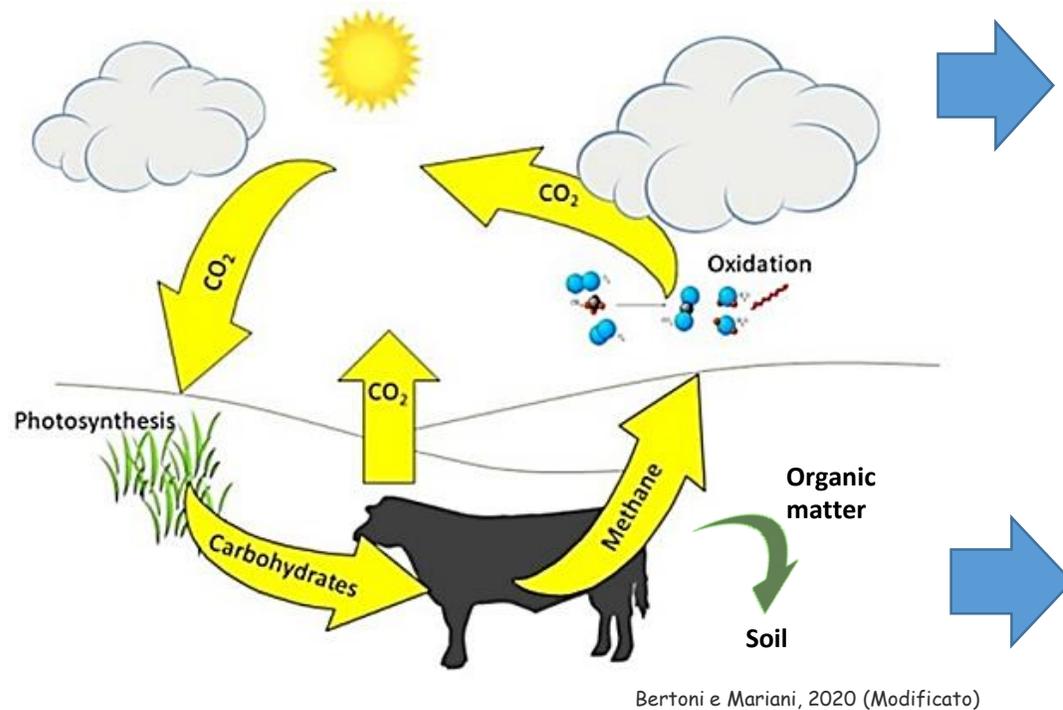


# THE GLOBAL WARMING



Source: Global Carbon Project; Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Centre (CDIAC)  
 Note: CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are measured on a production basis, meaning they do not correct for emissions embedded in traded goods.  
 OurWorldInData.org/co2-and-other-greenhouse-gas-emissions/ • CC BY

# CARBON DIOXIDE PRODUCED BY ANIMALS DOES NOT ACCUMULATE



Biogenic CH<sub>4</sub> takes an average of 12 years to be oxidized to CO<sub>2</sub>  
(ONU, IPCC AR-4)

Animals promote the removal of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere by stimulating photosynthesis and in the form of organic matter that accumulates in the soil reducing the risk of erosion and desertification

# IMPROVE THE ESTIMATION OF THE CLIMATE-CHANGING EFFECT OF GASES

The method for calculating the gases Global Warming Potential (GWP) was proposed in 1990

After 30 years of widespread use, it has created a certain "inertia" in its use without questioning its limits.

To try to improve the method today are proposed alternatives:

Assessment	Error	Estimation
$GWP$ (Global Warming Potential)	$\pm 40\%$	aggregate effect of GHG on GWP
$GWP_{100}$ (GWP orizzonte 100 anni)	$\pm 40\%$	effect calculated on 100 yeras
$GTP_{100}$ (Global Temperature Potential)	$\pm 75\%$	temperature changing imputable to a gas
$GWP^*$ (short-lived gas)		Effect of short-lived gases

None of these methods consider the biogenic origin of  $CH_4$

Only NZL has been doing since 2019

# INTERESTING OUTLOOK FOR GWP\*

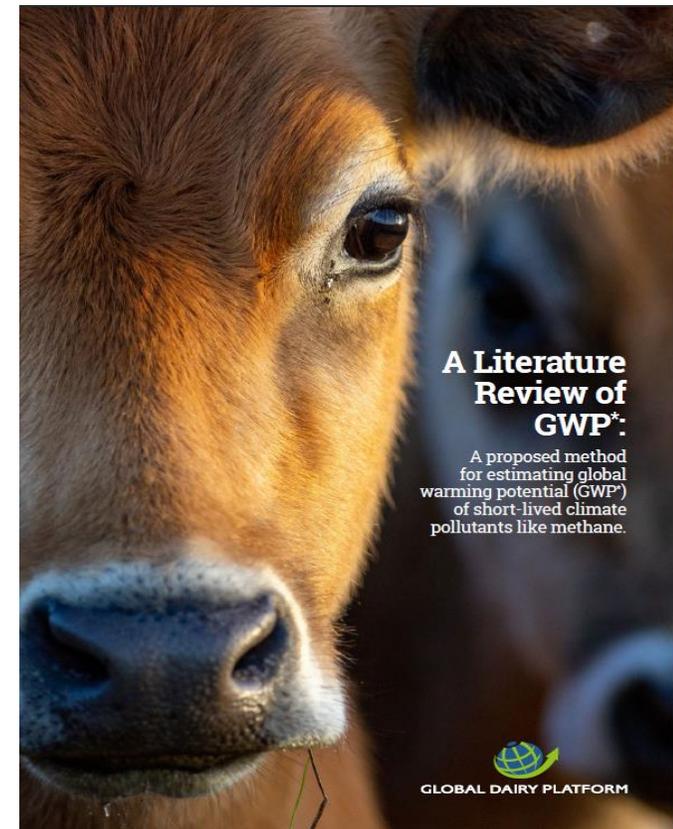
Need to find **new methodological approaches** for the assessment of **anthropogenic CH<sub>4</sub>** emissions and new measurement systems

A step in this direction is made by the **GWP\***

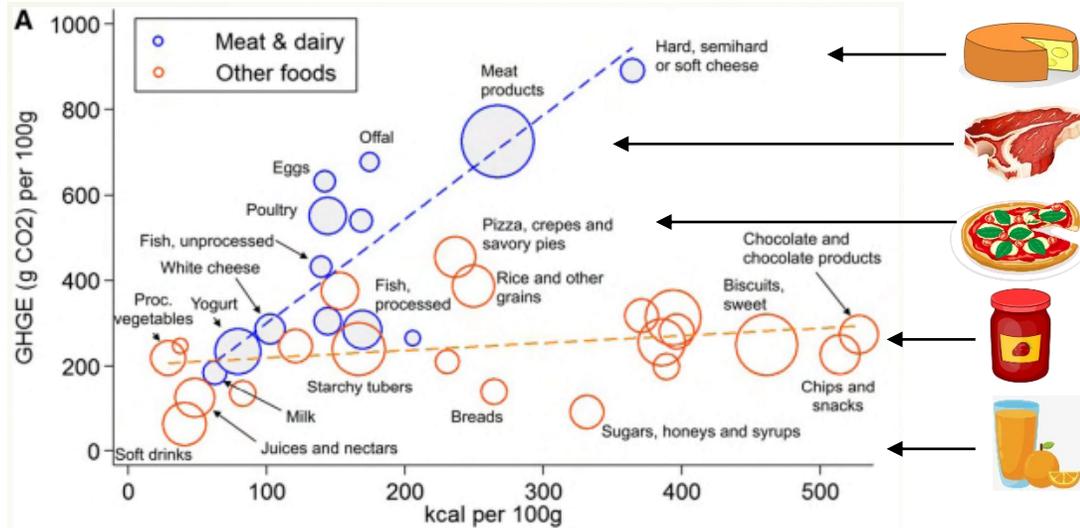


- ✓ for **more precise assessments** of the global warming effect of short-life gases as methane
- ✓ Provide to policy makers with a **simple tool** to **understand** the **GHGs dynamics**

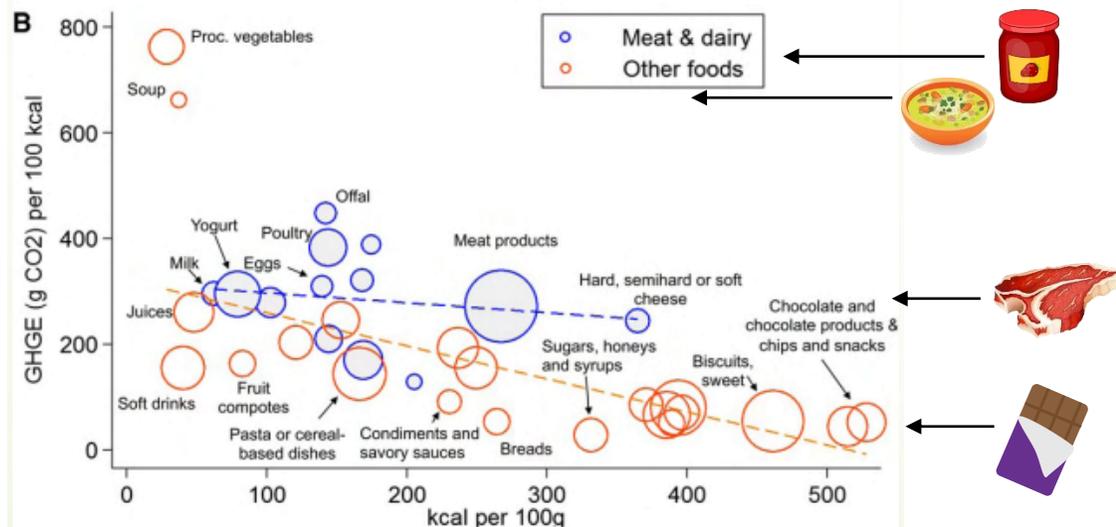
**Aim:** to limit the temperature increase to **1.5°C** by **2050**



# THE UNIT OF MEASUREMENT CONDITIONS THE FINAL EVALUATION ON SUSTAINABILITY



By product weight unit



By energy concentration

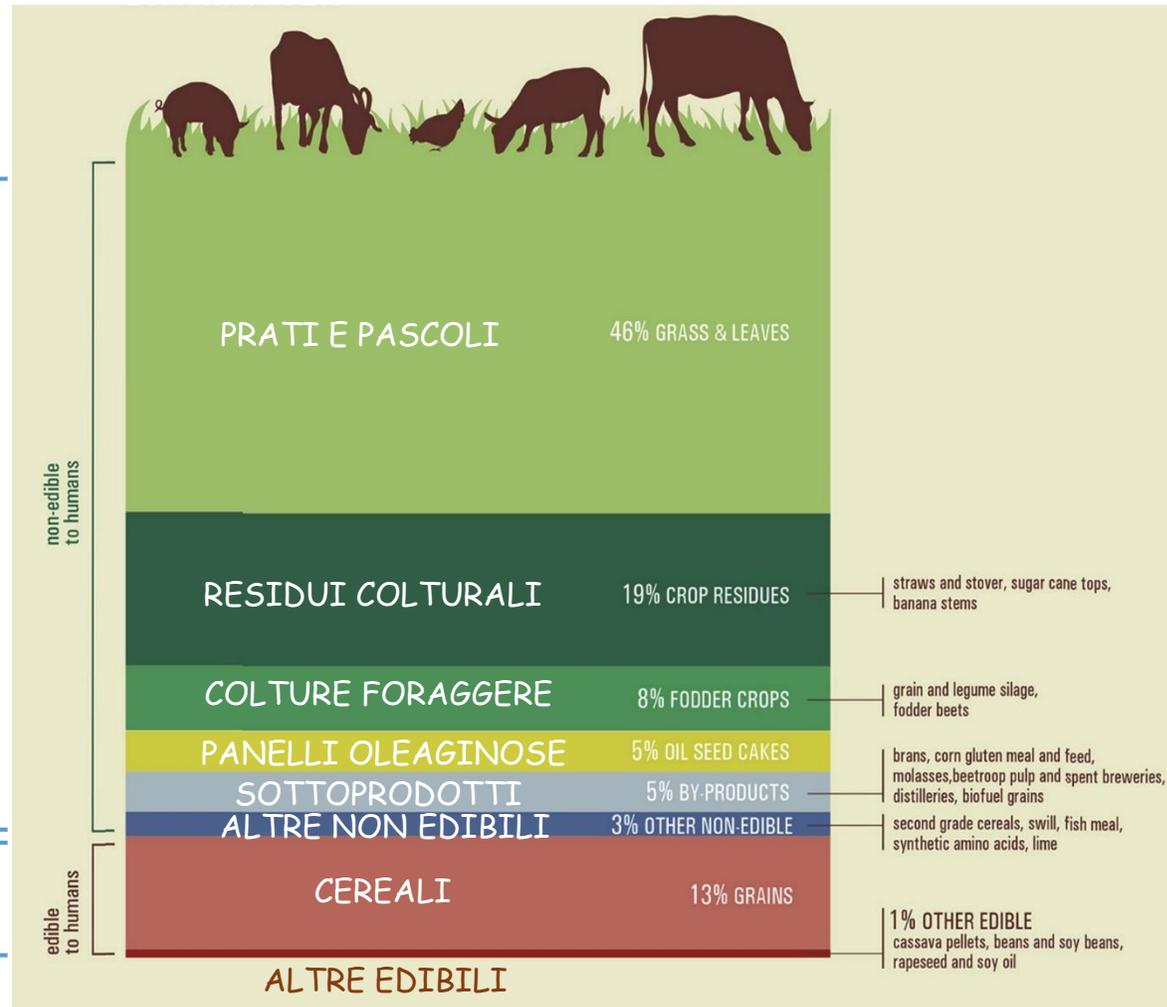


# COMPETITION WITH HUMANS FOR FOOD RESOURCES

Circa 6.0 Gigatons

86%  
not edible  
foods for  
humans

14%  
edible foods  
for humans

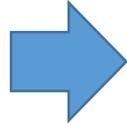
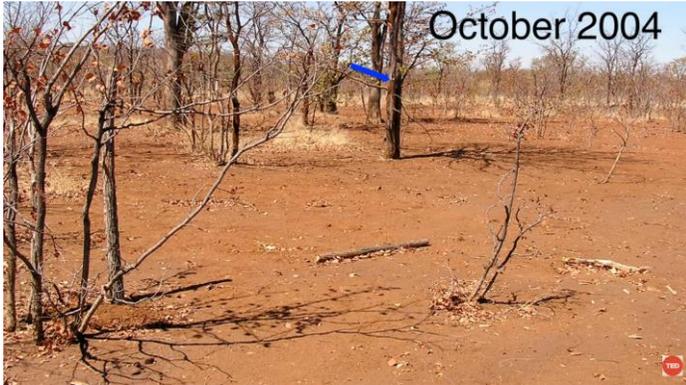


They transform  
foods of low  
biological value or  
unusable for humans  
into foods of high  
biological value

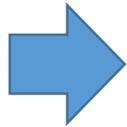
FAO, 2017 (Adattato da Mottet et al 2017)

# AND SPEAKING ABOUT SOIL DEGRADATION ...

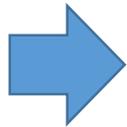
Africa



Mexico



Patagonia

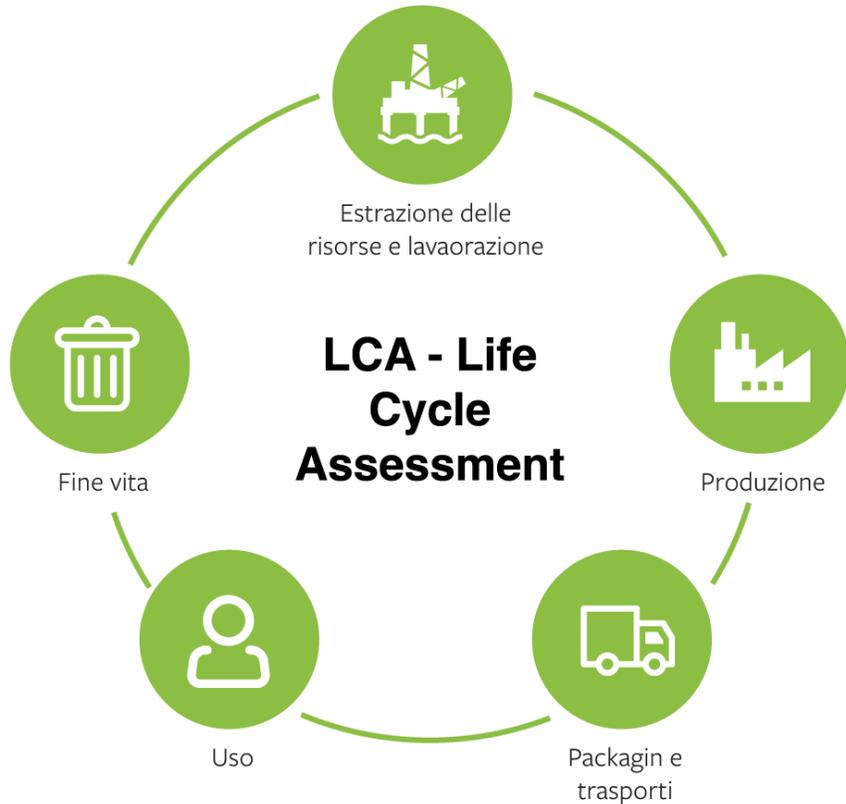


Reintroduction of animals has determined the recovery of degraded areas due to the contribution of organic matter to the soil



Confirmation of the role of animals in the ecosystem and agri-ecosystem

# 2nd KEY WORDS: MEASURABILITY AND DEMOSTRABILITÀ



The measurement of sustainability must be done with a **recognized, reliable and clearly codified method**

At political level, the method required is often the **LCA** (Life Cycle Assessment), but not only, because **comply** with the above **request**

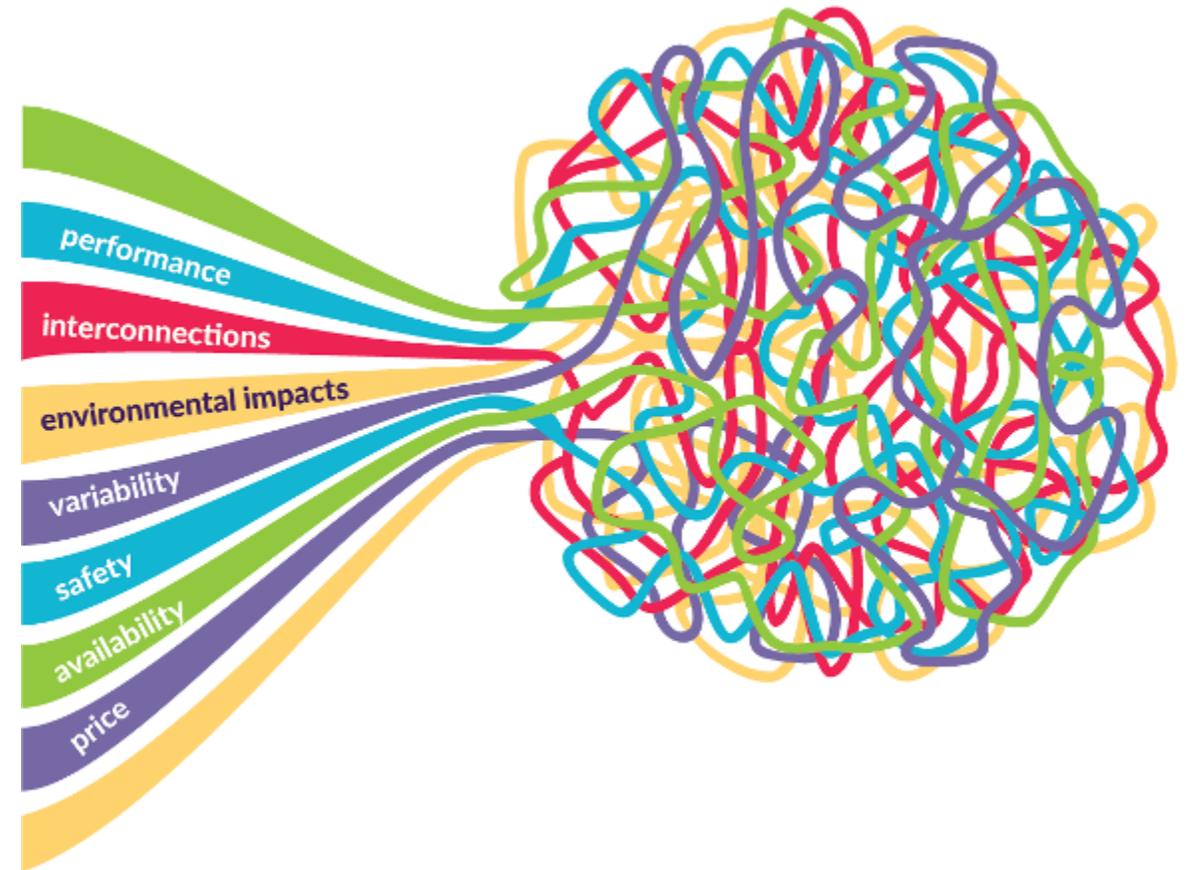
For example, in some countries, such as Denmark, the **LCA** method is required by the policy makers to demonstrate the veracity of **"green" claims** of the communication actions

# LIMITATION OF MANY METHODS REQUESTED

As discussed in the Part 2 of this lesson module, both LCA and others methods are born to evaluate industrial productive processes, but showed some limits when applied to biologic systems that are complex systems with interaction with others biologic sectors (air, water, soil, habitats, biodiversity, ...)

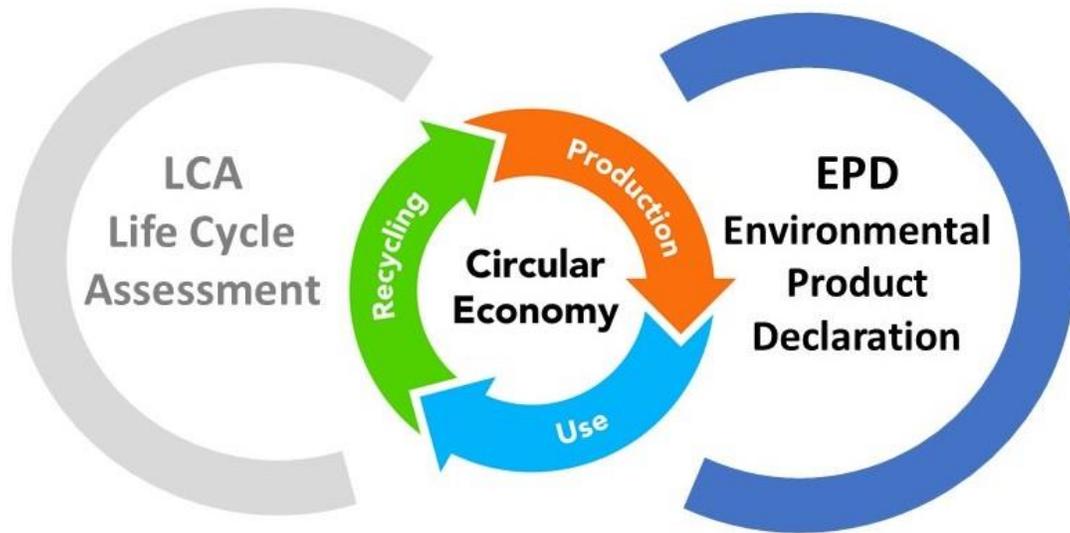
Thinking about agriculture and livestock, there are impacts that the LCA standard does not consider

Need to study and propose new methods that can make a complete evaluation



# 3rd KEY WORDS: CORRECTNESS, TRUTHFULNESS AND COMPARABILITY

**Communication**, usually is built on creative bases, of visual impact and addressed to the recipients, for communicate sustainability must be **founded** on **objective data**, **scientifically analysed** that return **true results**, collected following **harmonized procedures** also at international level, **verifiable** and possibly **certified** and **replicable** by third parties



For example  
the **LCA** analysis  
Could be validated with

**EPD** (Environmental Product Declaration)

with the aim of **comparability**

# EPD AND PCR

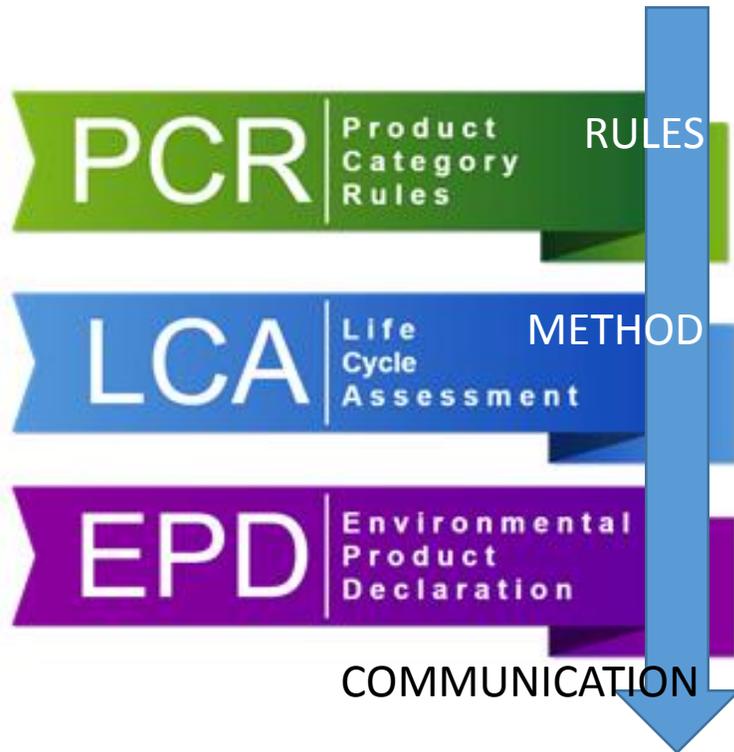
## EPD (Environmental Product Declaration)

Designed to **improve** environmental **communication** between **producers** and between **distributors** and **consumers**  
Producer communicates data and information relating to the environmental performance of the products and services offered

## PCR (Product Category Rules)

Rules carried out to a homogeneous **comparison** of the environmental impacts of the **same product/service** when is conducting the LCA

These rules are drawn up respecting specific (per product category) and rigorous **methodological requirements**, the basis for **verification** by third parties (independent and accredited) that will validate the EPD, in order to guarantee the credibility and truthfulness of the information



# TO IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION

These procedures are **expensive**, require **specific skills**, then can be carried out only by big commercial groups and are not for individual farm or livestock

Can lead to an environmental voluntary label system:

- ✓ Environmental **labels Type I** - ISO 14024
- ✓ Environmental self-declarations **Type II** - ISO 14021
- ✓ Environmental Product Declarations ISO **Type III** - ISO 14025



**Type I** labels, such as the Ecolabel, are certificated by an independent body; are developed on a scientific basis and provide compliance with specific limits, e.g. energy and material consumption, taking into account its entire life cycle



**Type II** environmental self-declarations, e.g. "recyclable" and "compostable" labels, require compliance with specific requirements on the information content and mode of dissemination  
Certification by an independent body not required



**Type III** EPD, based on the LCA conducted according to rules and requirements of PCR (Product Category Rules) make the data and information relating to a category product comparable with each other

## 4th KEY WORD: CLARITY

The **contents** for a correct and truthful communication of the sustainability are **complex**, **technical** and **specialized**

The communication challenge is to transform complex into **simple**, **usable** and as **clear** as possible content

**Simple** for the most general targets but **not simplistic**

**Deepening** the same aspects at the highest level **for** the most **specialized targets**

It will therefore always be necessary to pursue the correct specification of the themes and arguments adduced, eliminating any risk of ambiguity and misunderstanding

## 5th KEY WORD: ACCURACY

Environmental and sustainability communication must be **punctual, detailed, precise and true**

Is **not** possible **neglect** the **details** and **modify** or twist the **reality**

Communication must be **unambiguous** and **supported** by objective **scientific evidence**

The challenge is to find a correct **balance** between **technical data** (often too complex and usable only for a specialized audience) and a **more generic** but not partial communication

More accurate will be the scientific basis and coherence, higher will be the possibility of a positive receiving by the public opinion to **avoid** critics, negative evaluations or accusations of **greenwashing**



# PUNISHABILITY OF FALSE DECLARATIONS

This practice is called "**greenwashing**": misappropriation of environmental virtues aimed at creating a "green" image

In **November 2021** in **Italy** the **first civil sentence** was pronounced for "greenwashing", i.e. for the distorted use of environmental sustainability for **promotional purposes**

The alleged sustainable qualities of a product or a company can no longer be **vague, generic** or **exaggerated**, but must be **scientifically proven** or **demonstrable**



# UP FARMING PROJECT

Attention also our logo suggest a green claim!



# 6th KEY WORD: RELEVANCE

## Communication:

- ✓ deal with **issues** that are highly **relevant** to the **stakeholders** of the supply chain
- ✓ **not focus** on secondary **aspects of little interest** because convenient, **leaving out** crucial aspects with **not good performance** of the farm
- ✓ the **level of relevance** is not **decided** by the farmer but by **the addressee** of the message (the importance of **stakeholder engagement** activities)
  - ✓ the farmer must be able to **modulate** its **communication** and **content**, ensuring consistency of the information according with the **characteristics of the target**
- ✓ **not magnify** performance or **benefits intrinsically "green"** or inherent the type of product (the same for all competitors) and **not deriving by** the implementation of a sustainable or innovation **strategy** and changing of **production processes** peculiar of the farm

# FARM AND LIVESTOCK SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNICATION

Starting from the **awareness** that the farmers **are not polluters** but guardians of nature, it must be recognized that **not all farms are the same**

Farmers are **not sustainable regardless**, but it is need to **activate** the right **activities** to improve this function

The level of **sustainability** of farms is **growing**

For farms and livestock, it is important to **consider each aspects** of **sustainability** (environmental, social and economic)

**Communicate** this information **correctly** and in the **right way** knowing that it is difficult to communicate complex aspects in a simple way

Assertion always **based** on **scientific** data and **evidence**

# CURRENT SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNICATION IN ITALY

Actually, the **communication** is done both for **ethical** and **commercial** reasons

What Italians look at when shopping?

- ✓ **Origin** (Italianity)
- ✓ **Sustainability**

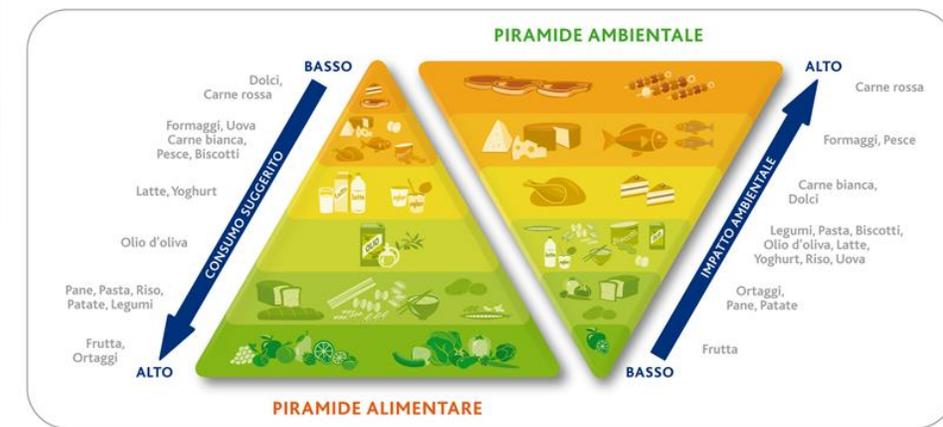
(Coop Report, 2022)

**1** product out of **4** reports claims on **environmental** sustainability

(Immagine Report, 2022)

Then in Italy communication is done prevalently by **big agri-food companies**, sustainability declarations are often linked to **voluntary regulations** adopted by individual companies (Barilla, Granarolo, etc.) and regard **environmental sustainability**

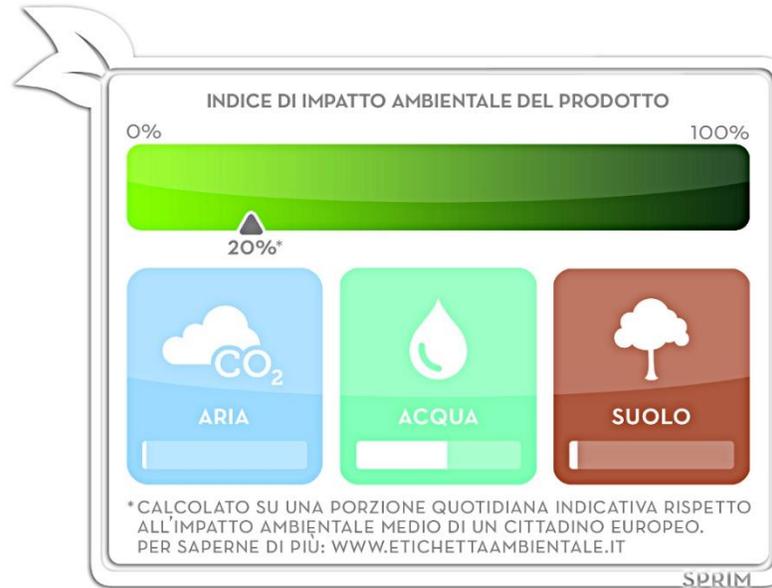
# THE EXAMPLE OF GRANAROLO AND BARILLA



# RECENT PROPOSALS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LABEL

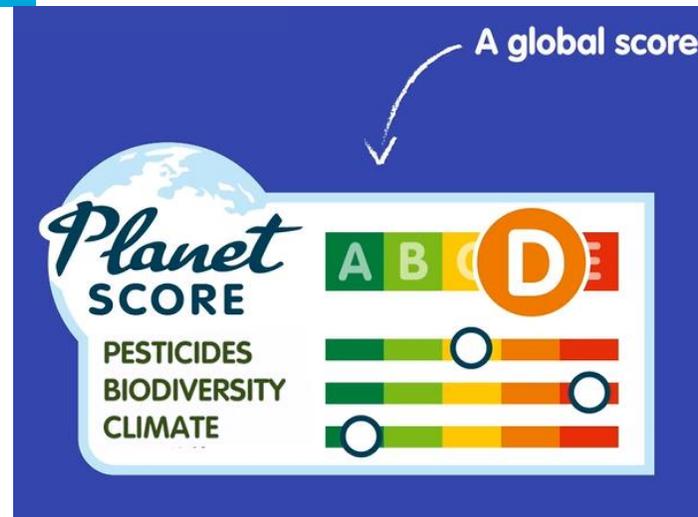


Based on LCA plus other indicators



Limits:

- ✓ for product and not for company (farm) or process
- ✓ environmental only
- ✓ based on LCA
- ✓ are developed for conventional food (and the novel food as the cultured meat?)
- ✓ for information only, do not provide evaluation methods, preferability criteria or minimum levels to reach



# ENVIRONMENTAL MARKS



## "Made Green in Italy"

Voluntary national scheme for the assessment and reporting of the environmental footprint of products (Law No 221/2015).

It is based on the PEF - Product Environmental Footprint method (Provided by the EU)

## "EMAS"

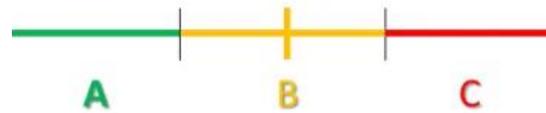
Audit and eco-management scheme is a voluntary EC tool that assesses and improves the company's environmental performance



# THE MGI METHOD



Evaluation carried out with 3 merit classes



- Classe A** – Prodotto eccellente, con prestazioni migliori rispetto al prodotto medio;
- Classe B** – Prodotto con prestazioni simili a quelle del al prodotto medio;
- Classe C** – Prodotto con prestazioni peggiori rispetto a quelle del al prodotto medio.

For the agriculture sector unlikely requested by single farms but by second or third level associative structures provided of product specification

# NEW SCIENTIFIC METHODS FOR THE FUTURE?

Considering the limits described for the methods showed, scientific work continues to improve the sustainability assessment

Even the University of Turin, in particular my Department (Department of Agricultural, Forestry and Food Sciences - DISAFA), under my supervision, is **working** on the **development** of a **method** that we have called I-sustain



The method implemented by DISAFA of UniTo

# PROPOSED METHOD

Evaluate each sustainability component with a dimensionless unit

Phases:

1) Select social, economic and environmental clusters

2) Collect the actual farm characteristics and activities



Probability (P) of a sustainable action

3) Collect social, economic and environmental indexes of the farm's geographical area



Severity (S) of a sustainable action

4) Sum the evaluation of each cluster to obtain the final Sustainability Index (SI)

# DOMAINS IDENTIFICATION



Chosen 3 **components** or domains:

## ENVIRONMENTAL

Specifically referring to the consumption of resources and the emission of pollutants

## TERRITORIAL

Refers to functions mainly related to agro-ecosystem services

## SOCIAL-ECONOMIC

Refers to functions that have general social and economic repercussions

# CLUSTERS SELECTION



3 components or domains

5 clusters x component

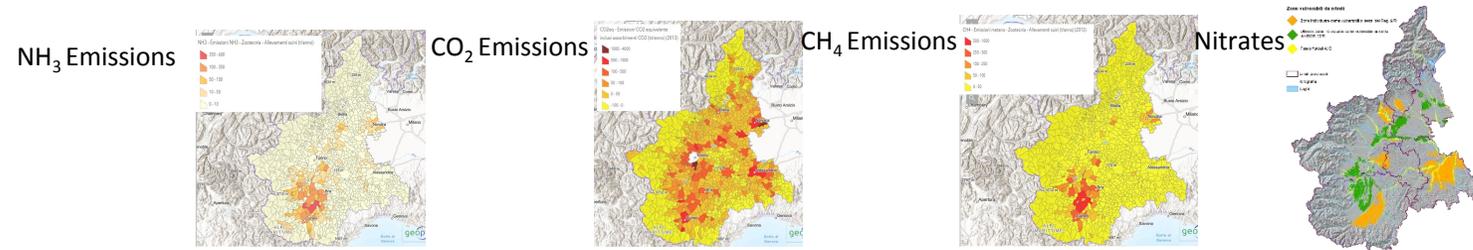
DOMAIN	CLUSTER
ENVIRONMENTAL	ENV 1 – Biodiversity ENV 2 – Nitrates ENV 3 – Renewable energy ENV 4 – Global warming effect ENV 5 – Acidification
TERRITORIAL	TER 1 – Landscape TER 2 – Infrastructures TER 3 – Defence of the territory TER 4 – Defence by landslide and erosion TER 5 – Defence by Inundation
SOCIAL-ECONOMIC	SOC 1 – Local supply chains SOC 2 – Social functions SOC 3 – Tourism SOC 4 – Culture SOC 5 – Economic functions

The **functions** performed by a system must be discussed previously and **shared** as widely as possible so to adapt them to an appropriate territorial scale

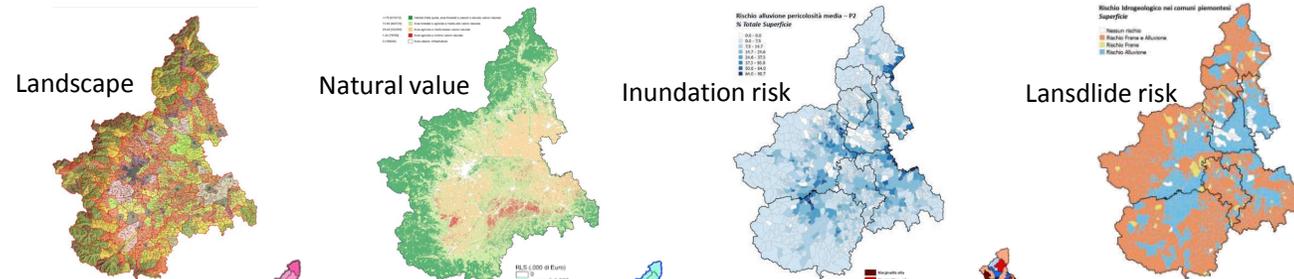
# THE TERRITORIAL CONTEXT DESCRIBED BY INDEXES

The importance of a function depends by the environmental characteristics  
Information to **municipal scale** should be collected in a **dedicated database**

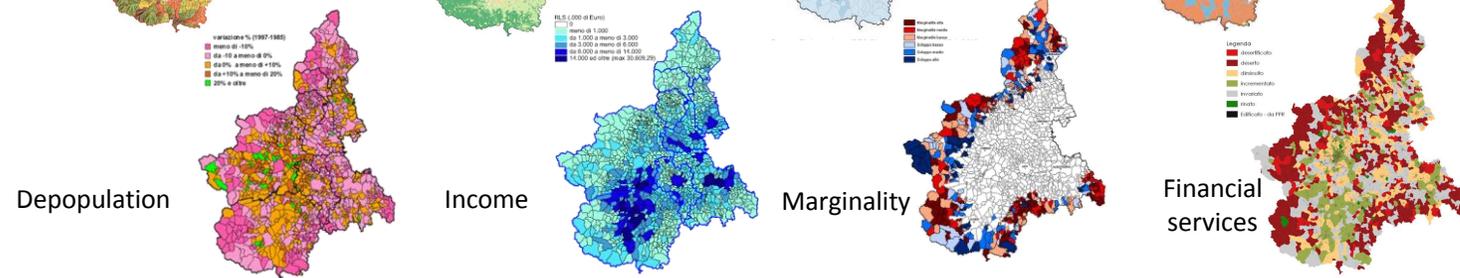
Environmental characteristics



Territorial characteristics



Social-economic characteristics



# CLUSTERS EVALUATION



4 classes of probability (P)

4 classes of severity (S)

16 classes of sustainability relevance

negligible (1; light blue); medium (2-3; green): relevant (4-8; yellow); very relevant (9-16; red)

P - Probability	High probability	4	4	8	12	16
	Probable	3	3	6	9	12
	Low probability	2	2	4	6	8
	Not probable	1	1	2	3	4
Level:			1	2	3	4
blue = negligible			Light	Medium	Heavy	Very heavy
green = medium						
yellow = relevant						
red = very relevant			S – Severity			

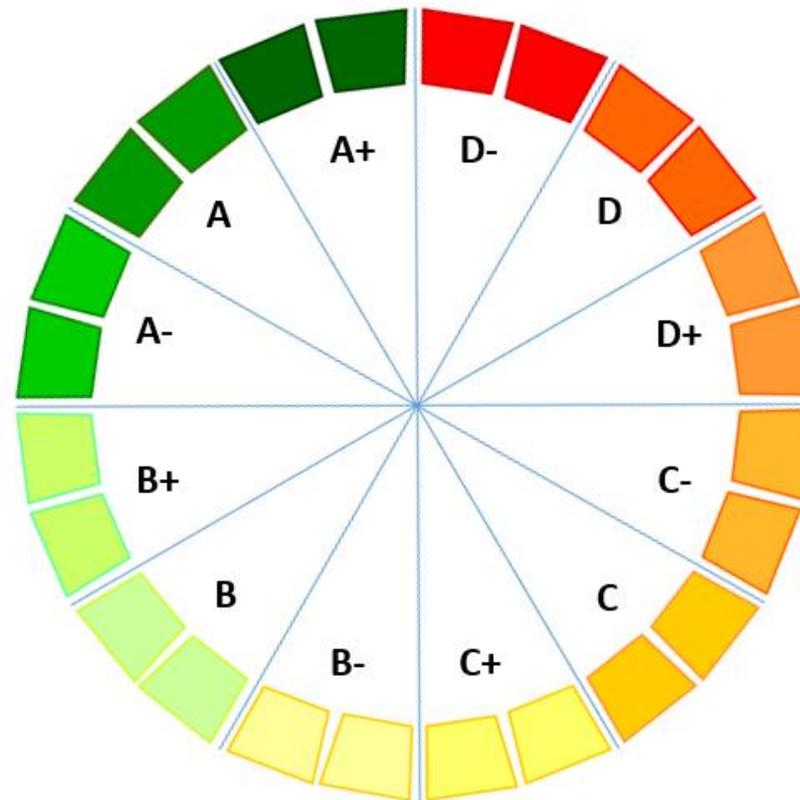
# SUSTAINABILITY INDEX CALCULATION AND LABELING



4 classes (A, B, C, D)

3 sub-classes (+, 0, -)

12 levels of sustainability



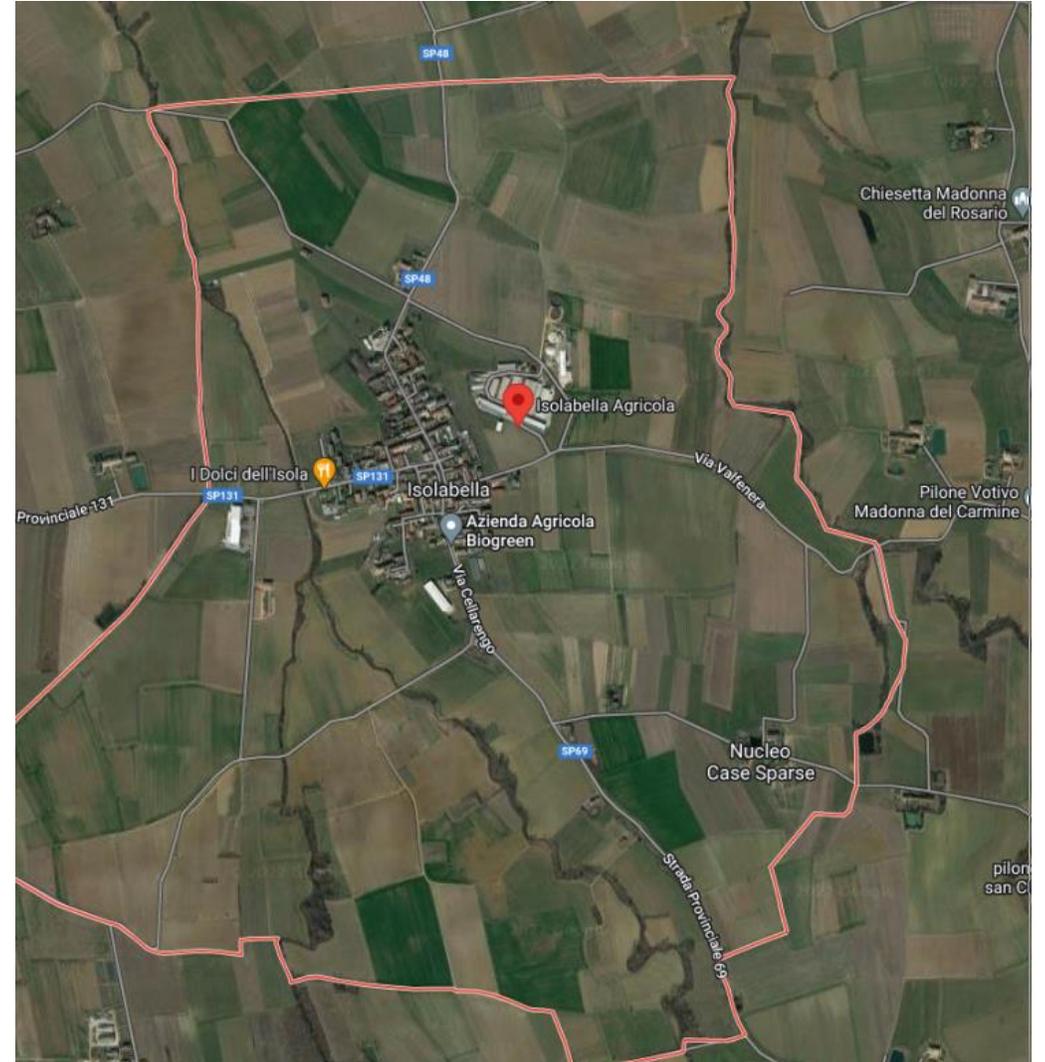
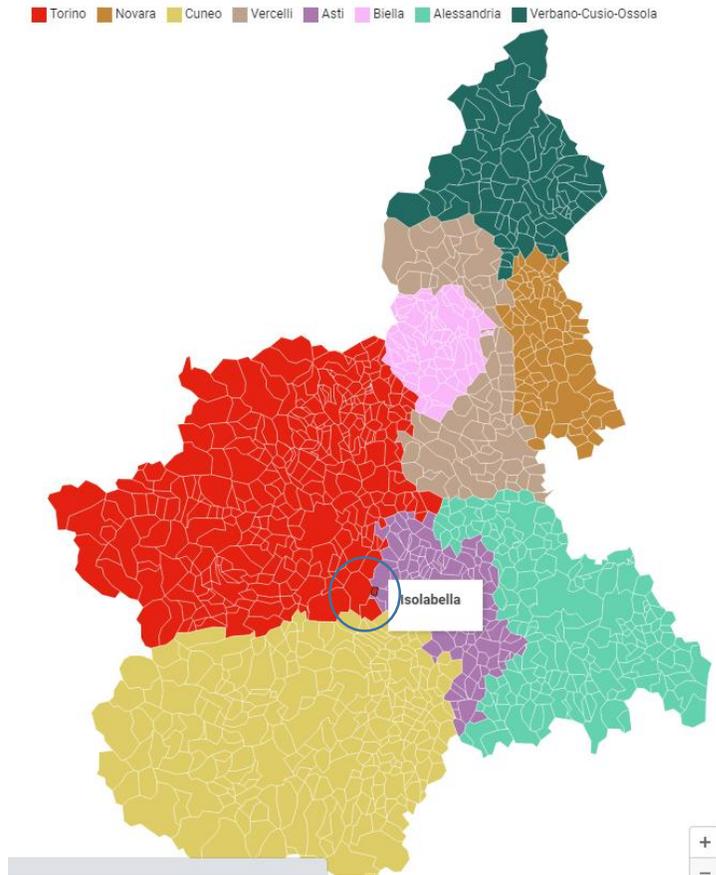
Label to communicate the level of sustainability

# EXAMPLE OF AN APPLICATION OF THE I-SUSTAIN METHOD TO THE DAIRY CATTLE SECTOR



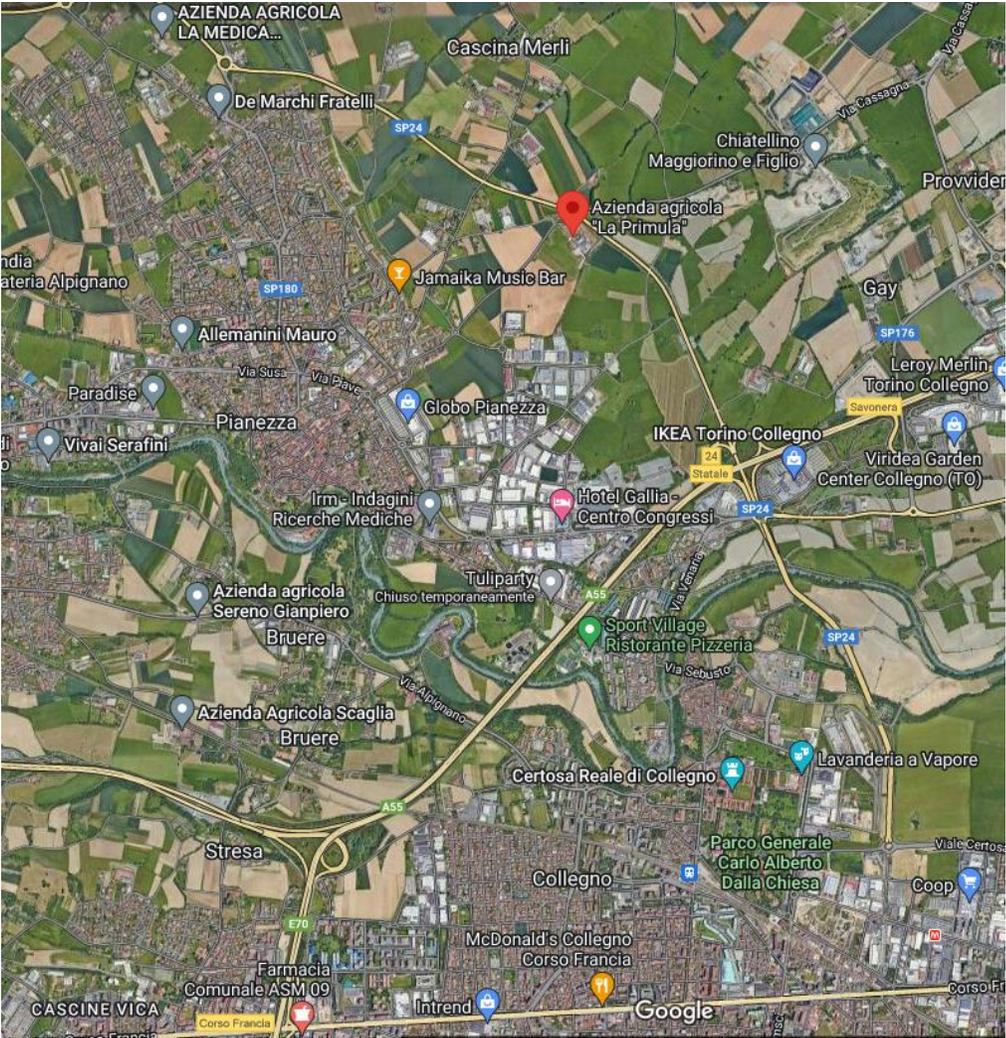
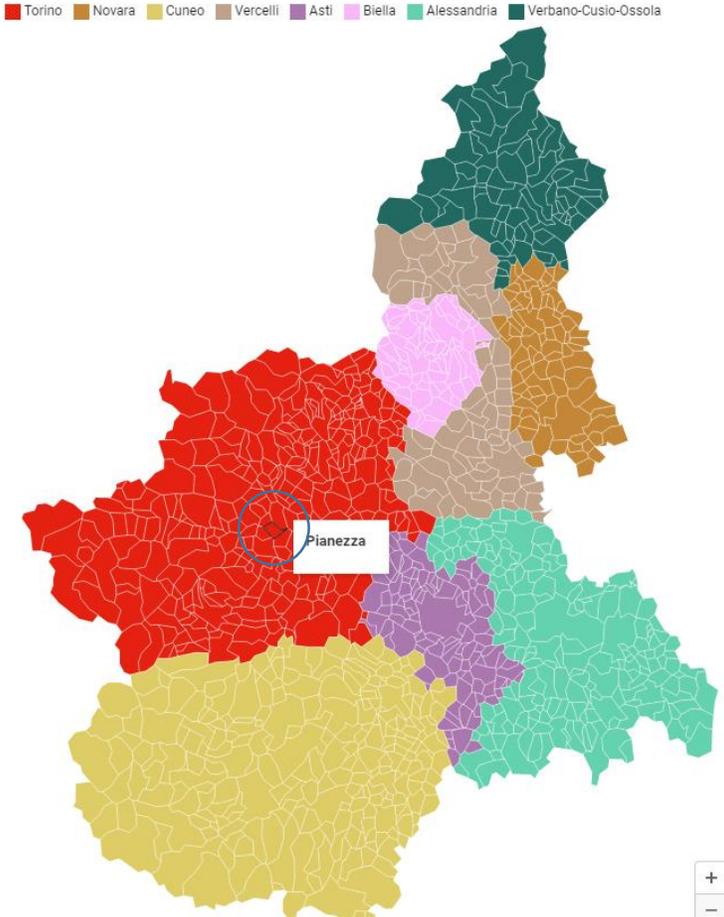
# FARM CLASSIFICATION AND LOCALIZATION (1)

Farm HI-VUL: High Intensity – VULnerable area



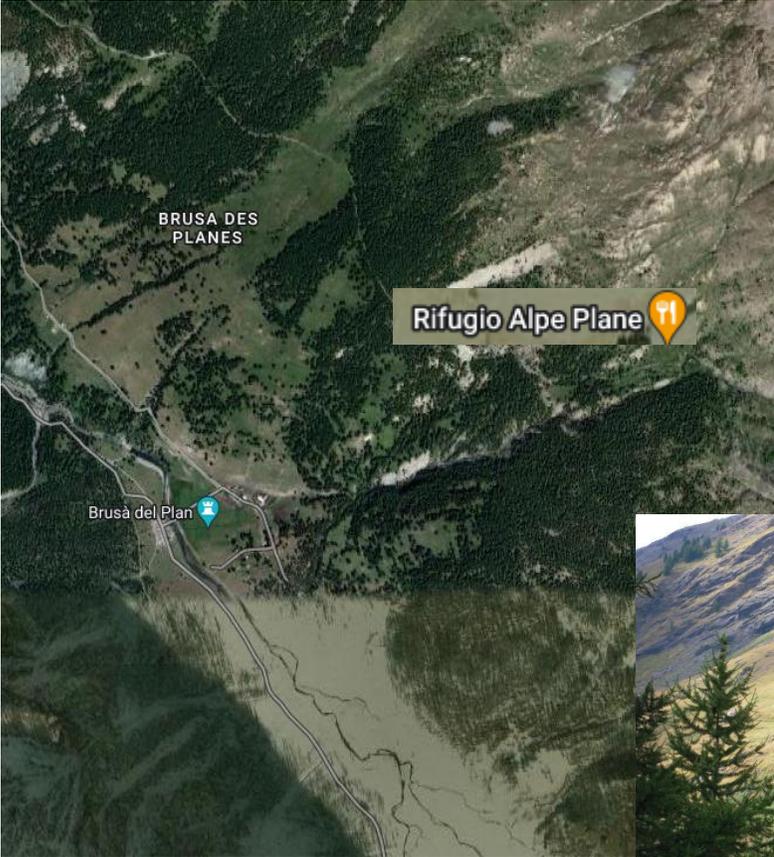
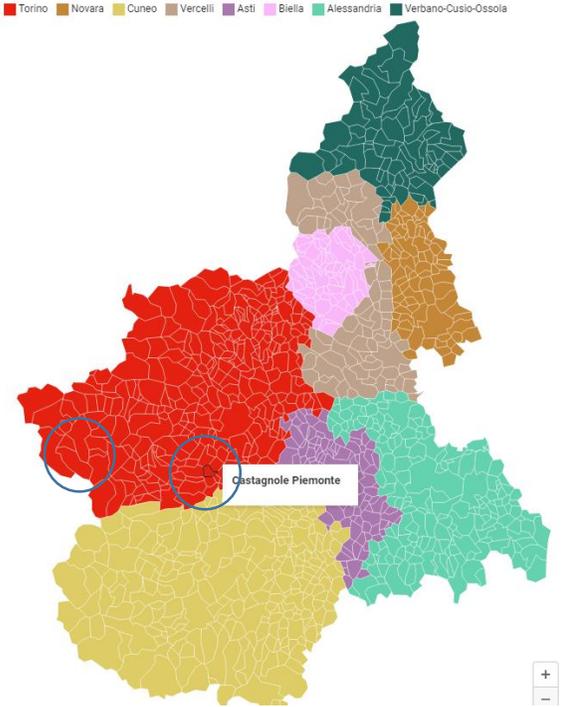
# FARM CLASSIFICATION AND LOCALIZATION (2)

Farm HI-URB: High Intensity – URBanized area



# FARM CLASSIFICATION AND LOCALIZATION (3)

## Farm LI-MAR: Low Intensity – Marginal area



# FARM CHARACTERISTICS (1)

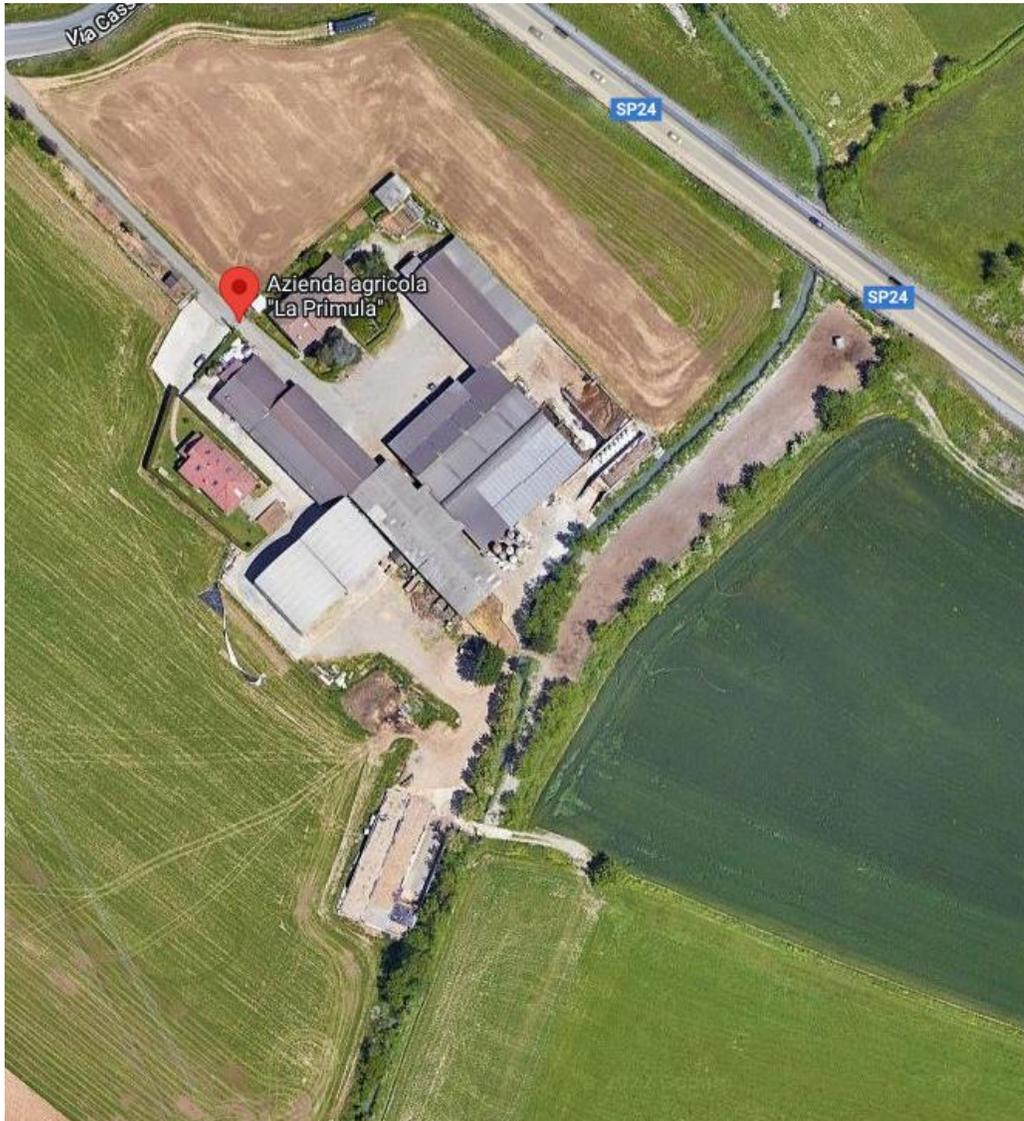


**Farm HI-VUL characteristics:** Intensive dairy farm (High Intensity) located in NVZ (VULnerable area)

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AAU (ha)	492
Pasture (ha)	0
Annual crops (ha)	406
Pluriannual crops (ha)	86
Workers (n)	16
Heads (n)	1050
Lactating cows (n)	440
Milk production (kg/d/cow)	35.4
Cheese making	no
Breed(s)	Italian Fresian
LU/ha AAU	1.7
Renewable energy	biomass, solar

# FARM CHARACTERISTICS (2)



Davide Biagini

**Farm HI-URB characteristics** : Intensive dairy farm in peri-urbanized area (HI-URB)

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AAU (ha)	57
Pasture (ha)	0
Annual crops (ha)	45
Pluriannual crops (ha)	12
Workers (n)	5
Heads (n)	253
Lactating cows (n)	118
Milk production (kg/d/cow)	36.8
Cheese making	yes
Breed(s)	Italian Fresian
LU/ha AAU	3.5
Renewable energy	solar

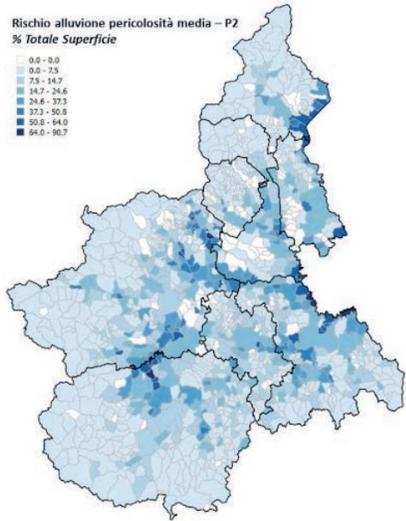
# FARM CHARACTERISTICS (3)



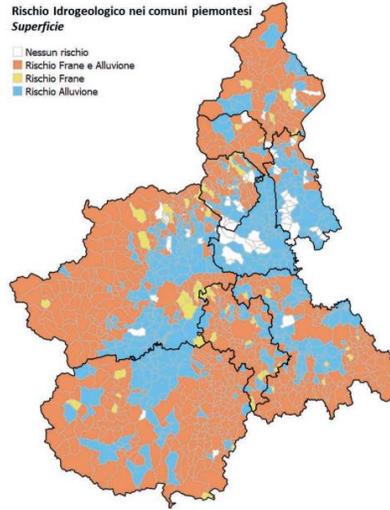
## Farm LI-MAR characteristics 3: Extensive dairy farm in marginal area (LI-MAR)

AAU (ha)	27
Pasture (ha)	500
Annual crops (ha)	19
Pluriannual crops (ha)	8
Workers (n)	5
Heads (n)	190
Lactating cows (n)	102
Milk production (kg/d/cow)	15.0
Cheese making	yes
Breed(s)	Barà – Austrian Red Pied
LU/ha AAU	3.0
Renewable energy	solar, hydro

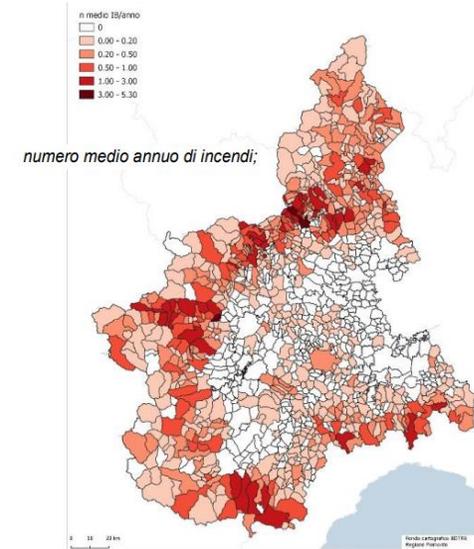
# TERRITORIAL INDEXES



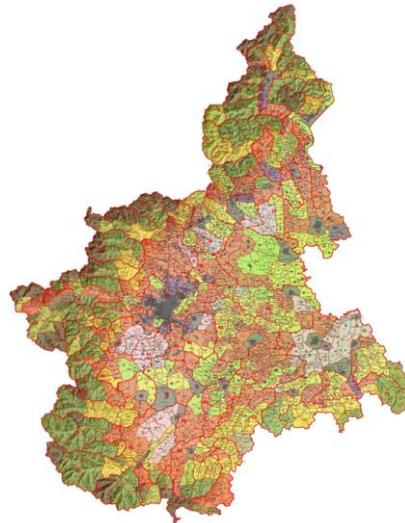
Inundation



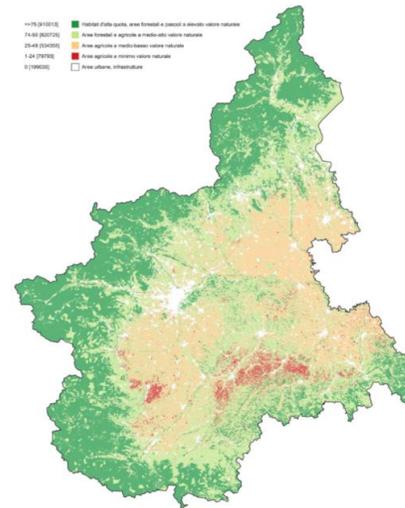
Landslides



Fires

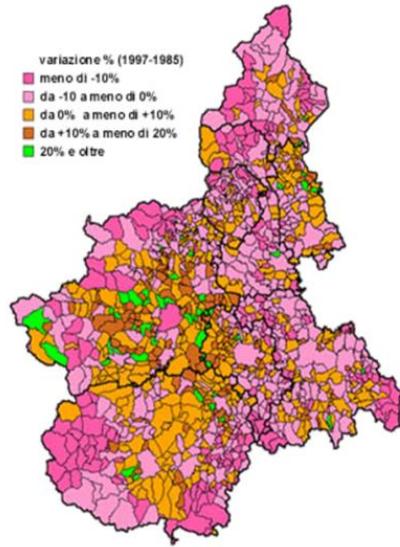


Landscape

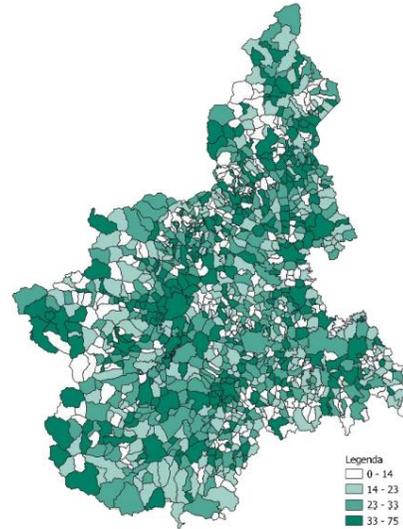


Natural value

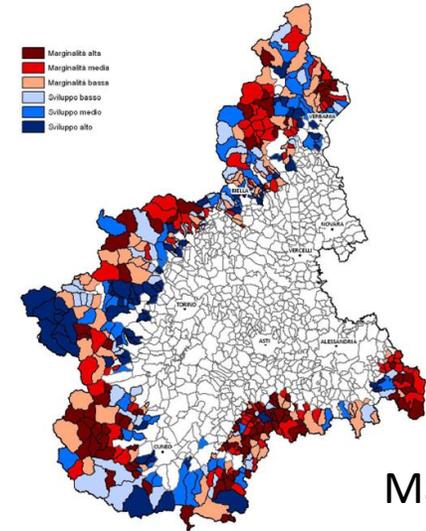
# SOCIAL-ECONOMIC INDEXES



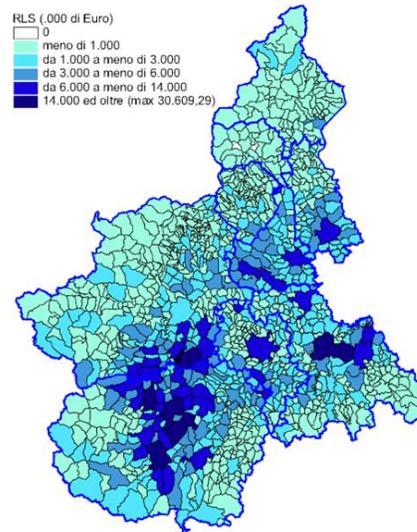
Depopulation ratio



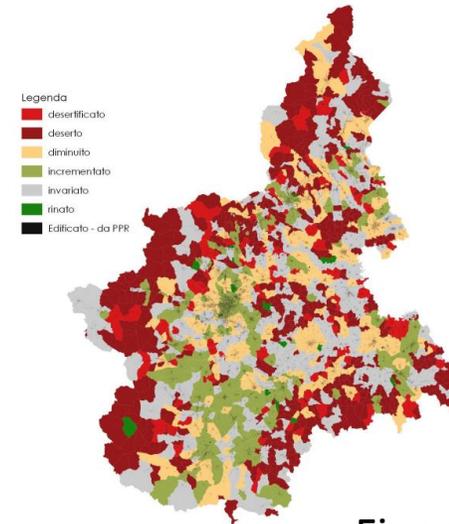
Attraction index



Marginality

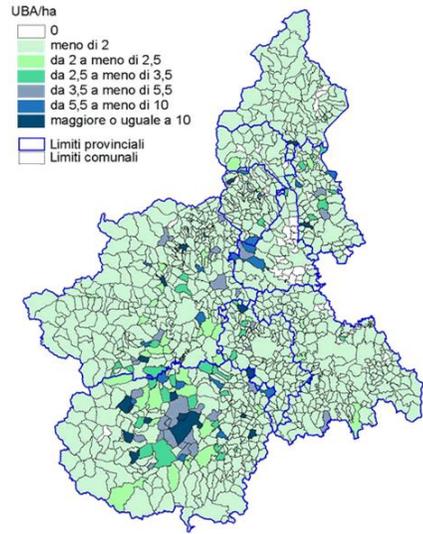


Income

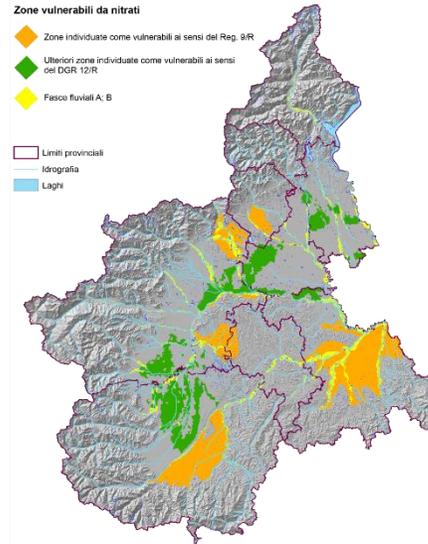


Financial services

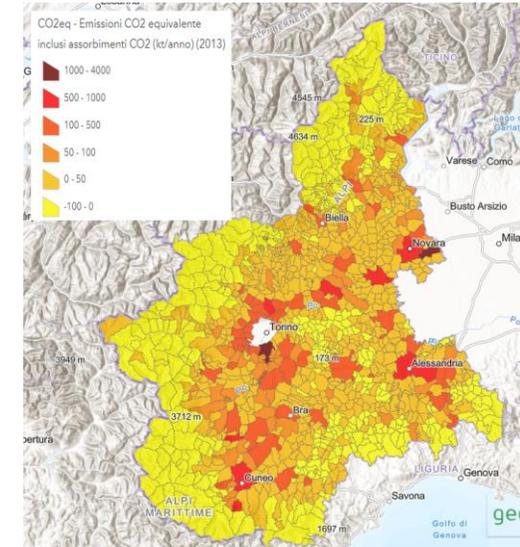
# ENVIRONMENTAL INDEXES



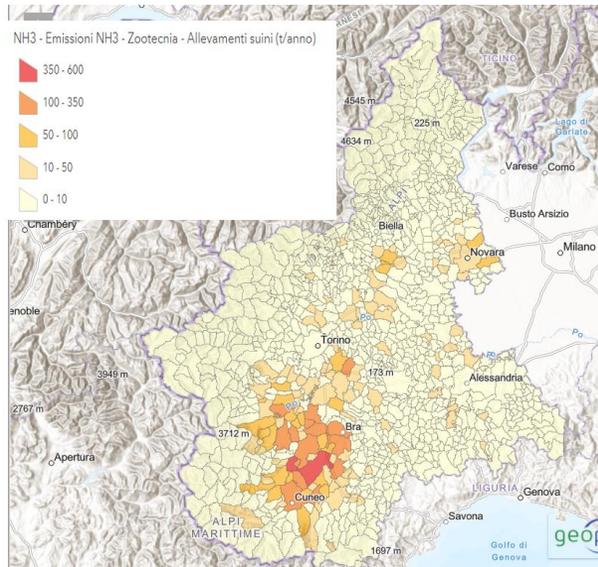
LU/ha



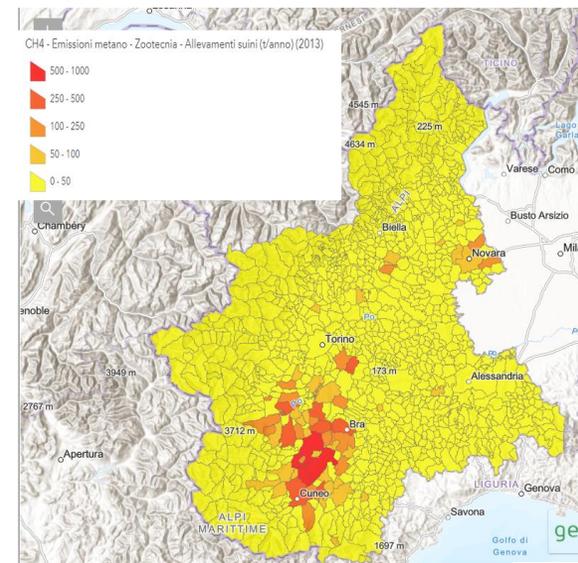
NVZs



CO<sub>2</sub> eq emissions

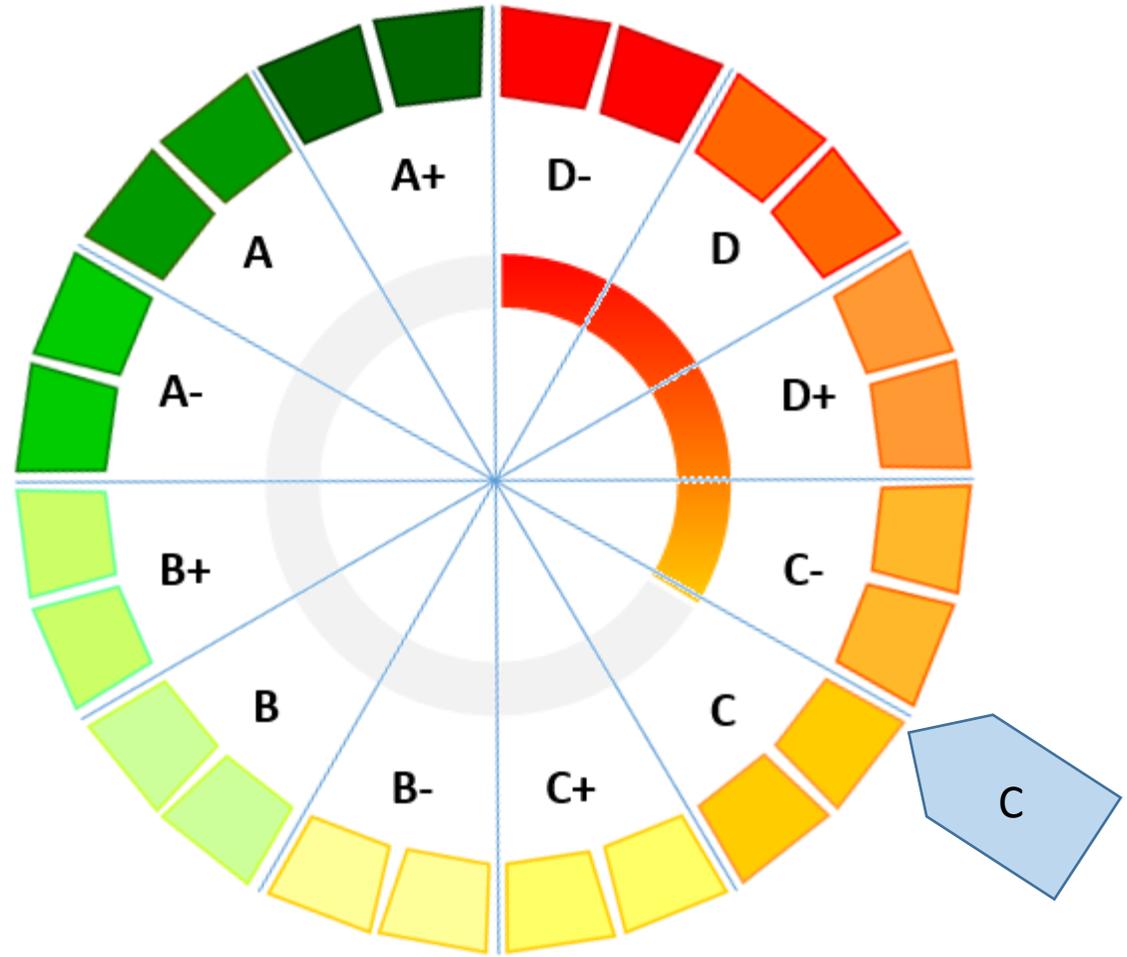
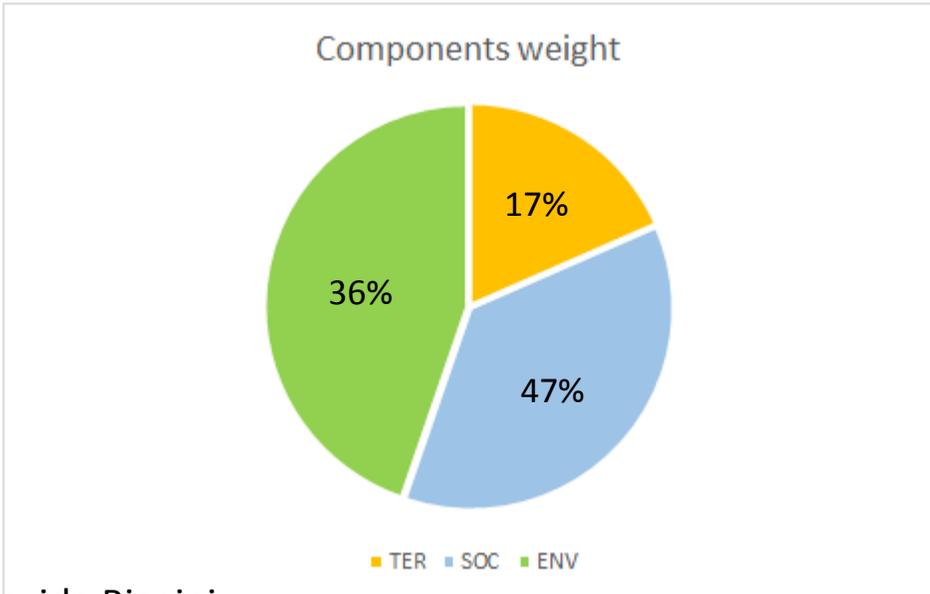
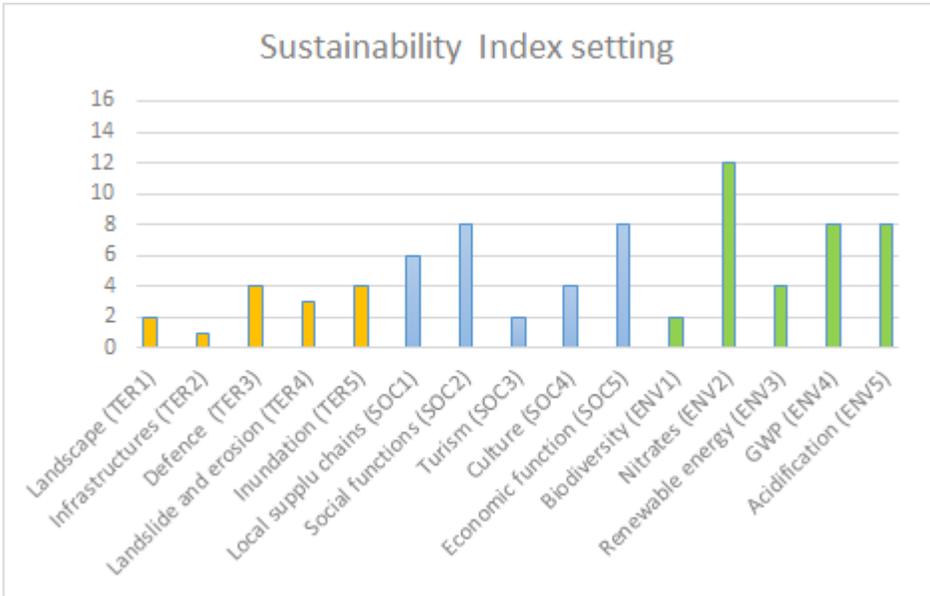


NH<sub>3</sub> emissions

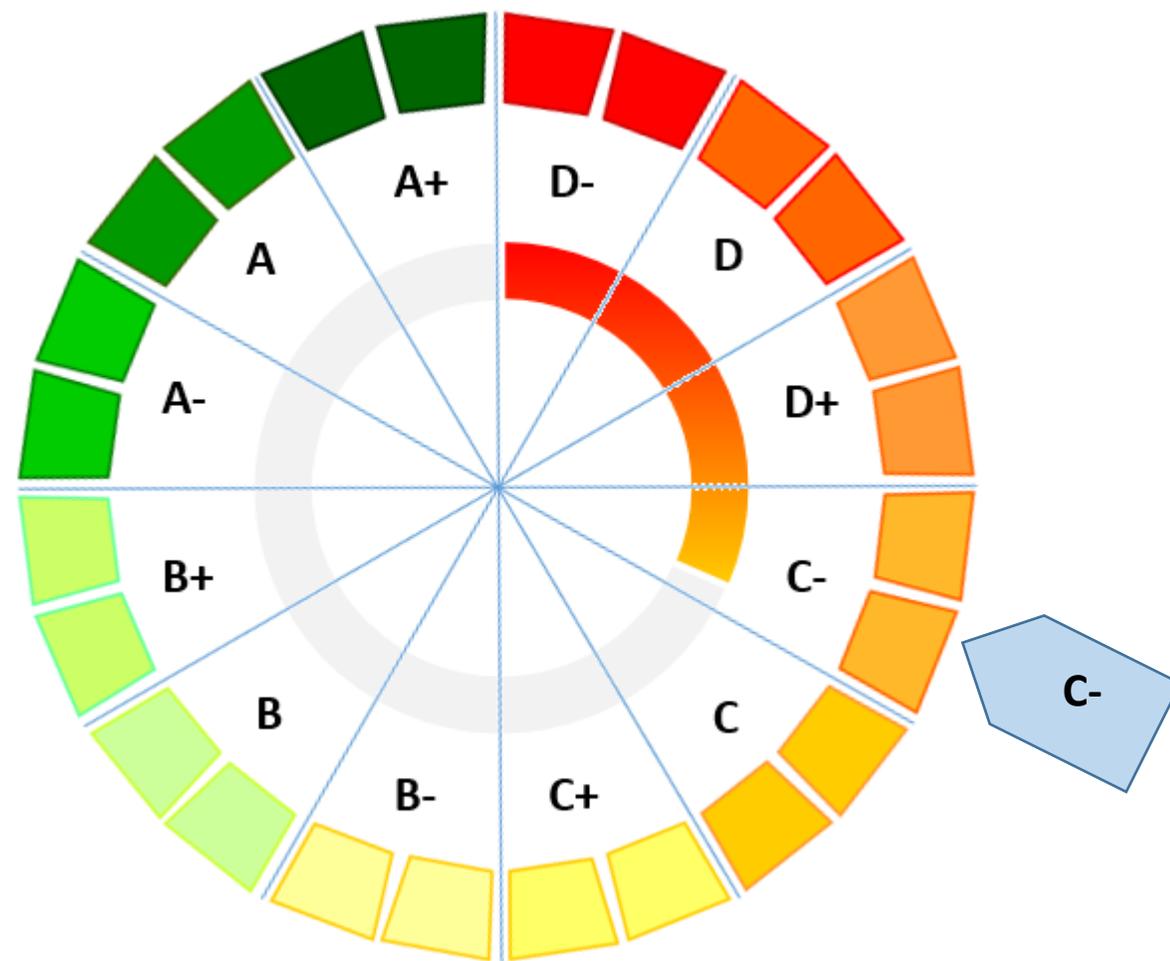
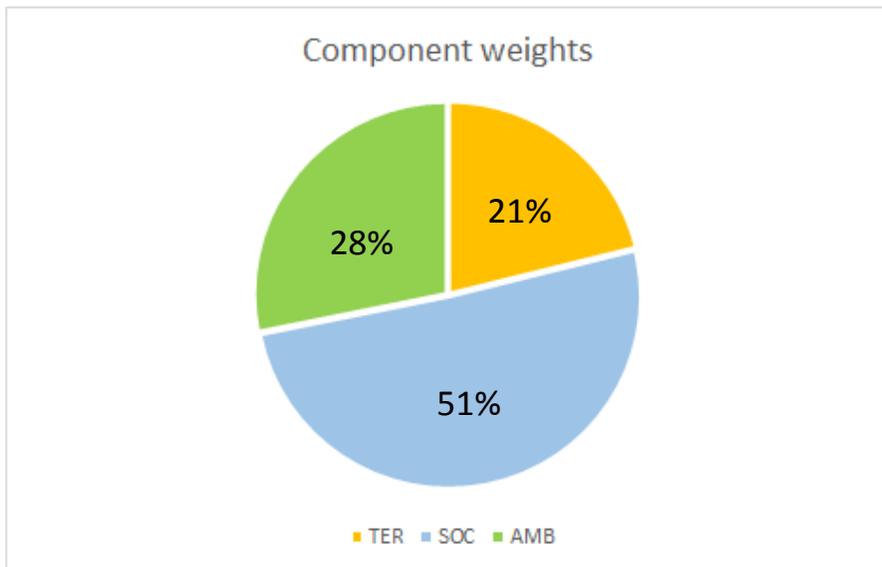
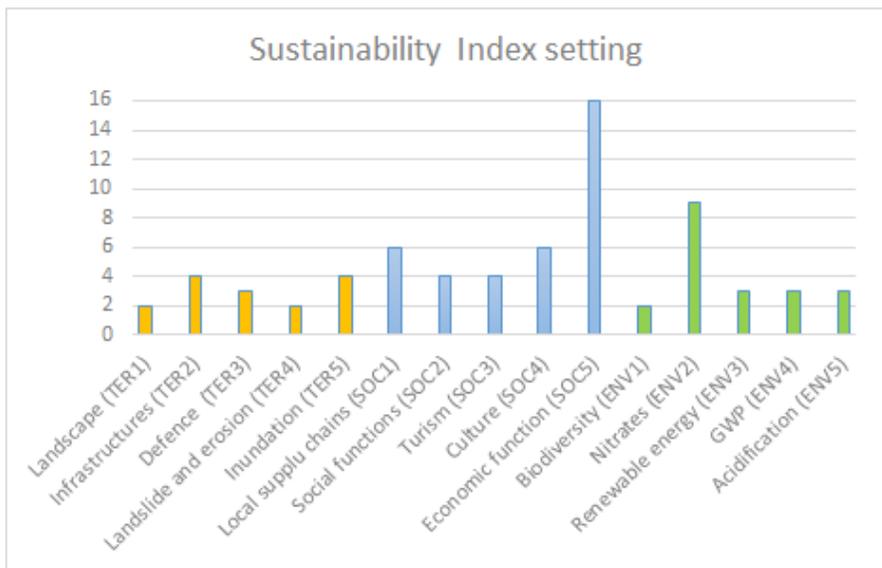


CH<sub>4</sub> emissions

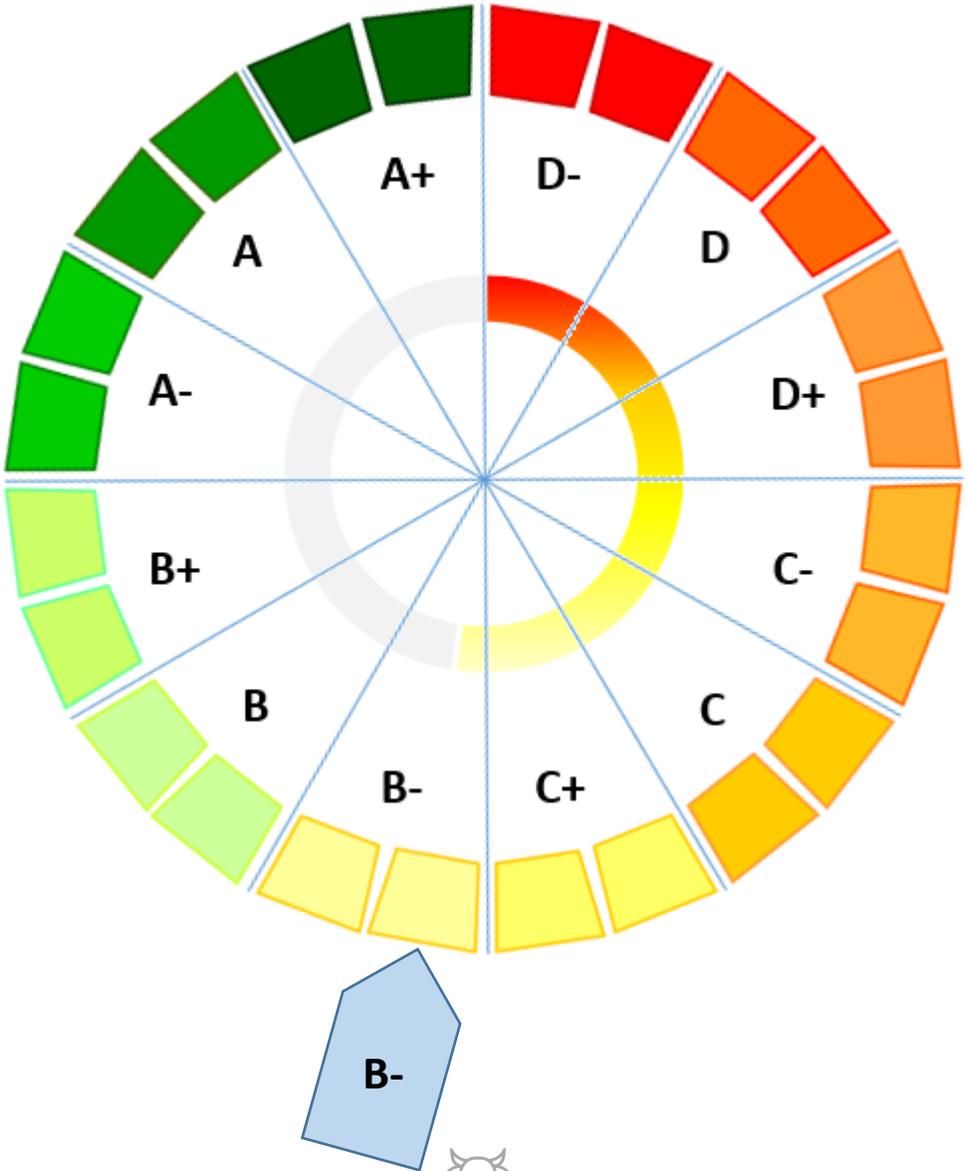
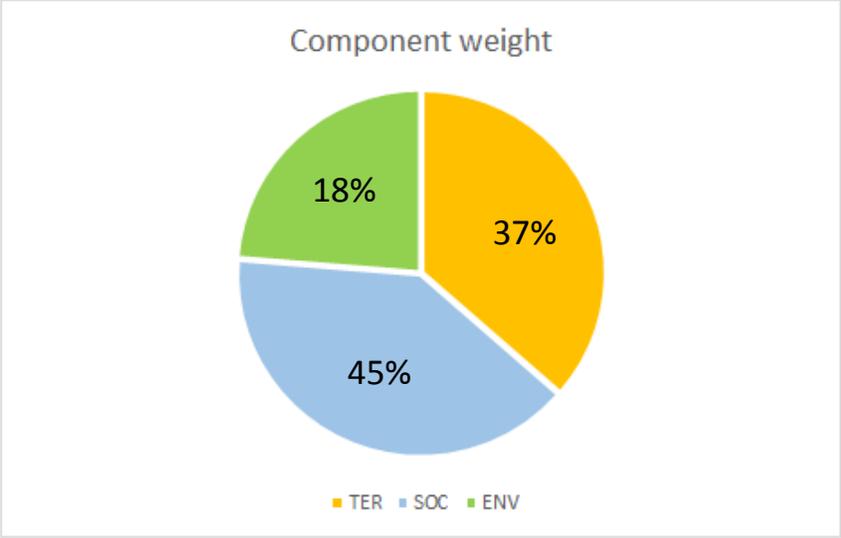
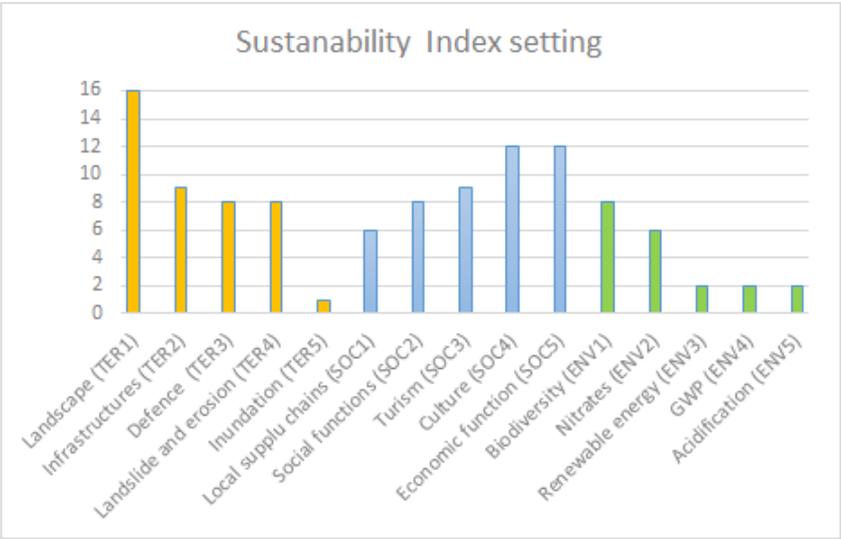
# HI-VUL FARM



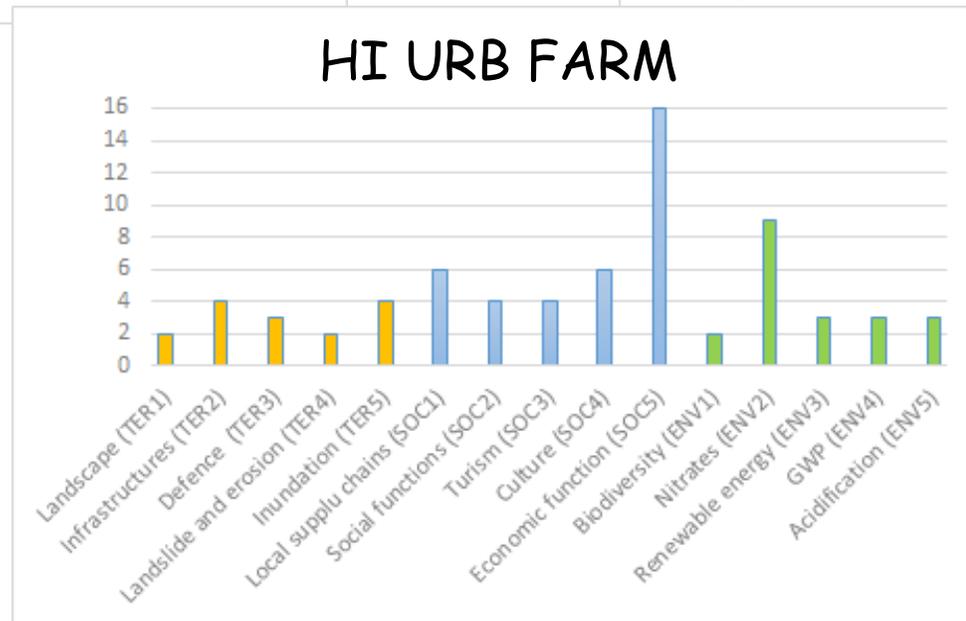
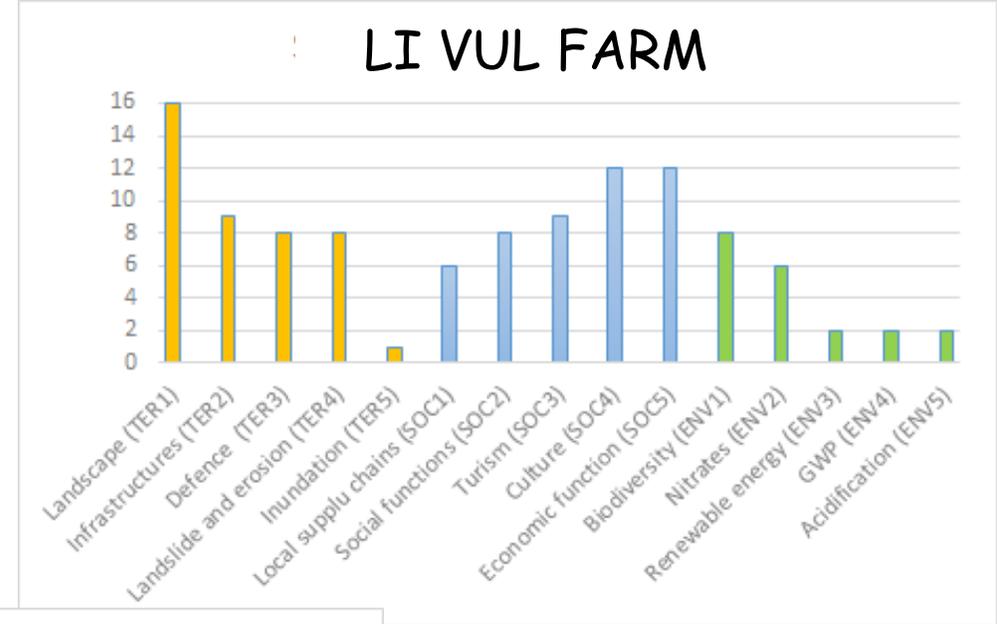
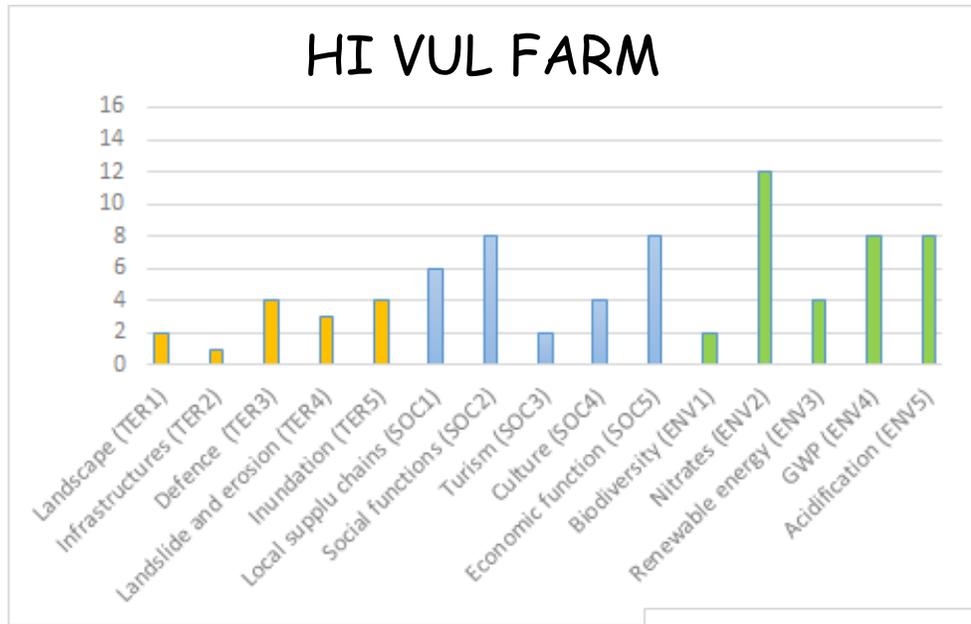
# HI URB FARM



# LI-MAR FARM



# COMPARISON

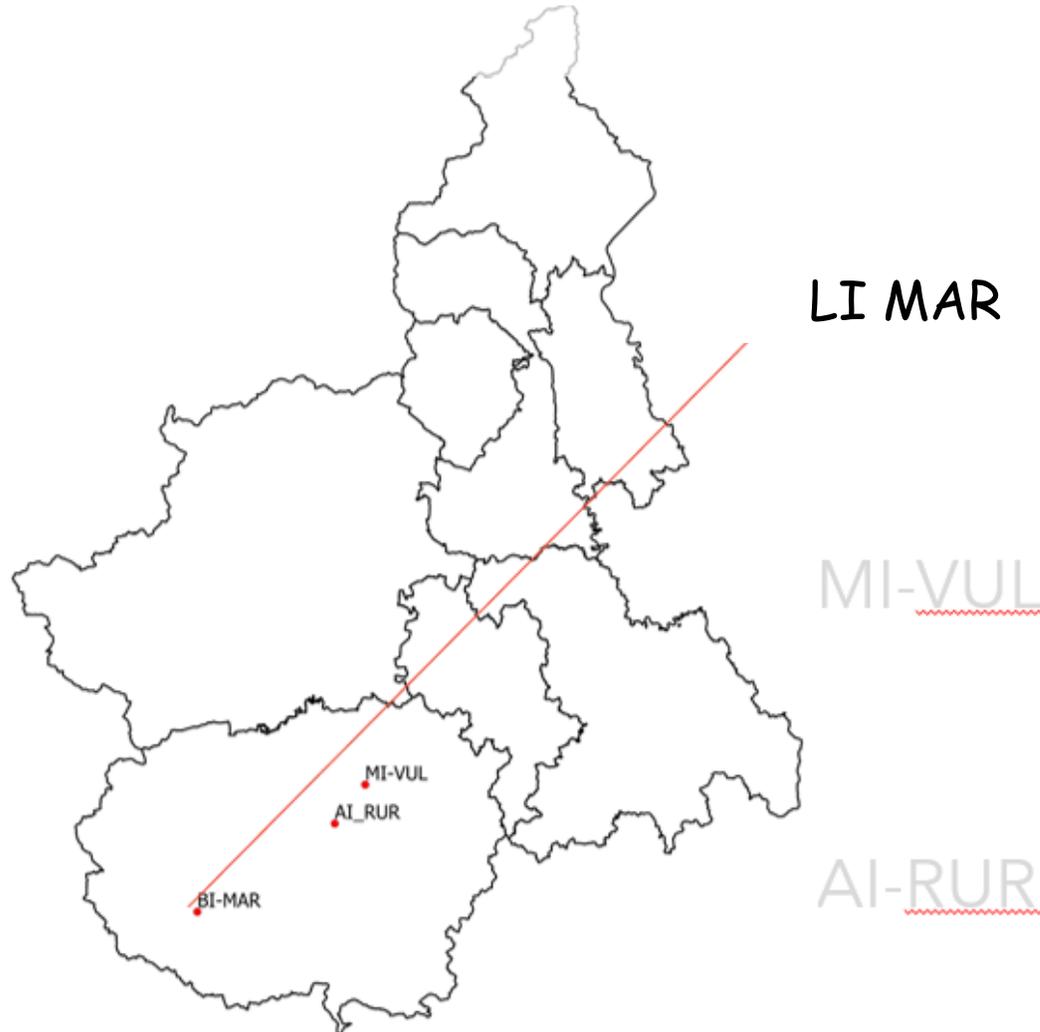


# EXAMPLE OF AN APPLICATION OF THE I-SUSTAIN METHOD TO THE BEEF CATTLE SECTOR (PIEMONTESE BREED)



7

# FARM CLASSIFICATION AND LOCALIZATION (1)



## Characteristics

- Zona marginale → Demonte (CN)
- 32 ha + 334 ha
- Prato permanente
- 260 capi
- Ingrasso: Fieno + mangime
- Rimonta: Fieno/Erba + mangime
- 90% reimpiego
- 23.100 kg PV

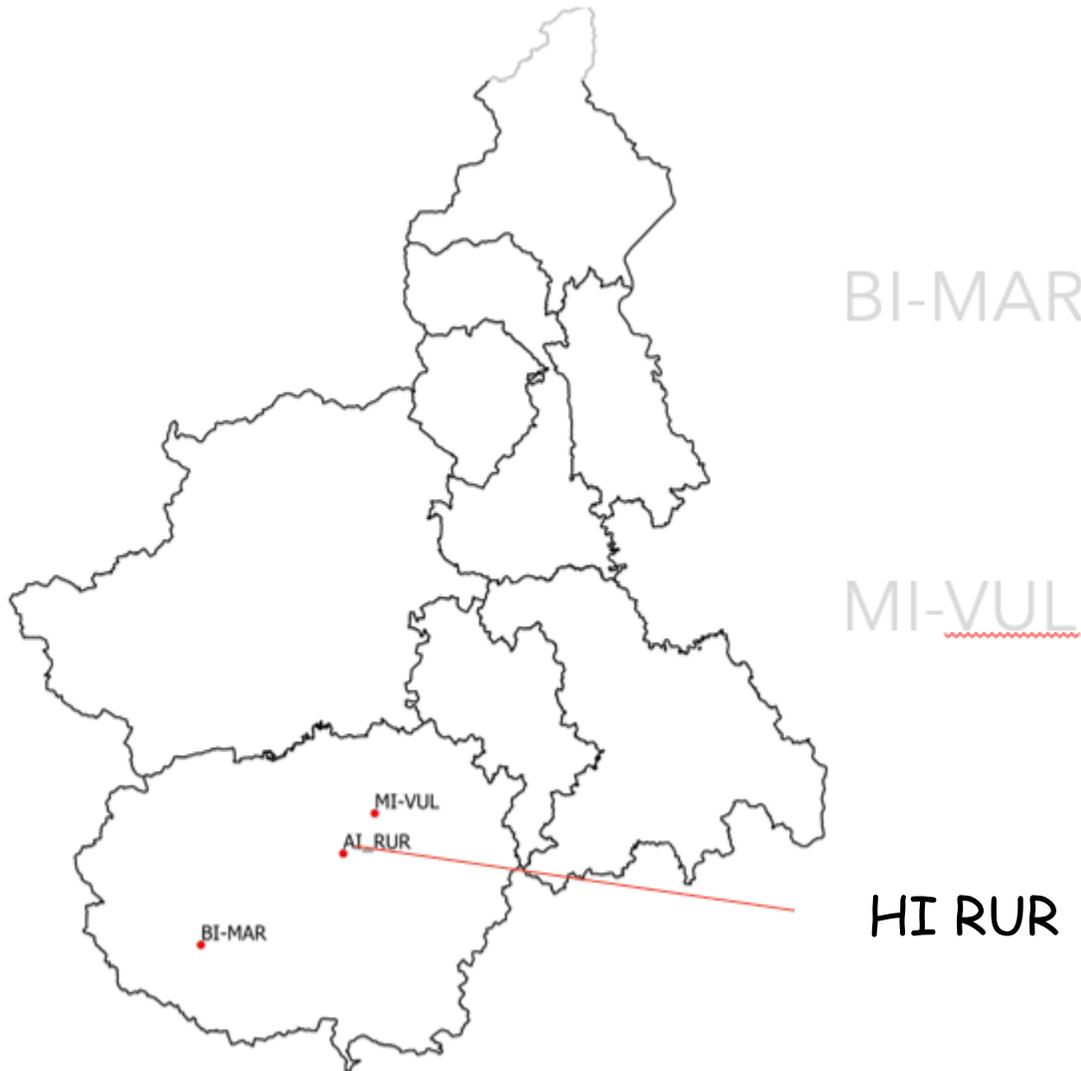
# FARM CLASSIFICATION AND LOCALIZATION (2)



## Characteristics

- Azienda in ZVN → Fossano (CN)
- 37 ha
- Cereali e prati avvicendati
- 270 capi
- Ingrasso: Fieno + mangime
- Rimonta: Fieno/Erba + silomais
- 91% reimpiego
- 45.100 kg PV

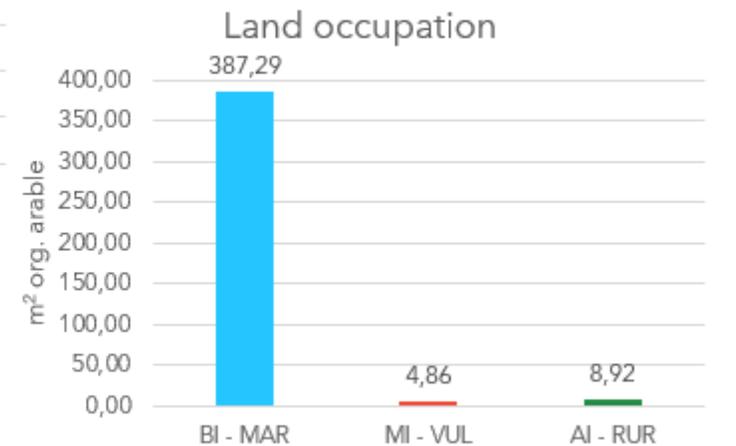
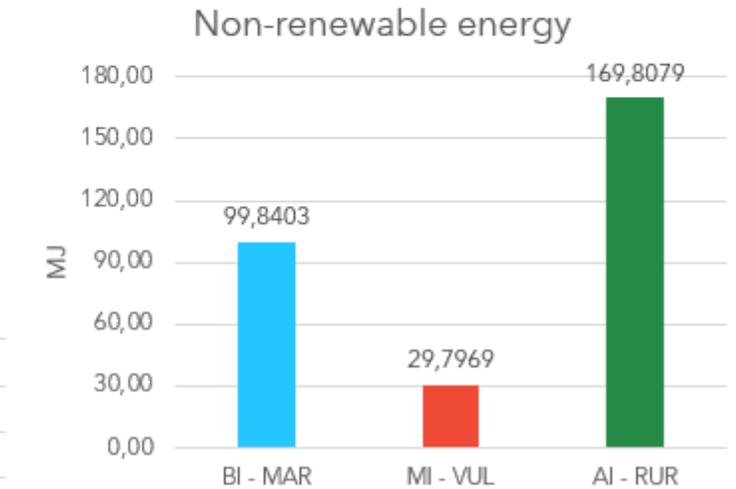
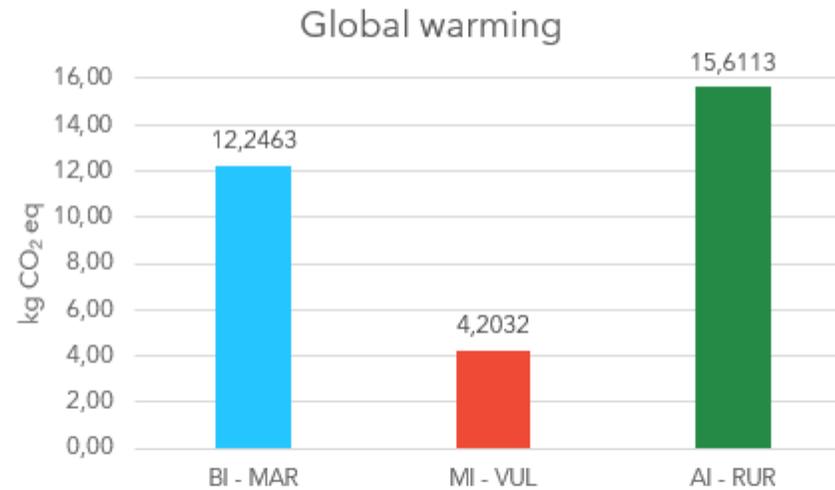
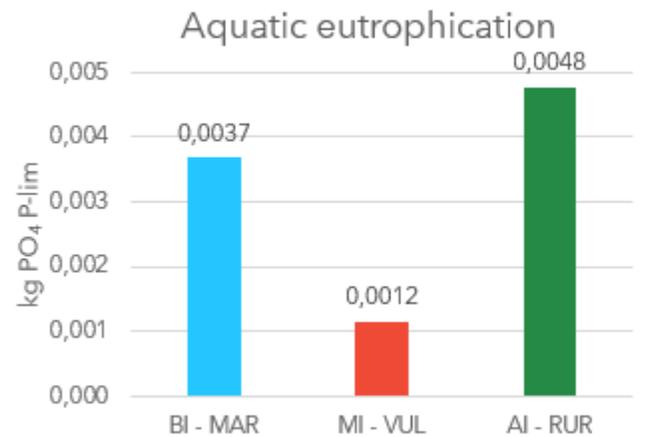
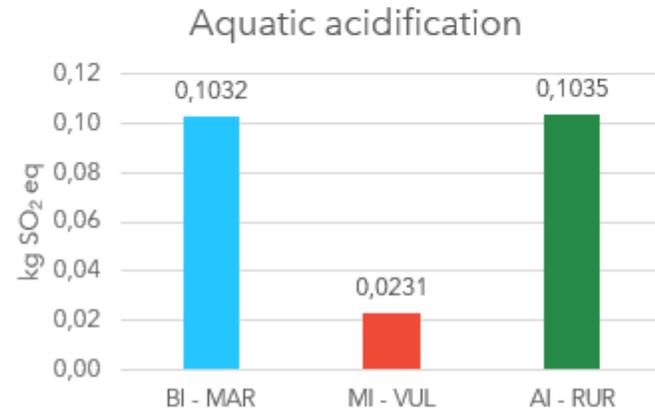
# FARM CLASSIFICATION AND LOCALIZATION (3)



## Characteristics

- Zona rurale → Cervere (CN)
- 86 ha
- Cereali e prati avvicendati
- 340 capi
- Ingrasso: Fieno + pastone + mangime
- Rimonta: Fieno/Erba + insilato
- 61% reimpiego
- 58.500 kg PV

# Life Cycle Assessment



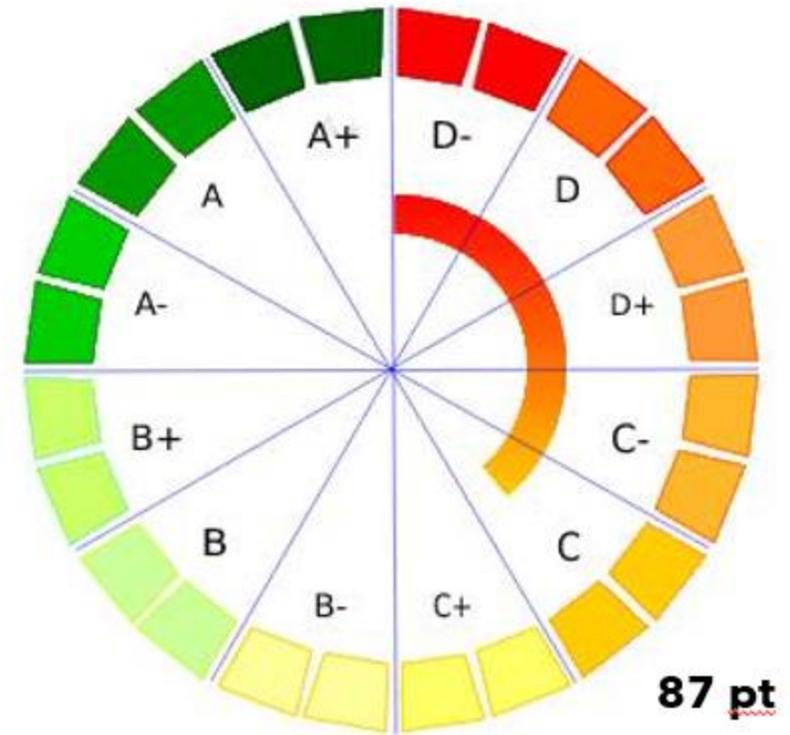
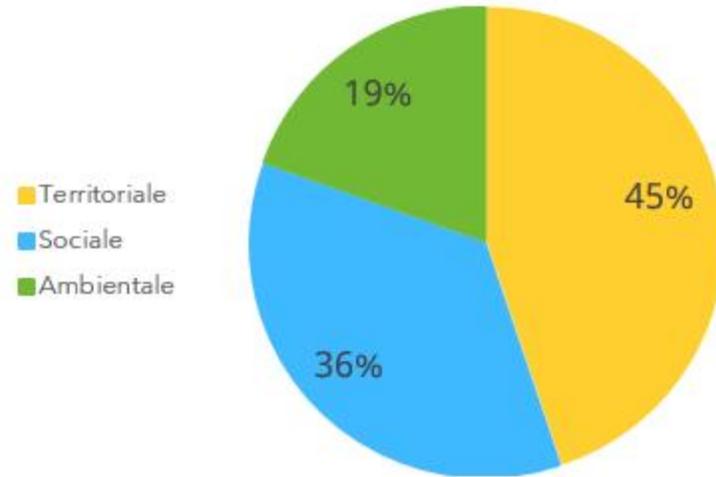
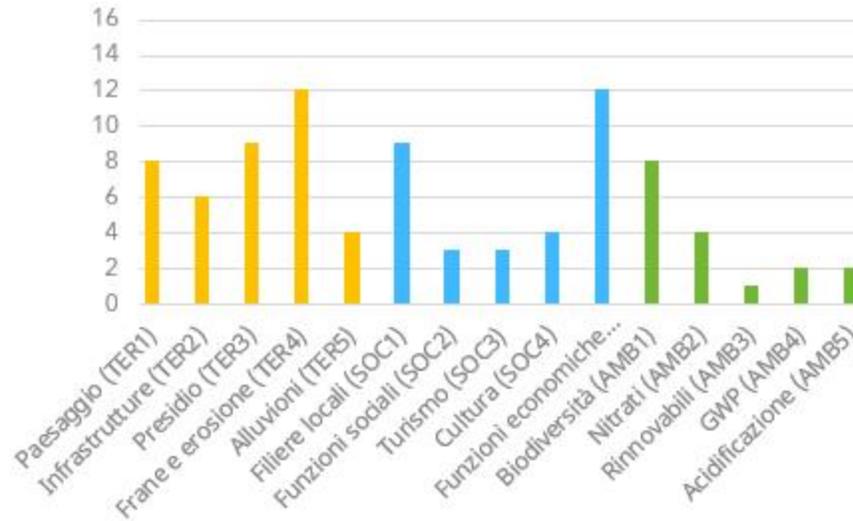
# LI-MAR FARM

• BI-MAR

• MI-VUL

• AI-RUR

Composizione dell'Indice di Sostenibilità



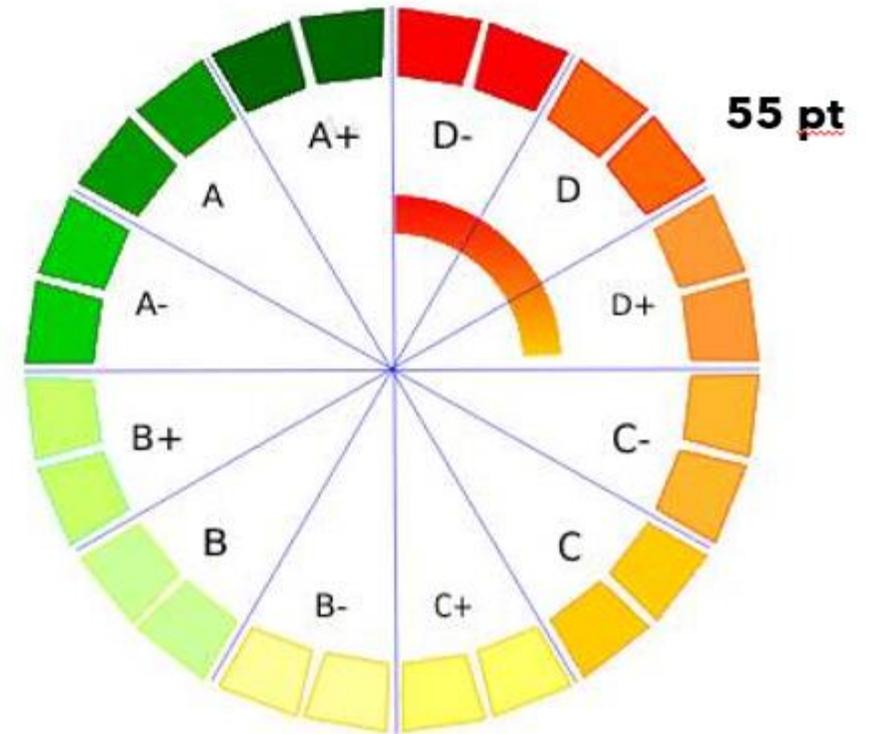
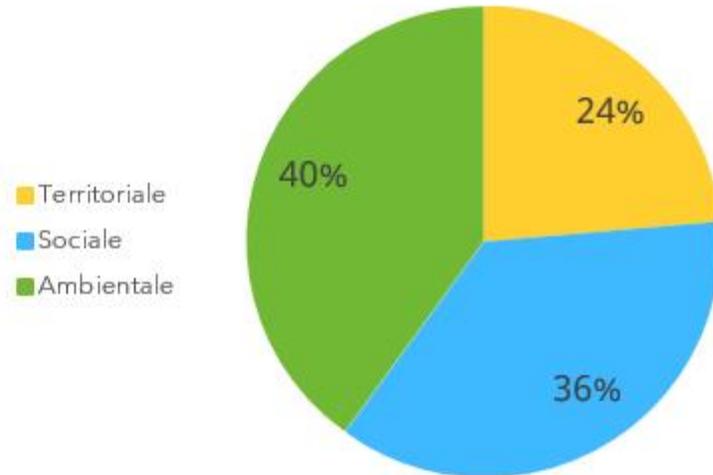
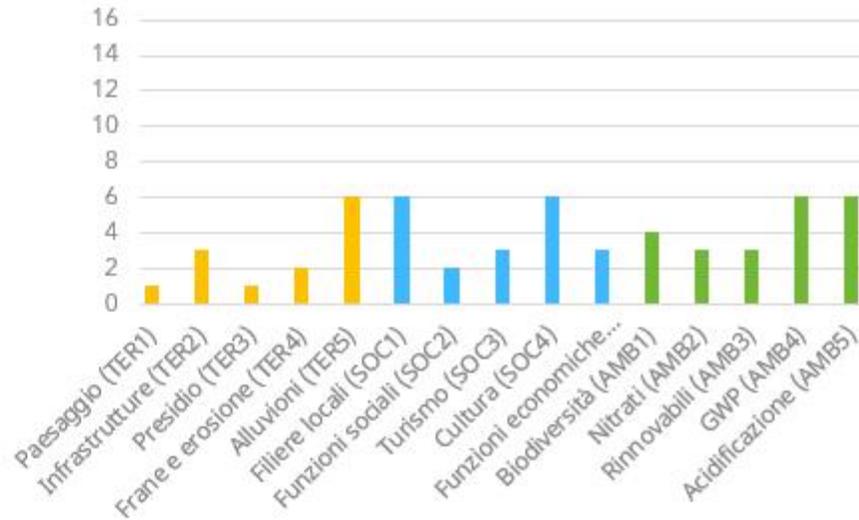
# MI-VUL FARM

• BI-MAR

• MI-VUL

• AI-RUR

Composizione dell'Indice di Sostenibilità



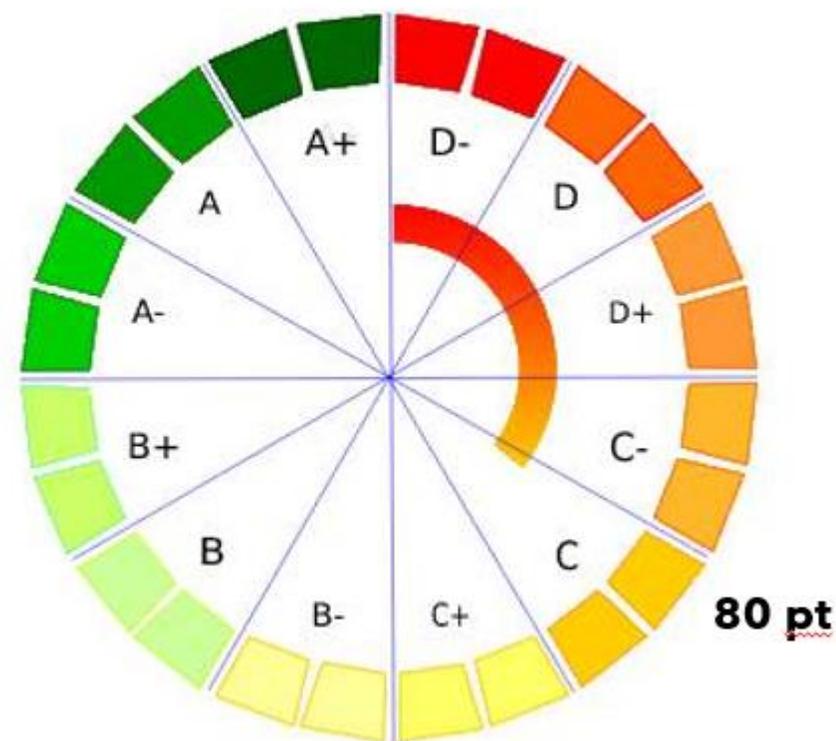
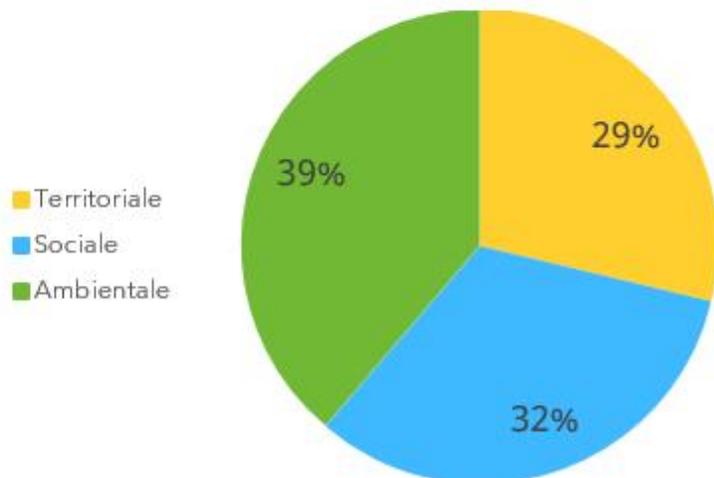
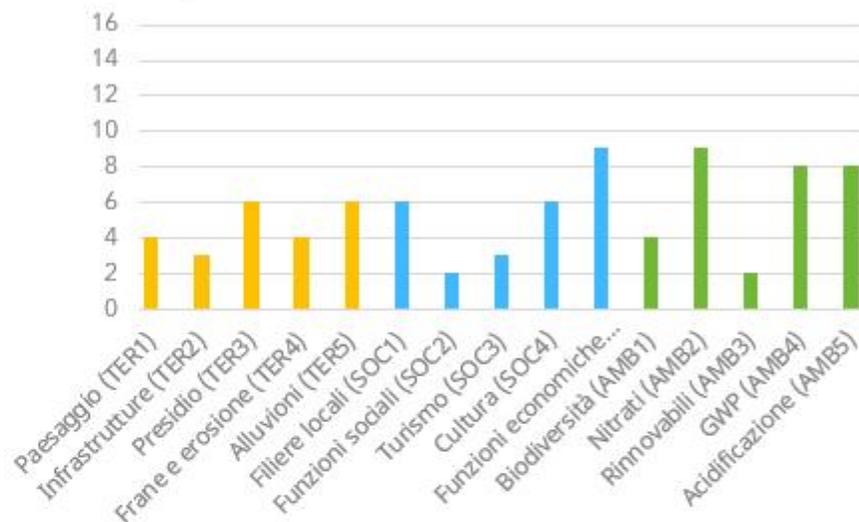
# HI-RUR FARM

• BI-MAR

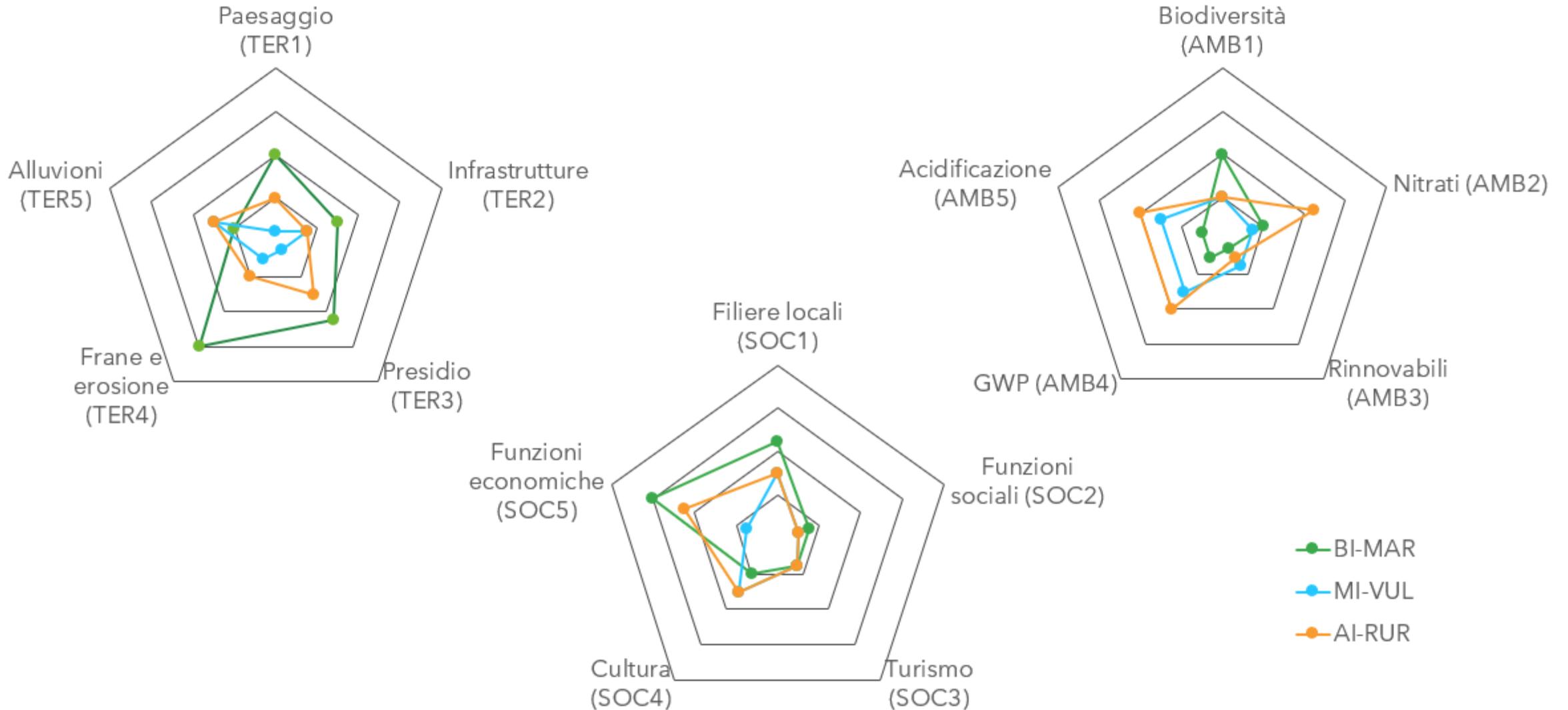
• MI-VUL

• AI-RUR

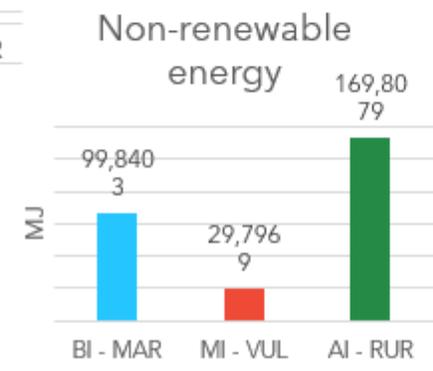
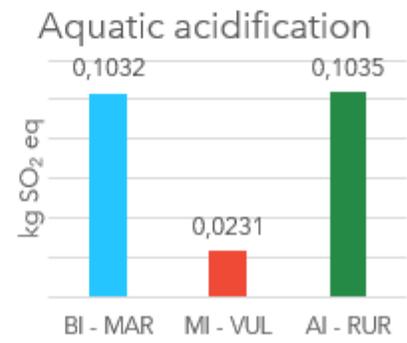
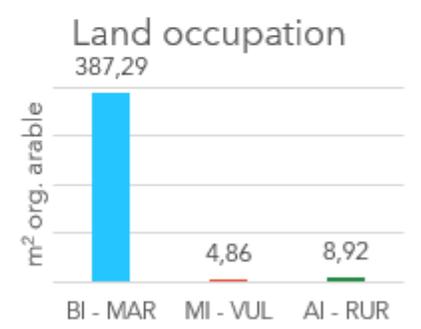
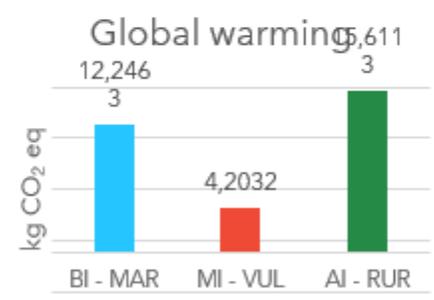
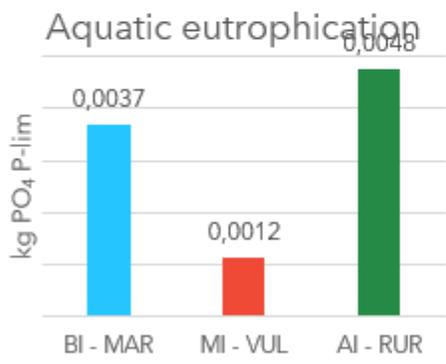
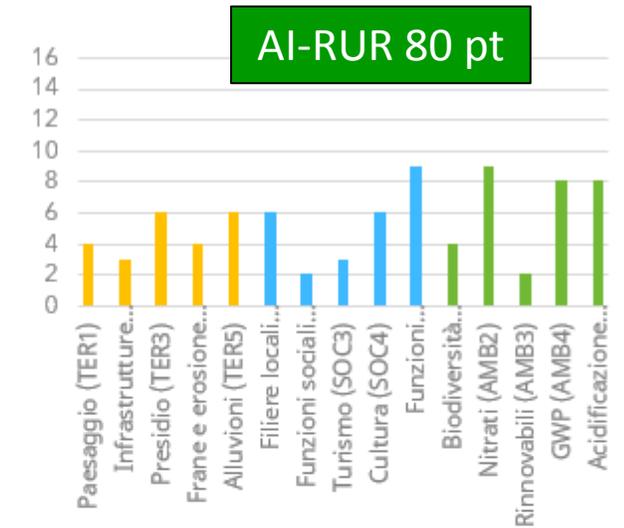
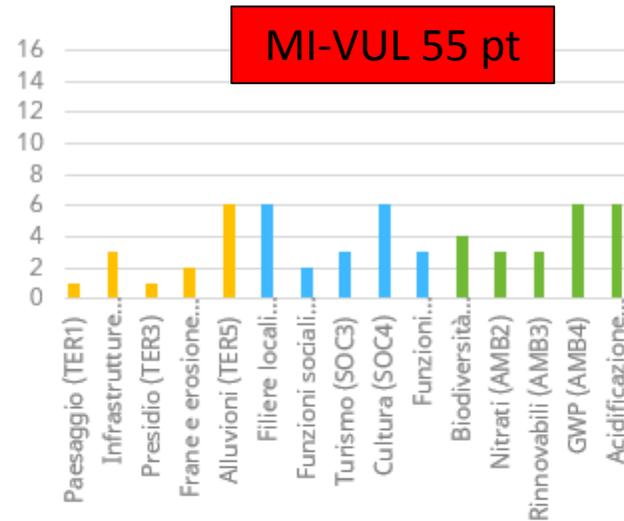
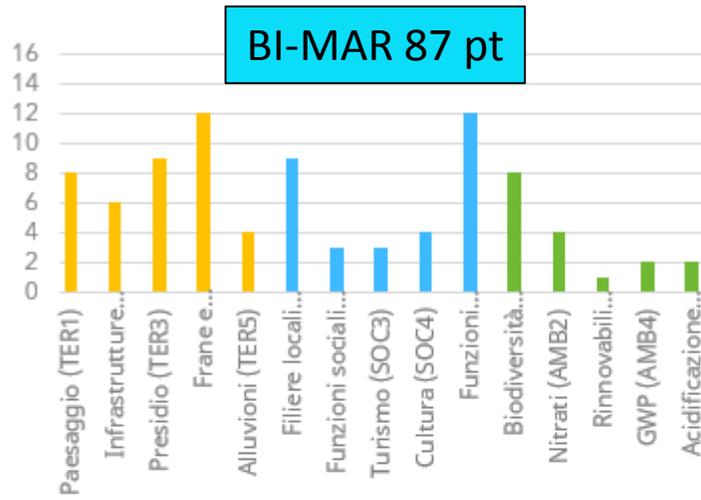
Composizione dell'Indice di Sostenibilità



# COMPARISON



# COMPARISON RESULTS I-SUSTAIN VS LCA



# FARM CLASSIFICATION I-SUSTAIN VS LCA

	LCA	I-SUSTAIN
Highest sustainability	MI-VUL	BI-MAR
Intermediate sustainability	HI-RUR	HI-RUR
Lowest sustainability	BI-MAR	MI-VUL

# OPERATIONALLY

The "I-Sustain" method could be used as:

- ✓ productive process sustainability assessment tool  
(to measure sustainability)
  - ✓ farm development tool  
(to increase sustainability)
  - ✓ policy makers tool  
(to reach the general objectives of the CAP)
  - ✓ communication tool  
(as commercial label)

# CONCLUSIONS

Sustainability is **changing** the production **methods** and the rules of competition

To be sustainable is not a fad or a marketing trend; it is the **answer** to a precise request that comes from the planet, from the rules and from consumers

To **prepare technicians** with adequate tools for a business advice **it is essential** to identify the points on which to advise the farm **to improve** the environmental, social, and economic **performances** and communicate this results to the stakeholders of the supply chain and to the consumers