

1 **Numerical analysis of agricultural emissions impacts on PM<sub>2.5</sub> in China using a high-**  
2 **resolution ammonia emission inventory**

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30 **Abstract**

31 China is one of the largest agriculture country in the world. The NH<sub>3</sub> emission from agriculture activities  
32 are significantly affects the regional air quality and horizontal visibility in China. To reliably estimate the  
33 agriculture NH<sub>3</sub> influence, a high-resolution agriculture NH<sub>3</sub> emission inventory compiled on 1km × 1km  
34 horizontal resolution was applied for calculating the NH<sub>3</sub> mass burden in China. The key parameter  
35 emission factors of this inventory was enhanced by considering many native experiment results, and the  
36 activity data of spatial and temporal information were updated by the statistic data in 2015. Not only  
37 fertilizer and husbandry, but also farmland ecosystems, livestock waste, crop residue burning, fuel wood  
38 combustion, and other NH<sub>3</sub> emission sources were included in this inventory. Furthermore, a source  
39 apportionment tool, ISAM (Integrated Source Apportionment Method), coupled with the air quality  
40 modeling system RAMS-CMAQ (Regional Atmospheric Modeling System and Community Multiscale Air  
41 Quality), was applied to capture the contribution of NH<sub>3</sub> emitted from total agriculture (Tagr) in China. The  
42 aerosol mass concentration in 2015 was simulated and the results showed that the high mass concentration  
43 of NH<sub>3</sub> which exceeded 10 μg m<sup>-3</sup> mainly appeared in the North China Plain (NCP), Central China (CNC),  
44 Yangtz River Delta (YRD), and Sichan Basin (SCB), and the annually average contribution of Tagr NH<sub>3</sub> to  
45 PM<sub>2.5</sub> mass burden was 14-22% in China. Specific to the PM<sub>2.5</sub> components, Tagr NH<sub>3</sub> provided major  
46 contribution to the ammonium formation (87.6%), but tiny contribution to the sulfate (2.2%). In addition,  
47 several brute-force sensitive tests were conducted to estimate the impact of Tagr NH<sub>3</sub> emission reduction  
48 on PM<sub>2.5</sub> mass burden. Compared with the result of ISAM, it was found that even though the Tagr NH<sub>3</sub>  
49 only provided 10.1% contribution to nitrate under current emission scenario, the reduction of nitrate could  
50 reach 95.8% upon removal of the Tagr NH<sub>3</sub> emission. The main reason of this deviation should be that the  
51 NH<sub>3</sub> contribution to nitrate should be small under "rich NH<sub>3</sub>" and large under "poor NH<sub>3</sub>" environment.  
52 Thus, the influence of NH<sub>3</sub> on nitrate formation would enhance with the decreasing of ambient NH<sub>3</sub> mass  
53 concentration.

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## 1. Introduction

Ammonia ( $\text{NH}_3$ ) is an important pollution species which principal neutralizing agent for the acid aerosols,  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$  and  $\text{NO}_3^-$  formed from the  $\text{SO}_2$  and  $\text{NO}_x$  (Chang, 1989; McMurry et al.; 1983). In addition,  $\text{NH}_3$  also influences the rate of particle nucleation (Ball et al.; 1999; Kulmala et al.; 2002) and enhances secondary organic aerosols (SOA) yields (Babar et al.; 2017). The widespread haze events have frequently occurred in most regions of eastern China in recent years, and several studies have reported that the secondary inorganic salts, including sulfate, nitrate, and ammonium, were the majorities of the total aerosols in the urban and rural regions (Tao et al.; 2014; Wang et al.; 2016; Zhang et al.; 2012; Lai et al.; 2016; Zhang et al.; 2018). Therefore, besides the heavy emissions of  $\text{SO}_2$  and  $\text{NO}_2$ ,  $\text{NH}_3$  emissions from the agriculture activities are also non-negligible.

China is one of the largest agriculture country in the world. Even though a decrease appeared from 2006 to 2012, the annual emission budget of  $\text{NH}_3$  which reached 9.7-12 Tg (Kang et al.; 2016; Xu et al.; 2016; Zhou et al.; 2015) was still huge and leads to high  $\text{NH}_3$  ambient concentration. This massive  $\text{NH}_3$  significantly affects the regional air quality and horizontal visibility. Firstly, the major  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  components,  $(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{SO}_4$ ,  $(\text{NH}_4)_3\text{H}(\text{SO}_4)_2$ ,  $\text{NH}_4\text{HSO}_4$ , and  $\text{NH}_4\text{NO}_3$  were partially or fully yielded from neutralizing  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  and  $\text{HNO}_3$  by the  $\text{NH}_3$  reacts (Tanner et al.; 1981; Brost et al.; 1988; Quan et al.; 2014; Zhao et al.; 2013; Zhang et al.; 2014). Studies also showed that  $\text{NH}_3$  improves the  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  nucleation by 1-10 times (Benson et al.; 2011), and provides sufficient new particle to alter the number and size distributions. Thus, the  $\text{NH}_3$  and its secondary product  $\text{NH}_4^+$  play an important role in the formation of air pollution and haze days. Some research showed that about 80% of total anthropogenic  $\text{NH}_3$  emissions derived from the agriculture sources, and the livestock manure provided more contributions than that of the synthetic fertilizer (Kang et al. 2016; Zhou et al.; 2016). The Chinese government has taken several control strategies to reduce the particle pollutions and their precursors, such as the catalytic reduction systems in the power sector (Xia et al.; 2016), measures to change coal to gas for residents' life and heating (Ren et al.; 2014), etc. Related observations have shown that the mass burden of  $\text{SO}_2$  and  $\text{NO}_x$  have distinctly decreased in recent year (De Foy et al.; 2016; Wang et al.; 2015; Zheng et al.; 2018). However, there was no specific measures for agriculture  $\text{NH}_3$  emission control have been implemented until now and the total agriculture  $\text{NH}_3$  emission budget was not obviously changed from 2010 to 2017 (Zheng et al.; 2018).

In addition, an accurate information of agriculture  $\text{NH}_3$  emission is also important for estimating the  $\text{NH}_3$  mass burden and its environmental effect. There were several studies focusing on  $\text{NH}_3$  emissions from

90 agricultural activities in China or East Asia. REAS (Regional Emission inventory in Asia) version 2  
91 established an anthropogenic emission inventory which includes the source of agricultural NH<sub>3</sub> (fertilizer  
92 application and livestock) (Kurokawa et al.; 2013). This inventory targeting years from 2000 to 2008 has  
93 0.25×0.25 degree spatial resolution with monthly variation. MASAGE\_NH<sub>3</sub> (Magnitude and Seasonality  
94 of Agricultural Emissions model for NH<sub>3</sub>) developed a bottom-up NH<sub>3</sub> emission inventories by using the  
95 adjoint of the GEOS-Chem chemical transport model (Paulot et al.; 2014). The network data for NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup> wet  
96 deposition fluxes from 2005-2008 were inversed to optimize the NH<sub>3</sub> emission in China in this inventory.  
97 Fu et al. (2015) used CMAQ model coupled to an agro-ecosystem to estimate the NH<sub>3</sub> emissions with high  
98 spatial and temporal resolution in 2011, which could obtain hourly emission features by online model  
99 calculation. These NH<sub>3</sub> emission inventory provided very useful datasets for understanding the distribution  
100 features of NH<sub>3</sub> mass burden in China. However, with the migration of population, economic growth, and  
101 increasing of agricultural products consumption, the spatial distribution and strength of agriculture NH<sub>3</sub>  
102 emission was significantly changed in China during last decade (Xu et al.; 2017), so that a reliable emission  
103 information based on recent year is also necessary for estimating the NH<sub>3</sub> mass burden.

104 Previous studies have investigated the influence of NH<sub>3</sub> emission to aerosol loading in several typical  
105 areas of China. Wu et al. (2008) conducted sensitivity studies to assess the impact of the livestock NH<sub>3</sub>  
106 emissions on PM<sub>2.5</sub> mass concentration in North China by using MM5/CMAQ modeling system. The results  
107 showed that the livestock NH<sub>3</sub> provided >20% contributions to nitrate and ammonium, but provided quite  
108 small contribution to sulfate. Wang et al. (2011) used the response surface modeling technique to estimate  
109 the NH<sub>3</sub> emission contribution in the East China, and found that the total NH<sub>3</sub> emission contributed 8-11%  
110 to PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration, and the nonlinear effects were significant while the transition between NH<sub>3</sub> rich and  
111 poor conditions. Fu et al. (2017) and Zhao et al. (2017) also investigated the impact of NH<sub>3</sub> emission on  
112 PM<sub>2.5</sub> in East China and Hai River Basin. However, the related research was still less and mainly focused  
113 on the local regions, and most of them generally used the brute-force sensitivity method to estimate the  
114 NH<sub>3</sub> impact based on chemistry model, which reflect the particle concentration change with emission  
115 reduction (Koo et al.; 2009).

116 A comprehensive high-resolution NH<sub>3</sub> emission inventory PKU-NH<sub>3</sub> based on the year 2015 is applied  
117 in this study to capture the agriculture NH<sub>3</sub> mass concentration in China, and the contribution to PM<sub>2.5</sub>  
118 particle was estimated by an air quality modeling system RAMS-CMAQ coupled with the online source  
119 tagged module ISAM. Compared with previous studies, this high-resolution agriculture NH<sub>3</sub> emission

120 inventory is more accurate and reflects the latest spatial and temporal distribution features (Liu et al.; 2019).  
121 The major trace gases and aerosol species in 2015 were simulated by the modeling system and evaluated  
122 by several observation data. The contribution to the pollutant concentrations can be tagged and quantified  
123 by RAMS-CMAQ-ISAM under current scenario (Wang et al.; 2009). Then, several brute-force sensitivity  
124 tests were conducted to estimate the effect of reducing agriculture NH<sub>3</sub> emission on the PM<sub>2.5</sub> mass burden  
125 as well. The results from the source apportionment simulation and brute-force sensitivity tests in January,  
126 April, July, and October were present, and the detail features over seven major populated areas (as shown  
127 in Figure 1) of China were mainly discussed.

## 128

### 129 **2. Methodology**

130 The emission inventory was described as follow. Firstly, the NH<sub>3</sub> emission data in China was provided  
131 by the PKU-NH<sub>3</sub> emission inventory (Kang et al.; 2016; Zhang et al.; 2018). This inventory was developed  
132 on the basis of previous studies (Huang et al.; 2012) and improved the horizontal resolution and accuracy.  
133 It compiled on 1km × 1km horizontal resolution with monthly based statistic data in 2015. One of the most  
134 uncertainty parameter the emission factors applied in this inventory was enhanced by considering as many  
135 native experiment results as possible with ambient temperature, soil acidity, and other factors change. In  
136 addition, this inventory not only includes the fertilizer and husbandry emission from agriculture activities,  
137 but also collects the emission data of farmland ecosystems, livestock waste, biomass burning (forest and  
138 grassland fires, crop residue burning, and fuel wood combustion), and other sources (excrement waste from  
139 rural populations, the chemical industry, waste disposal, NH<sub>3</sub> escape from thermal power plants, and traffic  
140 sources). Secondly, the anthropogenic emission of primary aerosols and the precursors were obtained from  
141 the MIX Asian emission inventory (base year 2012) prepared by the Model Inter-Comparison Study for  
142 Asia (MICS-ASIA III) (Lu et al.; 2011; Lei et al.; 2011). The anthropogenic emission sources of SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>,  
143 volatile organic compounds (VOCs), black carbon (BC), organic carbon (OC), primary PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and PM<sub>10</sub>  
144 were obtained from the monthly-based MIX inventory with 0.25° × 0.25° spatial resolution. The REAS  
145 (Regional Emission Inventory in Asia; Version 2; Kurokawa et al.; 2013) and GFED (Global Fire Emissions  
146 Database; Version 3; van der Werf et al.; 2010) were used to provide the VOCs, nitrogen oxides from flight  
147 exhaust, lighting, paint, wildfires, savanna burning, and slash-and-burn agriculture.

148 The modeling system RAMS-CMAQ was applied to simulate the transformation and transport of  
149 pollutants in atmosphere. The regional air quality model CMAQ (version 5.0.2) released by US

150 Environmental Protection Agency (Eder et al.; 2009; Mathur et al.; 2008) was the major component of the  
151 RAMS-CMAQ modeling system. In this model, The CB05 (version CB05tucl) chemical mechanism  
152 (Whitten, 2010) was used to treat the gas-phase chemical mechanism. The simulation of O<sub>3</sub> in urban plumes,  
153 which could impacts the NO<sub>x</sub> chemical transformation and fine particle mass predictions, was updated in  
154 this version for obtaining more reasonable results. The sixth-generation model CMAQ aerosol model  
155 (AERO6) which added 9 new PM<sub>2.5</sub> species and updated the secondary organic aerosol (SOA) yield  
156 parametrization and primary organic aerosol (POA) aging processes was used to simulate the formation  
157 and dynamic processes of aerosols. ISORROPIA model (version 2.1) (Fountoukis and Nenes, 2007) was  
158 used to describe the thermodynamic equilibrium of gas-particle transformation. The highly versatile  
159 numerical model RAMS which can well capture the boundary layer and the underlying surface was applied  
160 to provide the meteorological fields for CMAQ (Cotton et al.; 2003). The European Centre for Medium-  
161 Range Weather Forecasts reanalysis datasets (1°×1° spatial resolution) were used to supply the background  
162 fields and sea surface temperatures. The model domain (Figure 1) is 6654 km × 5440 km with 64 km<sup>2</sup> fixed  
163 grid cells, and uses a rotated polar stereographic map projection covered the whole mainland of China and  
164 its surrounding regions. The model has 15 vertical layers and half of them are located in the lowest 2 km to  
165 provide more precise simulation of the atmospheric boundary layer.

166 The ISAM is a flexible and efficient on-line source apportionment implementation which was used to  
167 track multiple pollutants emitted from different geographic regions and source types. Compared with its  
168 previous version TSSA (Tagged Species Source Apportionment), the processes of tracking tagged tracer  
169 transport and precursor reaction were optimized for balancing the computational requirements and reliable  
170 representation of the physical and chemical evolution. In order to reduce the nonlinear effect during phase  
171 transformation and relative chemical interactions, a standalone subroutine “wrapper” approach was applied  
172 in ISAM to apportion the secondary PM species and their precursor gases during the thermodynamic  
173 equilibrium simulation; a hybrid approach which employing the LU decomposition triangular matrices  
174 (Yang et al.; 1997) was developed for describing the gas-phase chemical interactions as well. In this study,  
175 ISAM was coupled into RAMS-CMAQ and set to trace the transport and chemical reactions of the NH<sub>3</sub>  
176 from fertilizer and husbandry emission sectors for quantitatively estimating the contribution of agriculture  
177 NH<sub>3</sub> emission to the PM<sub>2.5</sub> mass concentration in China.

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### 179 **3. Model evaluation**

180 In order to evaluate the model performances, several observation data are used to compared with the  
181 simulation results. The meteorological factors are important to capture the formation processes and  
182 transport of secondary aerosols. Thus, in this paper, the observed meteorological data from surface stations  
183 of the Chinese National Meteorological Center are collected to evaluate the performance of the model. The  
184 detail information is described in Appendix A. Furthermore, the observed SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>, and PM<sub>2.5</sub> released  
185 from the Ministry of Environmental Protection of China were applied to evaluate the modeled mass  
186 concentration of these pollutants. The hourly observation data in January, April, July and October at 6  
187 stations that located in Beijing, Jinan, Shijiazhuang, Nanjing, Guangzhou and Zhengzhou were collected in  
188 this study. The scatter plots of comparison are shown in Figure 2, and the statistical parameters between the  
189 observations and simulations are listed in Table 1-3. It can be seen that most of the scatter points broadly  
190 gather around the 1:1 solid line. Most of the correlation coefficients in Table 1-3 are higher than 0.5, which  
191 indicates that the model can capture the regional variation features of measurements. The standard  
192 deviations between the observation and simulation were similar in most cases as well. The simulation  
193 results performed better in winter than that in summer because the diffusion condition was strong and the  
194 mass concentration changed noticeably during summer time. The modeled PM<sub>2.5</sub> generally performed well  
195 due to relatively high correlation coefficients. The obvious deviation of the modeled mean, which was  
196 higher than that of the observation, was between the observed and modeled SO<sub>2</sub>. The emission of SO<sub>2</sub>  
197 reduced rapidly because of the control measures from 2013 in China. However, the emission inventory may  
198 not reflect this feature and slightly overestimated the mass burden.

199 The horizontal distributions of modeled monthly NH<sub>3</sub> mass concentration in January, April, July, and  
200 October in 2015 are shown in Figure 3. Pan et al. (2018) provided the distributions of satellite NH<sub>3</sub> total  
201 column distribution and the surface NH<sub>3</sub> concentrations at several observation sites in their Figure 1. As  
202 shown from their results, the highest mass burden mainly concentrated in North China Plain (NCP), Central  
203 China (CNC), Yangtz River Delta (YRD), and Sichan Basin (SCB). The simulation results in this study  
204 broadly reflected these distribution features. The values of NH<sub>3</sub> concentrations in these regions could reach  
205 10-25 μg m<sup>3</sup> in Pan et al. (2018), which also coincided well with the simulation results. However, some  
206 obvious deviation appeared in the areas of east part of Gansu province. The modeled NH<sub>3</sub> in these regions  
207 by this study was slightly higher than those of the observations in Pan et al. (2018). Zhang et al. (2018) also  
208 showed the NH<sub>3</sub> mass concentration in four seasons over China from simulation (horizontal distribution)  
209 and ground-based measurements (point values) in their Figure 9. Besides the regions maintained in Pan et

210 al. (2018), the high mass burden of  $\text{NH}_3$  also appeared in the Northeast China (NEC) as shown by both  
211 simulation and observation in Zhang et al. (2018). Generally, this distribution feature should be reasonable  
212 because the Three River Plain located in NEC is an important agriculture base of China, and the  $\text{NH}_3$   
213 emission in this region can be strong during spring and summer. The simulation results in this study also  
214 followed the seasonal variation feature of  $\text{NH}_3$  mass burden as shown in Zhang et al. (2018), which was  
215 higher in summer and lower in winter, and the magnitude was also close with each other. Thus, it can be  
216 seen that the modeled  $\text{NH}_3$  concentration by RAMS-CMAQ was reliable and can be applied for the analysis  
217 in this study.

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#### 219 **4. Results and discussions**

220 The horizontal distributions of modeled monthly  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  mass concentration in January, April, July, and  
221 October in 2015 was shown in Figure 4. The surface wind field was also shown in Figure 4. Over the east  
222 part of China, the heavy  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  pollution happened in January and the relatively better air quality appeared  
223 in July. The large  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  mass burden exceeded  $200 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$  in January mainly concentrated in the NCP, the  
224 Yangtze River Valley of CNC, and SCB, which broadly coincided with the regions covered by high mass  
225 burden of  $\text{NH}_3$  as shown in Figure 3. It can be seen that the wind speed in the regions mentioned above was  
226 relatively weak, implying that the diffusion condition was not good, and more aerosol can be trapped in  
227 these region. In addition, the  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  mass burden ( $50\text{-}150 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ ) was obviously lower than other months  
228 in July. Since the  $\text{NH}_3$  emission mainly concerns with the secondary inorganic aerosols (SNA): sulfate,  
229 nitrate, and ammonium formation, the analysis hereafter will mainly focus on the SNA. Figure 5 present  
230 the modeled monthly SNA mass concentration in January, April, July, and October in 2015. The mass  
231 loading of SNA generally provided 40-60% to the total  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  in the east part of China, which was  
232 comparable with previous studies (Cao et al.; 2017; Chen et al.; 2016; Lai et al.; 2016; Wang et al.; 2016).  
233 The distribution pattern and seasonal variation of SNA also followed the features of  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ , and the high  
234 mass concentration of SNA could exceed  $100 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$  in January.

235 Then, the contributions of  $\text{NH}_3$  from the multiple agriculture emission (includes fertilizer, husbandry,  
236 farmland ecosystems, livestock waste, crop residue burning, and excrement waste from rural populations)  
237 to aerosols were calculated using RAMS-CMAQ-ISAM; the monthly average contribution percentage of  
238 total agriculture activities (Tagr) in January, April, July, and October are shown in Figure 6. Generally, the  
239 Tagr  $\text{NH}_3$  provided 30-50% contribution in January and October, and 20-40% contribution in April and



240 July to the SNA over the most part of east China. The relatively lower value mainly appeared in April.

241 The regional average percent of Tagr contribution to sulfate, nitrate, ammonium, SNA, and PM<sub>2.5</sub> are  
242 shown in Table 4. As shown in this table, the annually average Tagr NH<sub>3</sub> provided major contribution which  
243 reached about 90% to ammonium and relatively small contribution which was 5-10% to nitrate mass burden.  
244 However, the contribution to sulfate was tiny and the main reason should be that there are various ways of  
245 sulfate formation from SO<sub>2</sub> besides neutralized by NH<sub>3</sub>, such as oxidized by H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, or peroxyacetic  
246 acid. The seasonal variation of ammonium was obvious: it could higher than 99% in January but lower than  
247 70% in July. Most of the difference as shown in Table 4 could exceeded 10% because the NH<sub>3</sub> emitted from  
248 other sources (anthropogenic and natural sources) was significant in these regions during summer time. The  
249 annually average Tagr NH<sub>3</sub> provided 20-40% contribution to the SNA mass concentration, and the  
250 contributions in January were larger than that in July as well. The seasonal variation and spatial features of  
251 Tagr NH<sub>3</sub> contribution to PM<sub>2.5</sub> mass concentration were similar with the features of SNA, and generally  
252 provided approximate 14-22% contribution to the total PM<sub>2.5</sub> mass concentration in these places. On the  
253 other hand, it can be seen that the annual contribution in China were higher than those of the contribution  
254 in the regions mentioned above. This feature indicated that the Tagr NH<sub>3</sub> provided more contribution than  
255 other sources over the regions with weaker anthropogenic activities.

256 In addition, the brute-force method (zero-out sensitivity test) which can capture the effect of emissions  
257 change on aerosol mass burden was applied to investigate the impact of the removal of Tagr NH<sub>3</sub> emission.  
258 Unlike the on-line source apportionment, the brute-force method mainly reflects the disparity of chemical  
259 balance caused by the emissions change, which could significantly alter the secondary pollutant formation.  
260 Several sensitivity tests were conducted and the results are shown in Figure 7 and Table 5. Figure 7 presents  
261 the mass burden variation of SNA associated with the Tagr NH<sub>3</sub> removal. From Figure 7, it can be seen that  
262 the reduction pattern and seasonal variation of the aerosol were broadly followed those of their mass burden.  
263 The significant reduction of SNA mainly appeared in the high concentration regions, and generally  
264 exceeded 25  $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ . Table 5 shows the percentage of the variation of sulfate, nitrate, ammonium, SNA, and  
265 PM<sub>2.5</sub>. Compared with Table 4, it can be found that the variation percent of SNA and PM<sub>2.5</sub> which reached  
266 30-60% and 24-42%, respectively, were about two times higher than those of the contribution percent, and  
267 this significant distinction was mainly caused by the variation of nitrate: the contribution of Tagr NH<sub>3</sub> to  
268 nitrate was generally below 10% as shown in Table 4, but the reduction of nitrate associated with removing  
269 Tagr NH<sub>3</sub> emission could exceed 90% as shown in Table 5. This difference between the results of ISAM

270 and brute-force was expected as a result of high nonlinearity in the  $\text{NO}_x$  chemistry. The nitrate formation  
271 could become more sensitive when the “rich  $\text{NH}_3$ ” environment shifts to “poor  $\text{NH}_3$ ” environment, which  
272 means the decrease of nitrate mass burden would accelerate with the  $\text{NH}_3$  emission reduction. Therefore, it  
273 can be deduced that the contribution of  $\text{NH}_3$  to nitrate should be significantly lower under “rich  $\text{NH}_3$ ”  
274 environment than that under “poor  $\text{NH}_3$ ” environment. Similar phenomenon was also reported by some  
275 previous study (Wang et al.; 2011; Xu et al.; 2016). To prove this point, more brute-force sensitivity tests  
276 were conducted. The variation of sulfate, nitrate, ammonium, and SNA mass burden associated with the  
277 reduction of  $\text{NH}_3$  emission (80%, 50%, 40%, 30%, 20%, and 10% Tagr  $\text{NH}_3$  emission, respectively) was  
278 shown in Figure 8. It can be seen that the decline of nitrate mass concentration was more rapid than that of  
279 ammonium, and the trend became slightly faster with the reduction of  $\text{NH}_3$  emission (signifying from “rich  
280  $\text{NH}_3$ ” to “poor  $\text{NH}_3$ ”) in the most regions. The acceleration of nitrate mass burden decline was more  
281 significant in the regions with strong  $\text{NH}_3$  emission. Furthermore, this acceleration stopped while 20%  $\text{NH}_3$   
282 emission remained as shown in Figure 8.

283

## 284 **5. Conclusions**

285 The emission budget of agriculture  $\text{NH}_3$  was huge and played an important role on the regional particle  
286 pollution in China. As a precursor of the secondary aerosol, reasonably estimate the nonlinear processes of  
287 secondary aerosol formation should be the key point for capturing the contribution of  $\text{NH}_3$  to particle  
288 pollution. In this study, the air quality modeling system RAMS-CMAQ was applied to simulate spatial-  
289 temporal distribution of trace gas and aerosols in 2015. In addition, the PKU- $\text{NH}_3$  emission inventory which  
290 compiled on  $1\text{km} \times 1\text{km}$  horizontal resolution with monthly based data was applied to accurately capture  
291 the agriculture  $\text{NH}_3$  emission features in China. Then, the source apportionment module ISAM was coupled  
292 into this modeling system to quantitatively estimate the contribution of agriculture  $\text{NH}_3$  to  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  mass  
293 burden. The brute-force sensitivity tests were also conducted for discussing the impact of the agriculture  
294  $\text{NH}_3$  emission reduction. The meteorological factors and mass concentration of  $\text{NH}_3$ ,  $\text{SO}_2$ ,  $\text{NO}_2$ , and  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$   
295 from simulation were evaluated and showed well agreement with the observation data. Some interesting  
296 results were explored and summarized as follow:

297 (1) The high mass burden of  $\text{NH}_3$  could exceeded  $10 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ , and mainly appeared in the NCP, CNC,  
298 YRD, and SCB. These regions were highly coincidence with the regions that heavy particle pollution  
299 covered in China. Therefore, it can be deduced that the influence of agriculture  $\text{NH}_3$  on the  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  mass

300 concentration should be significant.

301 (2) The results from ISAM simulation shows that the Tagr NH<sub>3</sub> provided 17-23% and 15-22%  
302 contribution to the PM<sub>2.5</sub> in January and July, respectively, in the most part of east China, and the largest  
303 annual average contribution appeared in CNC (17.5%). Specific to the SNA components, the annually and  
304 regional average contribution of Tagr NH<sub>3</sub> to ammonium, nitrate, sulfate was 87.6%, 10.1%, and 2.2% in  
305 China. The agriculture NH<sub>3</sub> emission provided major contribution to the ammonium formation, but tiny  
306 contribution to the sulfate due to the various other ways of sulfate formation.

307 (3) The brute-force sensitive test could reflect the effect of changing Tagr NH<sub>3</sub> emission on PM<sub>2.5</sub> mass  
308 burden. The results indicated that the reduction percent of PM<sub>2.5</sub> mass burden due to removal Tagr NH<sub>3</sub>  
309 emission could reach 24-42% in the most part of east China, which was approximately two times higher  
310 than the contribution. The reduction percent of nitrate that reached exceed 90% was the main reason caused  
311 this significant different. In addition, the further analysis proved that the ambient NH<sub>3</sub> mass burden could  
312 obviously affects its contribution to the SNA formation: the NH<sub>3</sub> contribution to nitrate should be lower  
313 under "rich NH<sub>3</sub>" and higher under "poor NH<sub>3</sub>". Therefore, the influence of NH<sub>3</sub> would enhance with the  
314 decreasing of ambient NH<sub>3</sub> mass concentration.

315 It is suggested that the NH<sub>3</sub> influence on the PM<sub>2.5</sub> mass burden are complex because of the  
316 nonlinearity of secondary aerosol formation. Significantly deviation exists between the results from ISAM  
317 and brute-force method, so that these two kinds of results should be distinguished and applied to explain  
318 different issues: the contribution under current scenario and the effect due to emission reduction,  
319 respectively. The modeling system is a versatile tool allows us to investigate these valuable information for  
320 choosing more efficient strategies of reducing the impact of agriculture NH<sub>3</sub> and improving air quality.

### 321 **Acknowledgments**

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## Appendix A

The daily average temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and maximum wind direction in January, April, July and October 2015 were compared with the surface shared data from the Chinese National Meteorological Center (<http://data.cma.cn/>) in 9 stations. The comparison results are shown in Figure A1-A4. These stations are located in the East China where the high NH<sub>3</sub> emission regions. Generally, the modeled temperature was in good agreement with the observed data, and can reflect the large fluctuation and seasonal variation of relative humidity as well, except that some of the extreme high or low values appeared abruptly. As shown in Figure A3, most of the daily average wind speed was lower than 3 m s<sup>-1</sup> at Zhengzhou, Miyun, Tianjin and Baoding station (all located in the North China Plain), which means the diffusion condition was not good due to the stable weather. Otherwise, the relatively strong wind appeared at Nanjing, Chaoyang, Nanning and Jinan. The modeled wind speed generally reproduced all these features. The direct comparison between observed and modeled wind direction which can be easily influenced by the surrounding surface features is difficult. Nevertheless, the prevailing wind direction in different seasons can be captured by the simulation results for all stations.

In addition, Figure A5 present the regional average NH<sub>3</sub> emission flux (g/s/grid) of different sectors, including fertilizer, Husbandry, Biomass burning, Farmland ecosystems, Waste disposal, and other sectors, over each regions in January, April, July and October. Furthermore, the percent (%) of each NH<sub>3</sub> emission sector was shown in Figure A6. All the information was obtained from the PKU-NH<sub>3</sub> emission inventory directly. It can be seen that the emission flux was higher in summer and lower in winter. The strongest emission flux mainly appeared in BTH, SDP and CNC. The distribution pattern of NH<sub>3</sub> mass concentration

These features generally followed the distribution pattern of NH<sub>3</sub> mass concentration as shown in Figure 3. On the other hand, the major proportion was provided by husbandry and fertilizer, and relatively higher in spring and summer.

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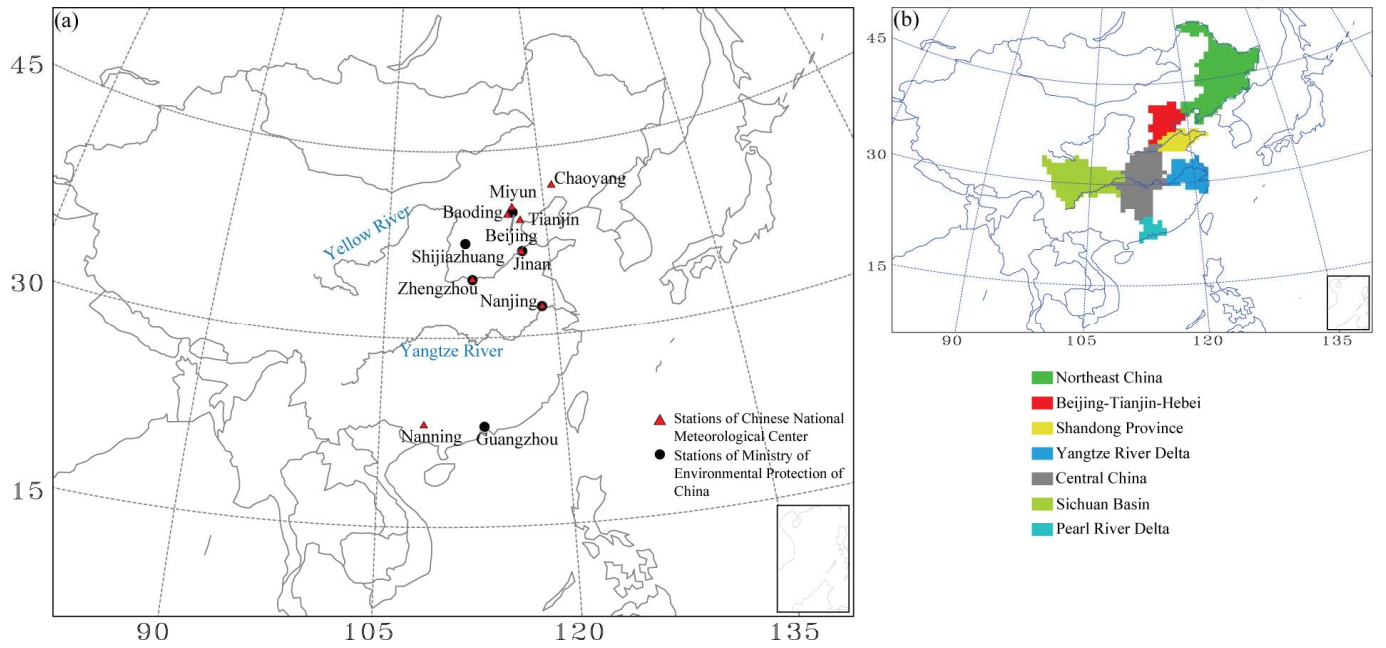
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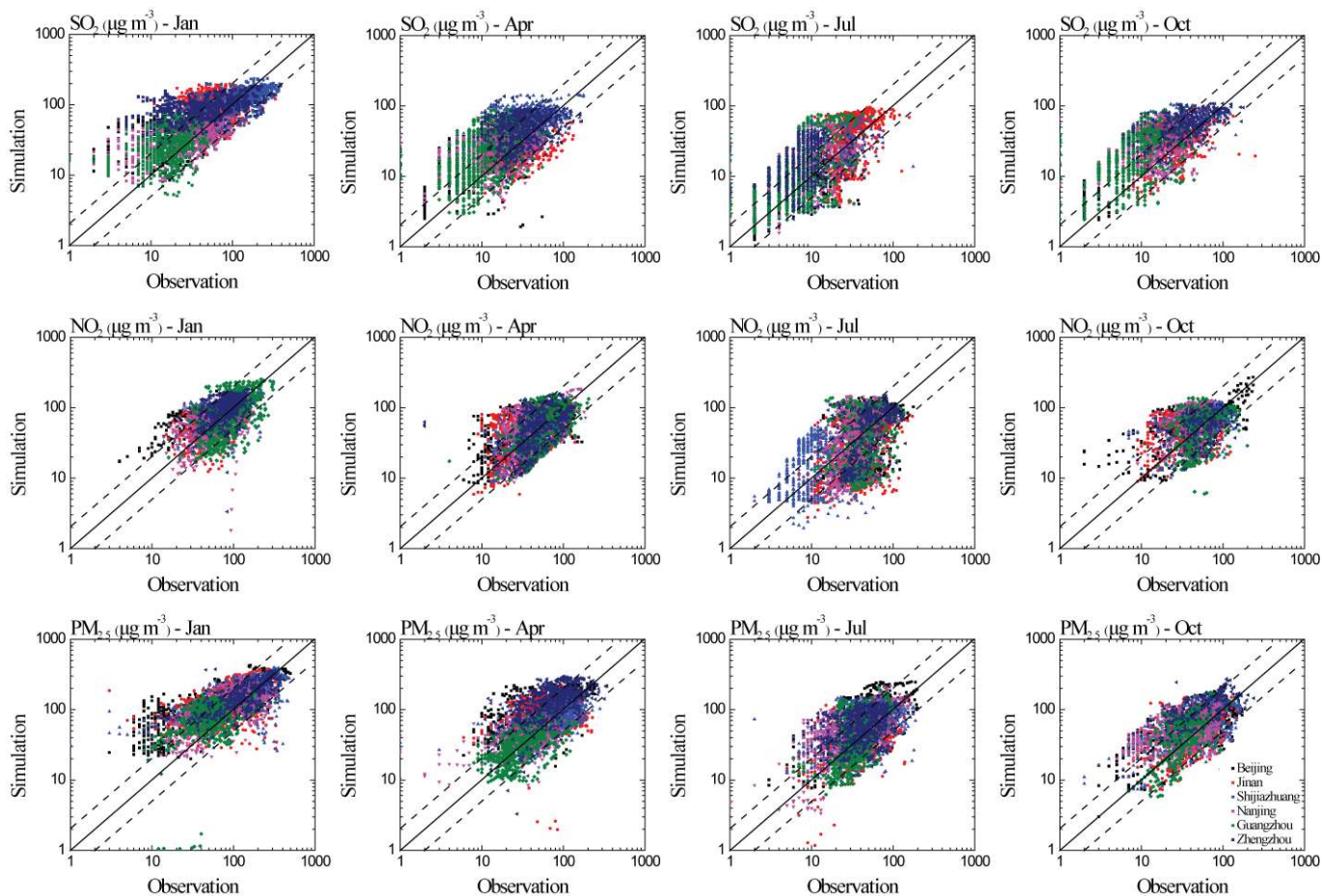
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 524 Figure 1. Model domain used in this study and the geographic locations of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei (BTH), Northeast  
 525 China (NEC), Yangtze River Delta (YRD), Pearl River Delta (PRD), Sichuan Basin (SCB), Central China (CNC) and  
 526 Shandong Province (SDP). The location of observation data was also shown in the model domain.  
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 553 Figure 2. The scatter plots between the modeled and the observed hourly SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>, and PM<sub>2.5</sub> in January, April, July and  
 554 October 2015. The solid lines are 1:1 and the dashed lines are 2:1 or 1:2.  
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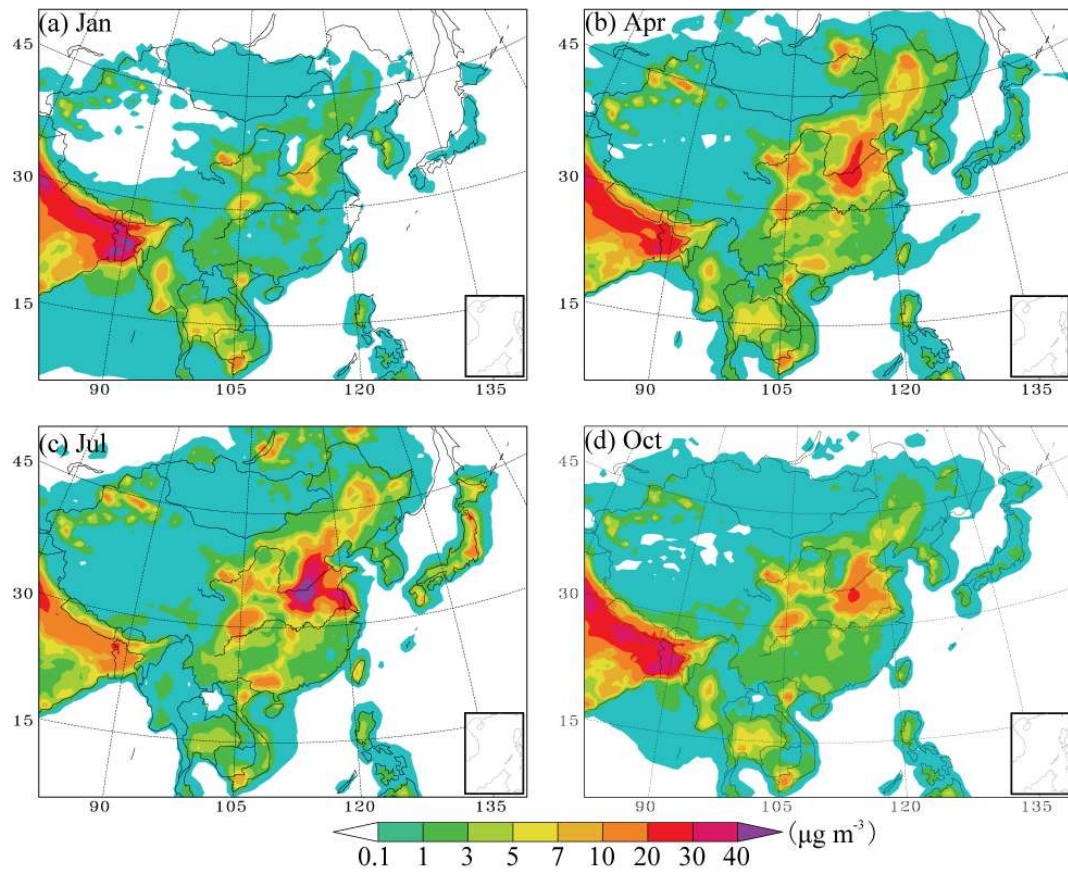


Figure 3. The horizontal distributions of the modeled monthly  $\text{NH}_3$  mass concentration in January, April, July, and October in 2015.

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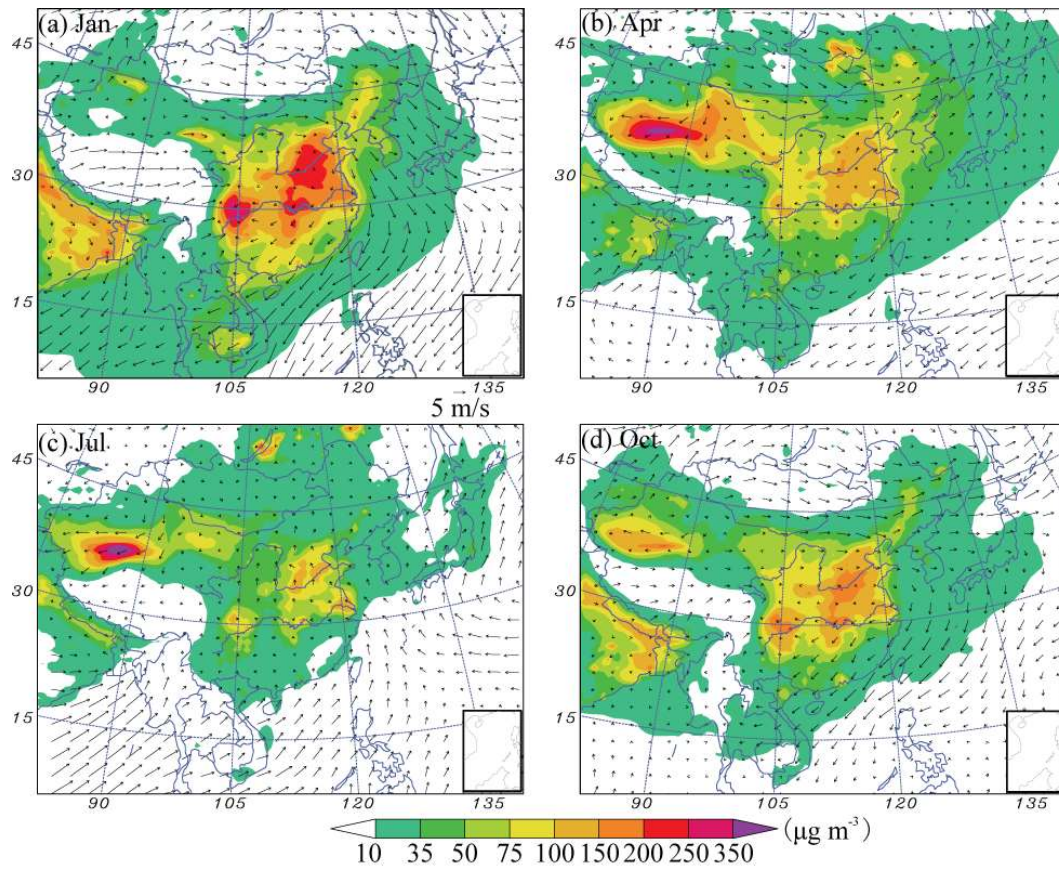
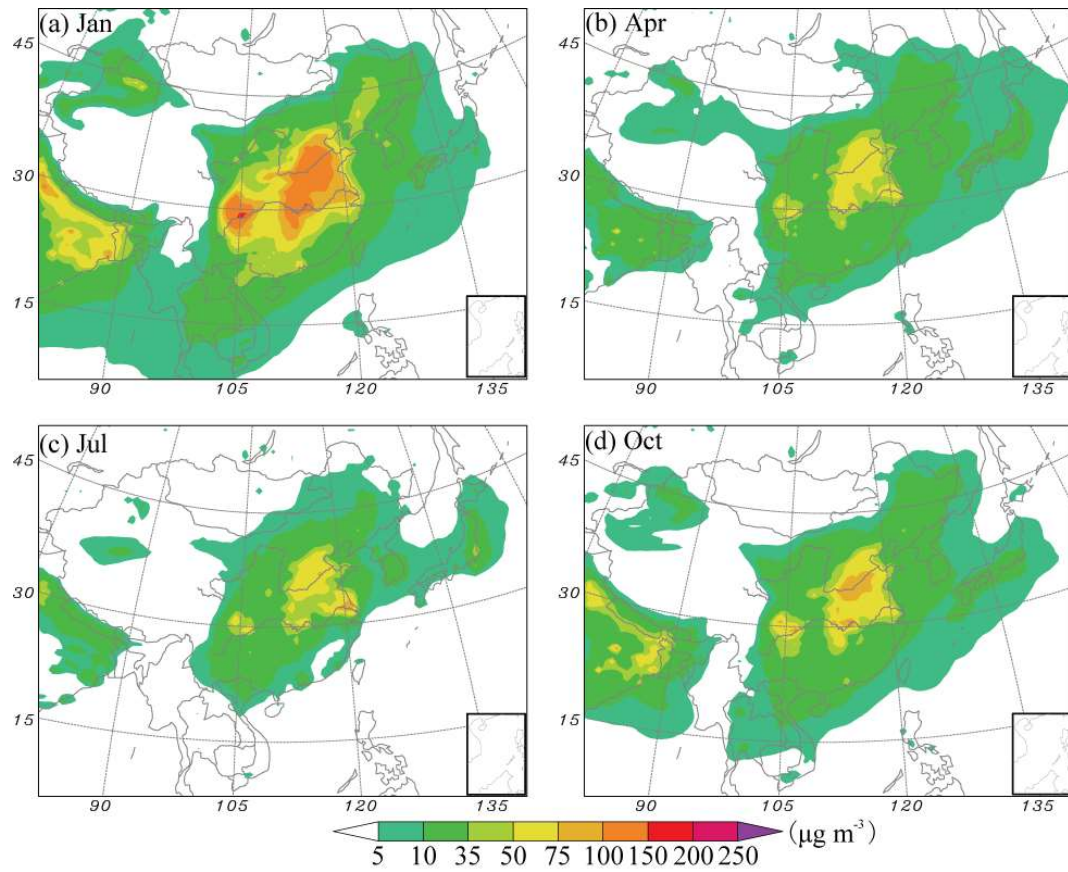
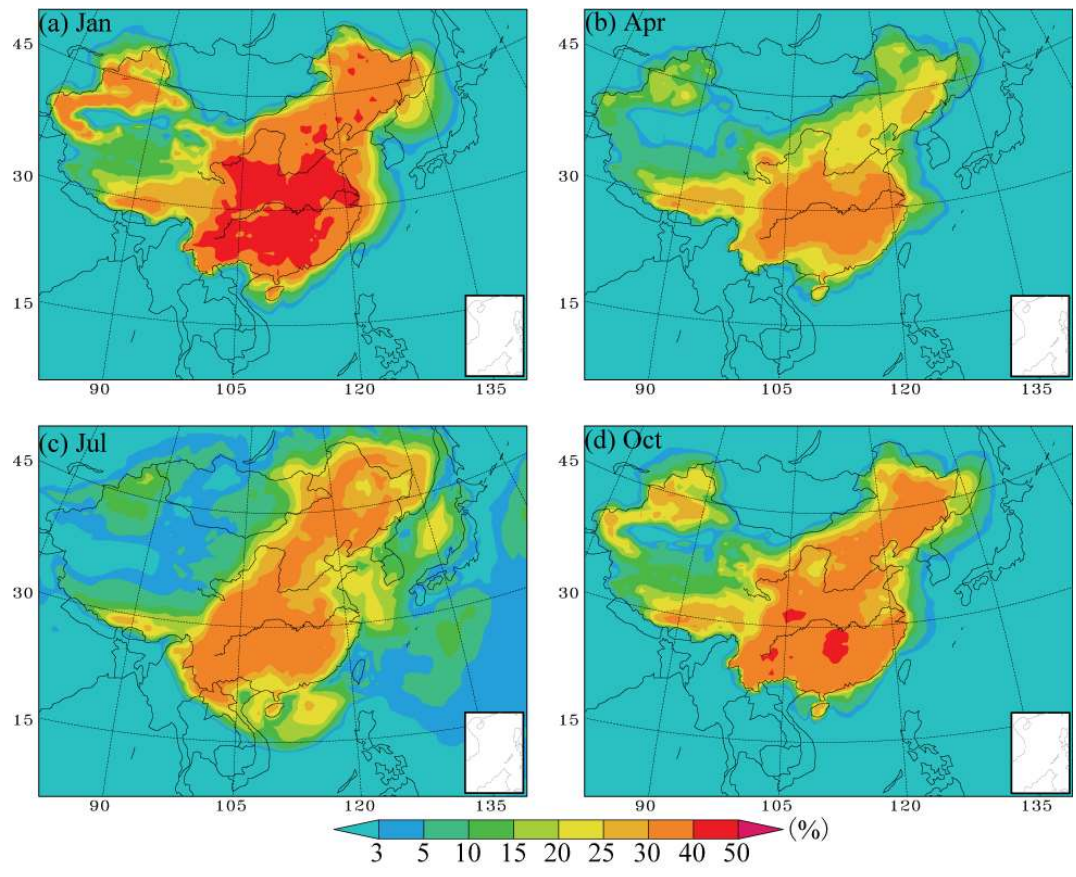


Figure 4. The horizontal distributions of the modeled monthly PM<sub>2.5</sub> mass concentration in January, April, July, and October in 2015. Also shown are the surface wind field.

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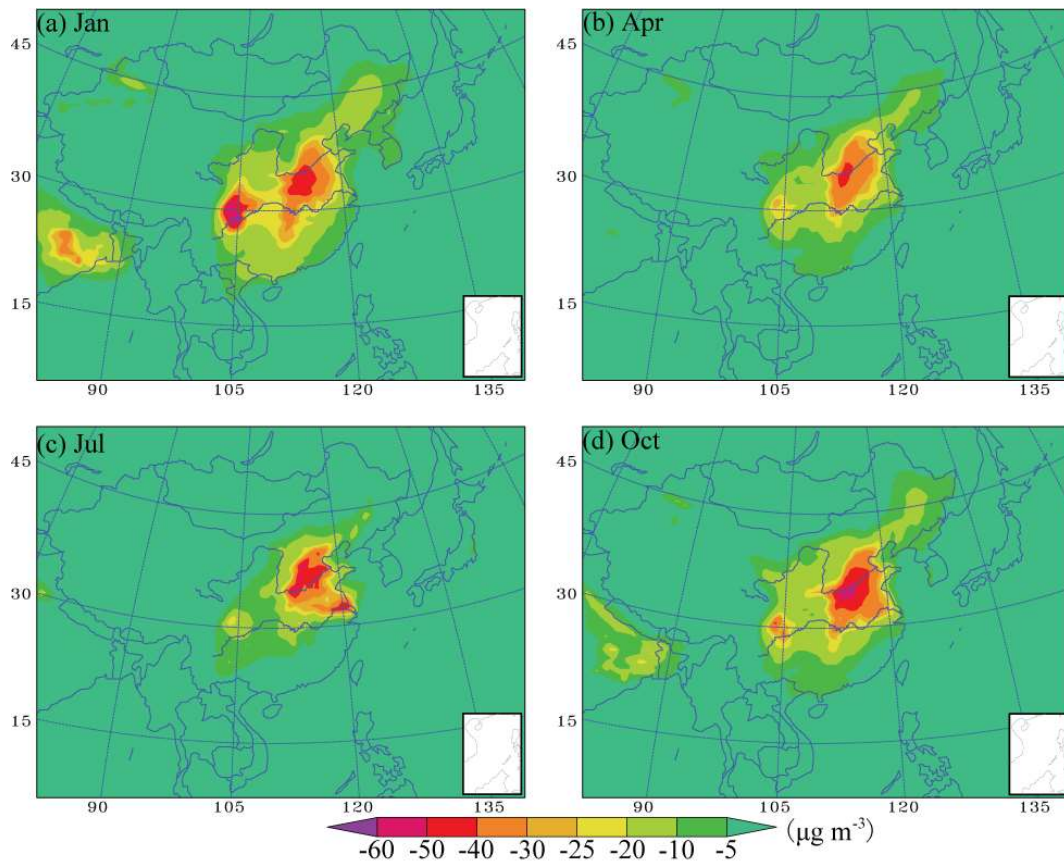
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 622 Figure 5. The horizontal distributions of the modeled monthly SNA mass concentration in January, April, July, and  
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 646 Figure 6. The horizontal distributions of the contribution percentage of  $\text{NH}_3$  emissions to SNA mass concentration (%) in  
 647 January, April, July and October.  
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 670 Figure 7. The horizontal distributions of SNA mass concentration ( $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ ) variation associated with agriculture NH<sub>3</sub>  
 671 removal in January, April, July and October.  
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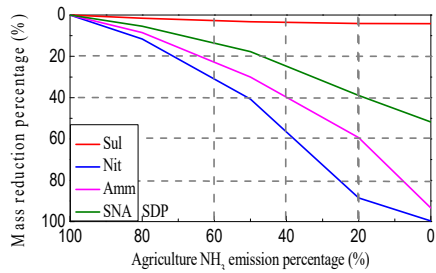
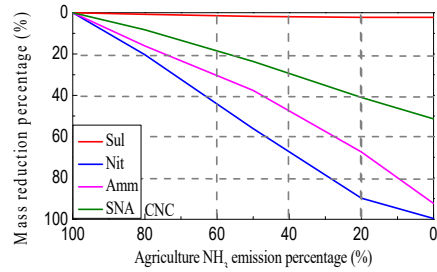
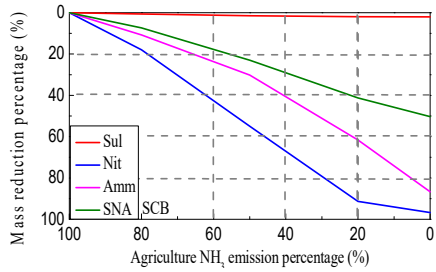
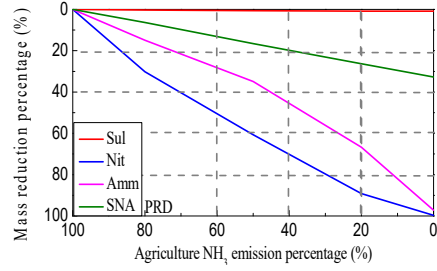
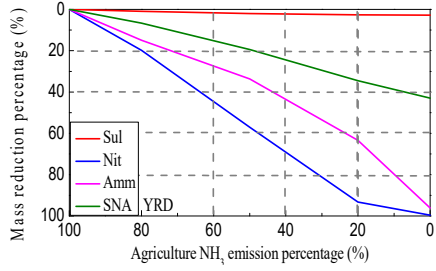
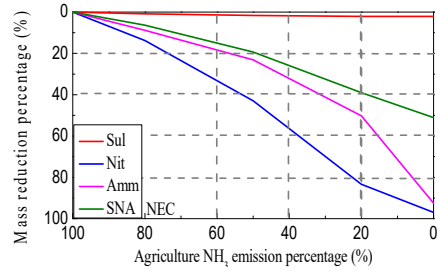
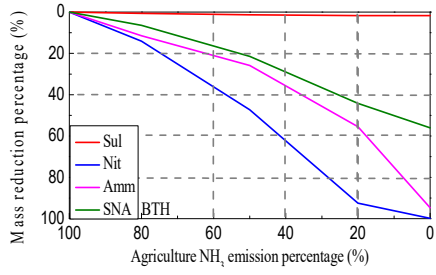


Figure 8. The variation (%) of sulfate, nitrate, ammonium, and SNA mass burden associated with the NH<sub>3</sub> emission reduction (%).



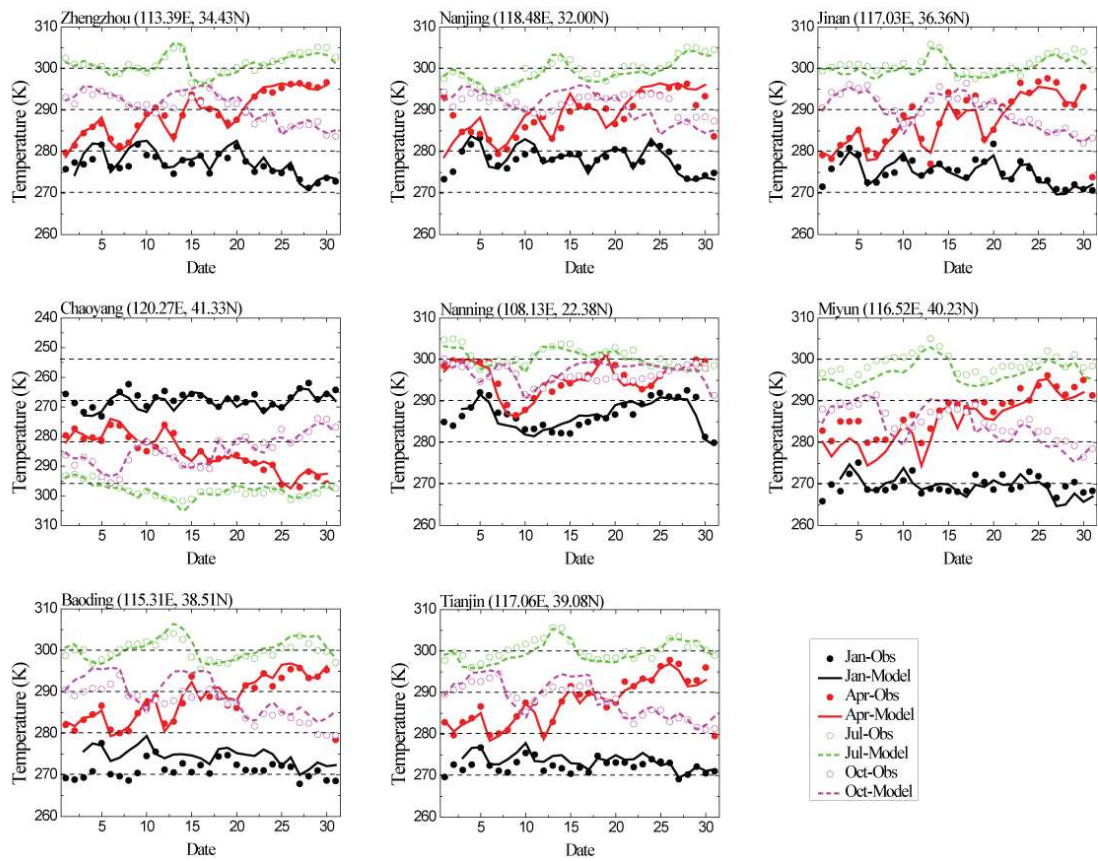


Figure A1. Observed and modeled daily average temperatures (K) in January, April, July and October 2015.

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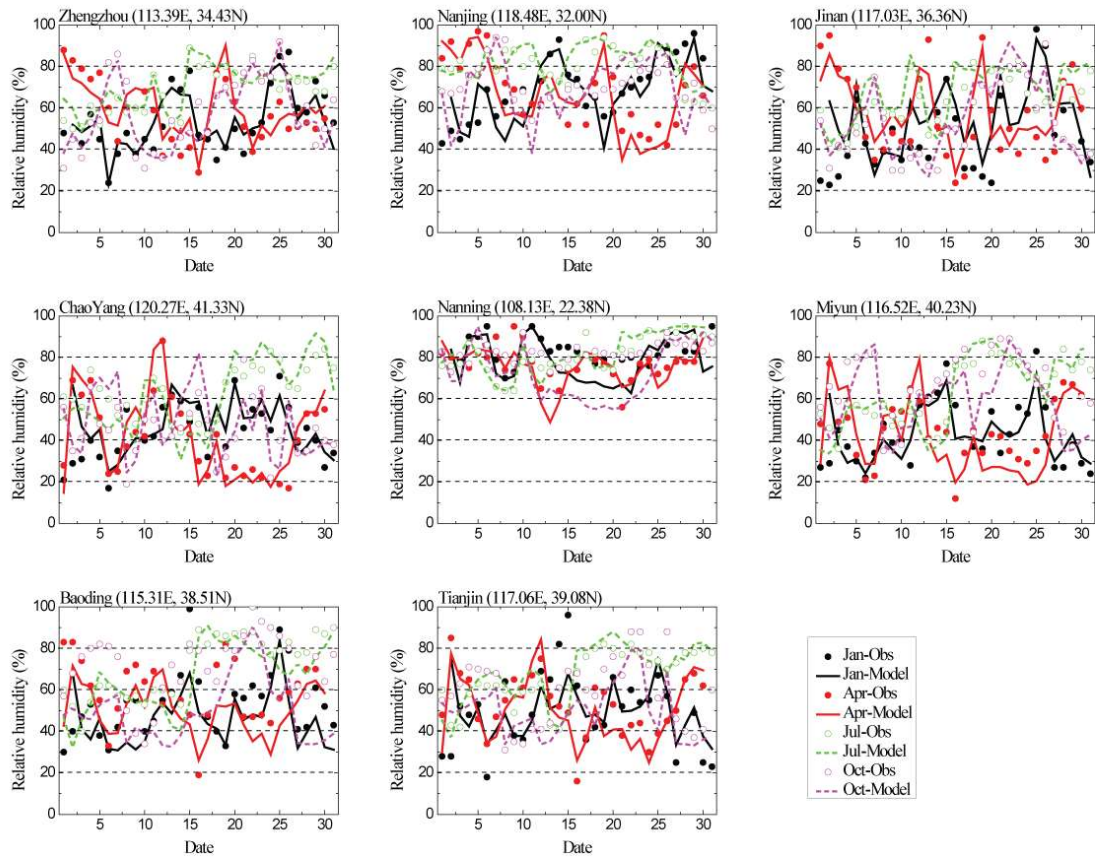


Figure A2. Same as Figure A1 but for relative humidity (%)

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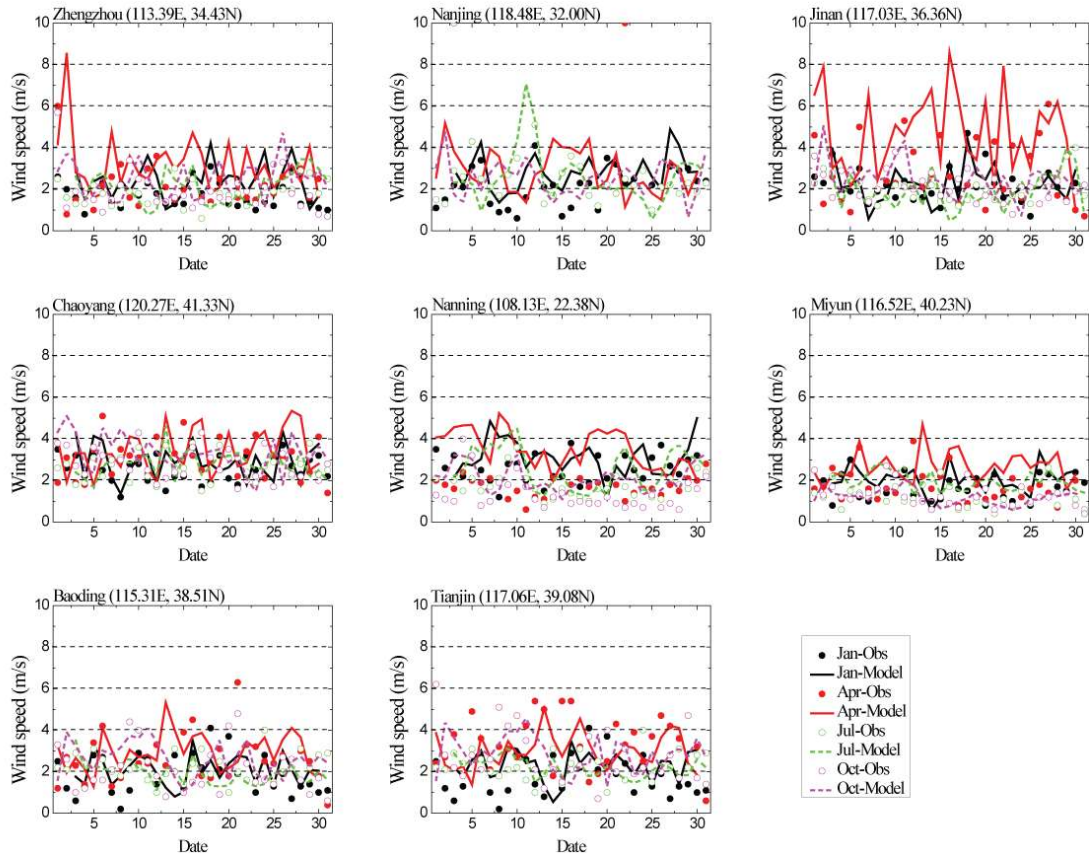


Figure A3. Same as Figure A1 but for wind speed ( $\text{m s}^{-1}$ )

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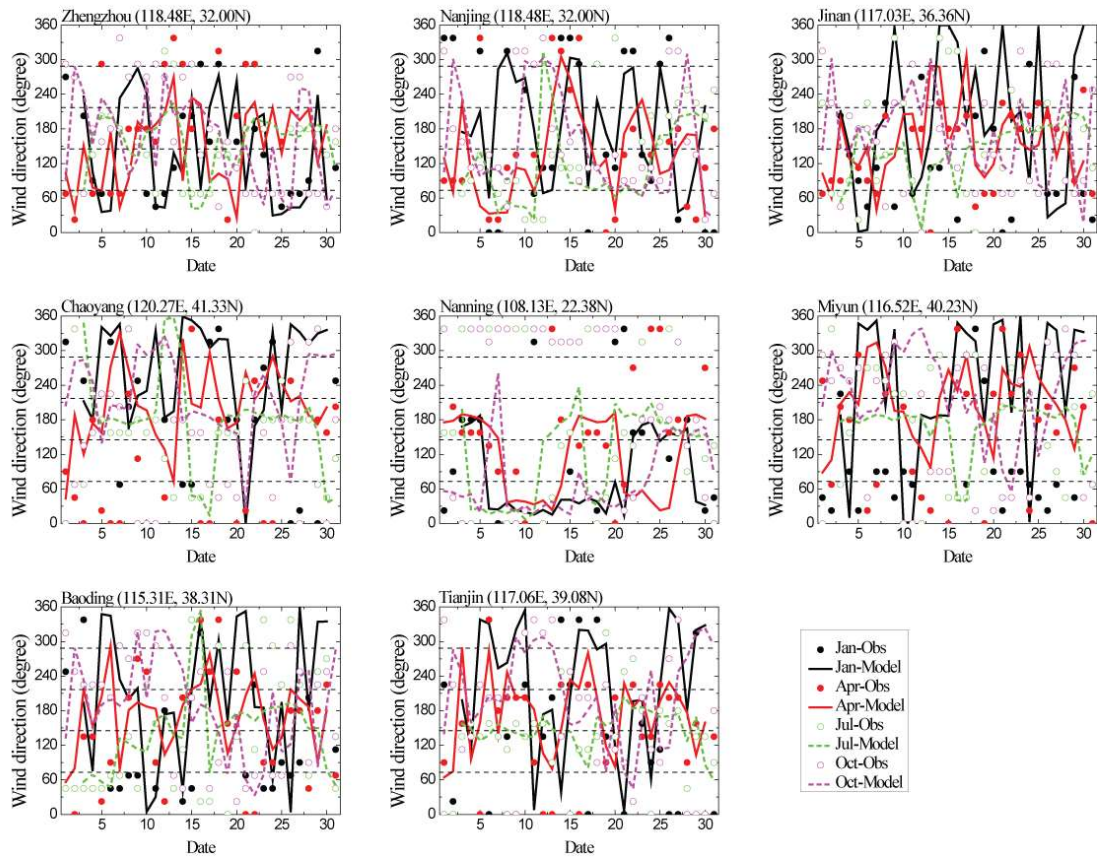
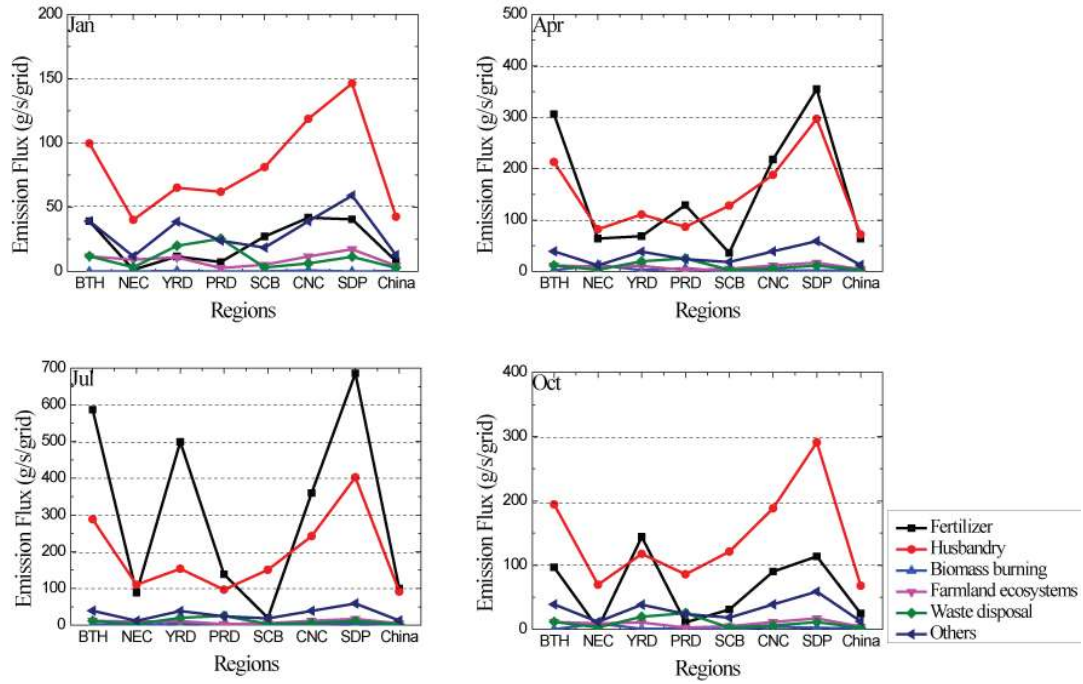


Figure A4. Same as Figure A1 but for daily maximum wind direction (degree)

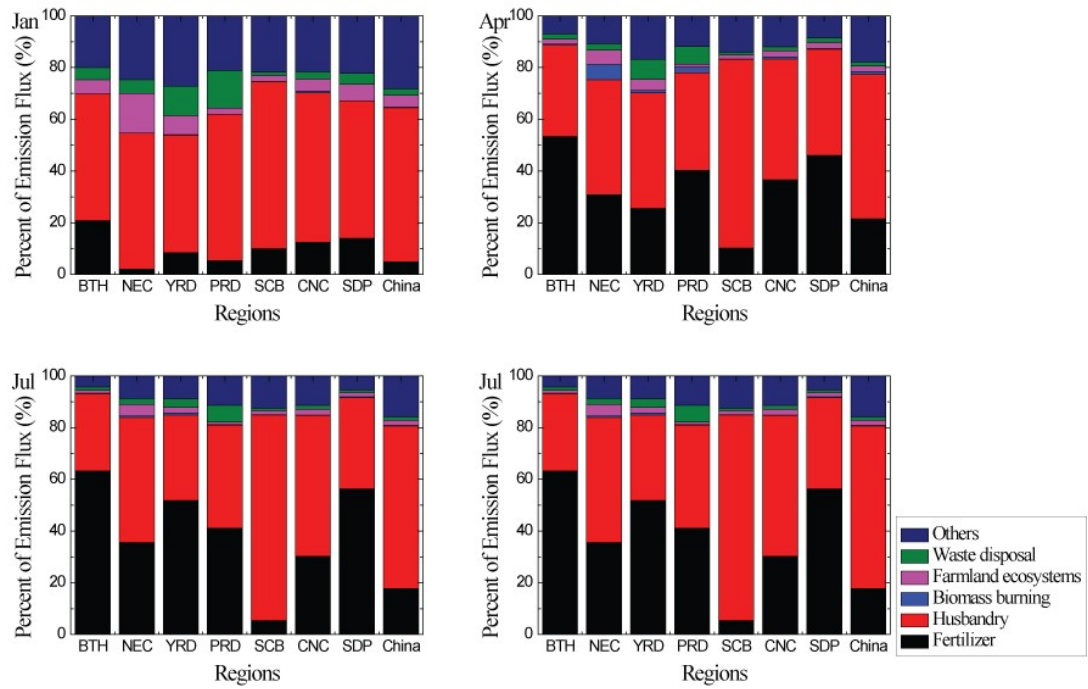
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 807 Figure A5. The regional average NH<sub>3</sub> emission flux (g/s/grid) of different agriculture sectors over each region in January,  
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834 Figure A6. The percent (%) of different NH<sub>3</sub> emission sectors over each region in January, April, July and October.

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Table 1. Statistical summary of the comparisons of the monthly average PM<sub>2.5</sub> between simulation and observation

	$N^a$	$O^b$	$M^c$	$\sigma_o^d$	$\sigma_m^e$	$R^f$
Jan	4464	106.5	126.9	84.5	76.2	0.74
Apr	4320	64.6	76.8	44.7	56.8	0.66
Jul	4464	49.2	42.1	32.3	41.4	0.58
Oct	4464	58.2	68.1	35.5	46.9	0.61

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<sup>a</sup> Number of samples

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<sup>b</sup> Total mean of observation

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<sup>c</sup> Total mean of simulation

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<sup>d</sup> Standard deviation of observation

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<sup>e</sup> Standard deviation of simulation

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<sup>f</sup> Correlation coefficient between daily observation and simulation

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Table 2. Statistical summary of the comparisons of the monthly average NO<sub>2</sub> between simulation and observation

	<i>N</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>M</i>	$\sigma_o$	$\sigma_m$	<i>R</i>
Jan	4464	79.7	87.1	39.8	39.0	0.60
Apr	4320	53.7	55.5	29.9	32.5	0.59
Jul	4464	43.6	40.1	25.8	30.0	0.51
Oct	4464	53.6	61.3	32.0	31.7	0.54

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Table 3. Statistical summary of the comparisons of the monthly average SO<sub>2</sub> between simulation and observation

	<i>N</i>	<i>O</i>	<i>M</i>	$\sigma_o$	$\sigma_m$	<i>R</i>
Jan	4464	61.0	71.5	61.3	47.5	0.63
Apr	4320	24.8	35.7	26.5	24.6	0.52
Jul	4464	13.9	22.4	15.1	19.1	0.46
Oct	4464	21.2	36.8	20.2	21.8	0.50

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Table 4. The regional percent (%) of Tagr NH<sub>3</sub> contribution to sulfate, nitrate, ammonium, and SNA mass concentration.

		Sulfate	Nitrate	Ammonium	SNA	PM <sub>2.5</sub>
BTH	Jan	0.9	4.5	98.0	39.7	19.3
	Jul	1.0	9.3	75.9	28.1	20.6
	Annual	1.1	8.0	83.3	23.1	15.5
NEC	Jan	0.6	3.2	94.0	34.4	18.6
	Jul	0.8	6.7	83.5	27.9	16.1
	Annual	1.0	5.6	83.7	22.5	14.3
YRD	Jan	0.9	5.8	99.2	40.9	22.5
	Jul	0.5	8.1	68.7	24.0	15.4
	Annual	1.0	7.4	85.7	23.6	15.3
PRD	Jan	0.8	5.0	98.1	40.2	20.4
	Jul	1.4	4.7	85.3	27.7	15.9
	Annual	0.9	5.8	90.6	24.5	14.2
SCB	Jan	0.6	3.7	97.0	37.4	17.9
	Jul	0.7	5.6	95.9	31.5	19.5
	Annual	0.7	5.1	93.9	21.6	13.0
CNC	Jan	0.9	4.9	99.2	42.6	20.6
	Jul	0.9	6.7	88.9	33.7	22.0
	Annual	0.9	6.0	92.8	26.1	17.5
SDP	Jan	0.7	4.9	98.3	39.2	21.0
	Jul	0.7	8.3	67.0	23.5	16.6
	Annual	0.9	7.1	80.5	21.6	15.1
China	Jan	2.4	9.3	92.3	34.4	21.4
	Jul	2.2	10.4	90.9	25.1	16.4
	Annual	2.2	10.1	87.6	29.0	16.0

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Table 5. The variation percent (%) of sulfate, nitrate, ammonium, and SNA mass concentration associated with agriculture NH<sub>3</sub> removal.

		Sulfate	Nitrate	Ammonium	SNA	PM <sub>2.5</sub>
BTH	Jan	0.5	99.8	96.2	51.9	37.8
	Jul	1.0	99.6	95.0	47.0	39.2
	Annual	0.7	99.8	94.7	49.4	38.5
NEC	Jan	0.7	99.2	96.4	60.9	39.2
	Jul	0.8	94.5	91.5	37.0	27.8
	Annual	0.7	96.9	92.5	48.9	34.5
YRD	Jan	2.7	99.4	96.0	52.6	32.2
	Jul	7.2	99.0	96.8	44.9	37.6
	Annual	5.0	99.2	96.1	48.8	36.9
PRD	Jan	3.6	99.8	97.2	50.3	31.5
	Jul	0.4	92.7	97.4	30.3	24.1
	Annual	2.0	96.2	97.2	40.3	27.8
SCB	Jan	4.9	94.1	80.3	57.6	41.7
	Jul	0.2	99.3	92.5	42.0	28.3
	Annual	2.6	96.7	85.9	49.8	35.0
CNC	Jan	3.1	99.1	92.2	56.7	41.5
	Jul	0.7	99.3	96.0	45.1	37.2
	Annual	1.9	99.2	92.3	50.9	39.4
SDP	Jan	1.7	99.8	95.8	47.7	38.0
	Jul	3.6	99.2	93.6	45.6	37.3
	Annual	2.7	99.5	93.4	46.6	37.6
China	Jan	2.6	93.9	86.3	54.8	39.5
	Jul	0.6	97.7	87.8	36.7	27.5
	Annual	1.6	95.8	86.9	45.7	32.9

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