

# Sunflower Seedling Salinity Tolerance Assay

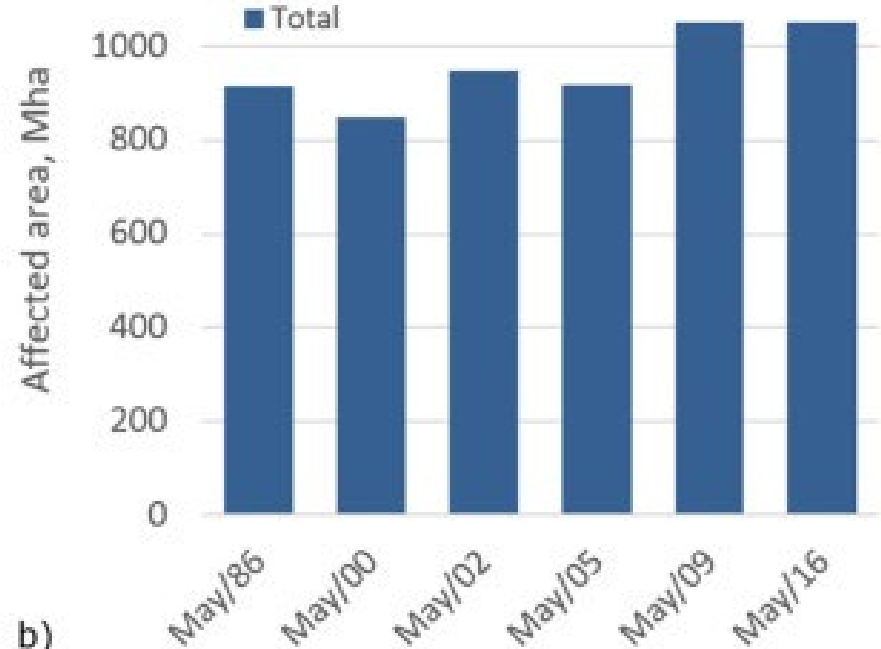
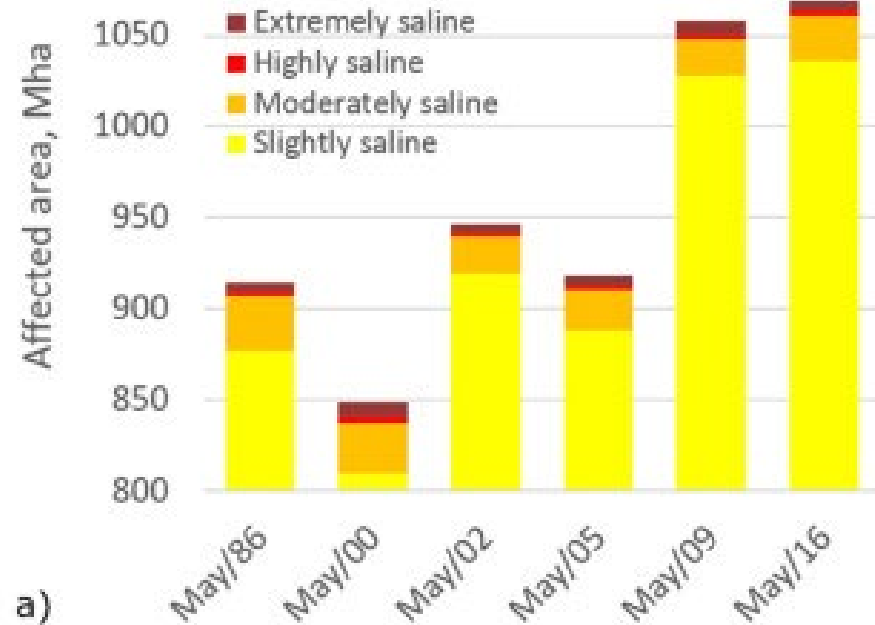
Joseph A.M. Barham  
NDSU | Dept. of Plant Sciences  
2026 NSA Research Forum  
January 8th, 2026

# An introduction...

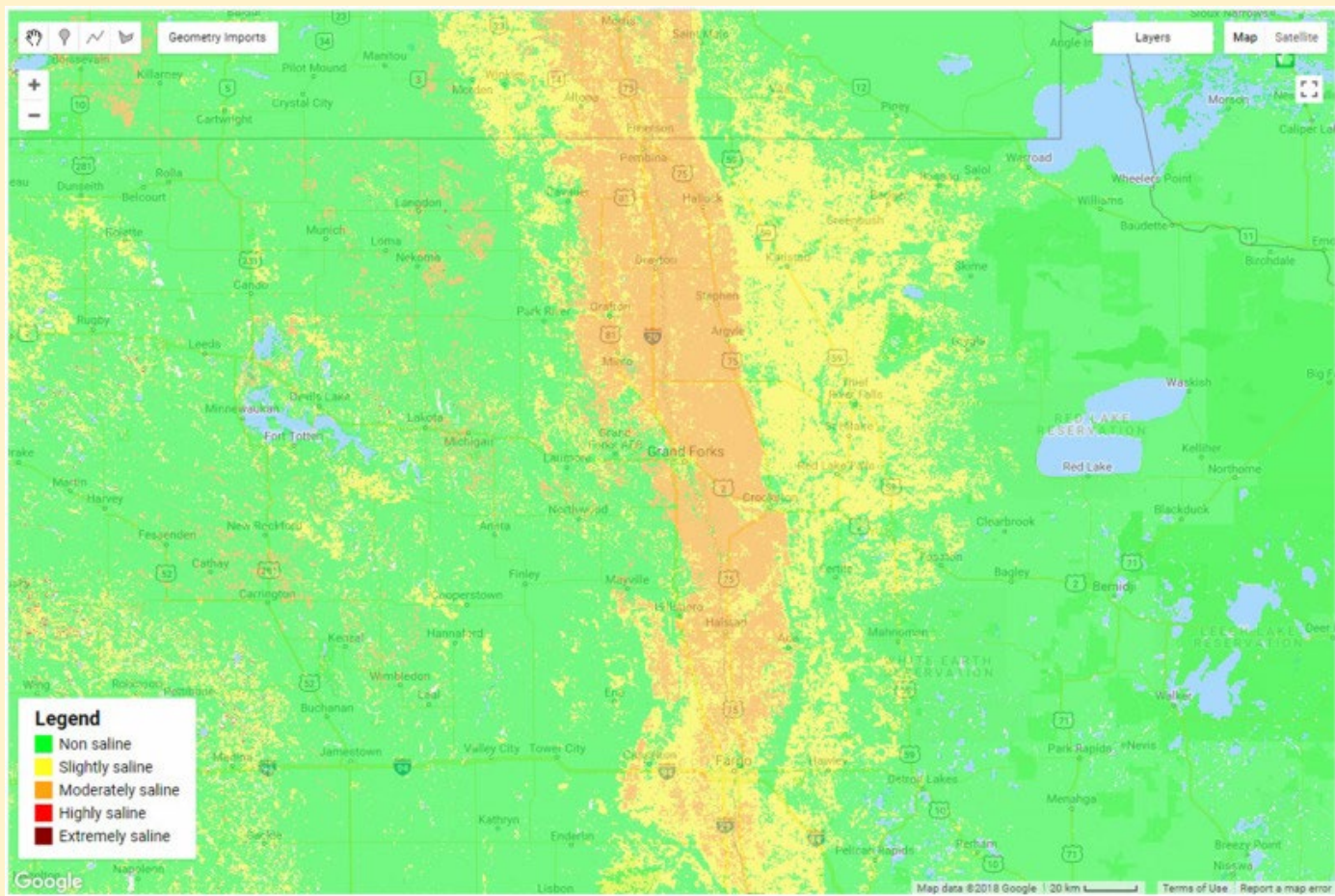


Franzen *et al.* (2024), [www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/sites/default/files/2024-06/sf1087.pdf](http://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/sites/default/files/2024-06/sf1087.pdf)

# Volatility in saline acreage globally

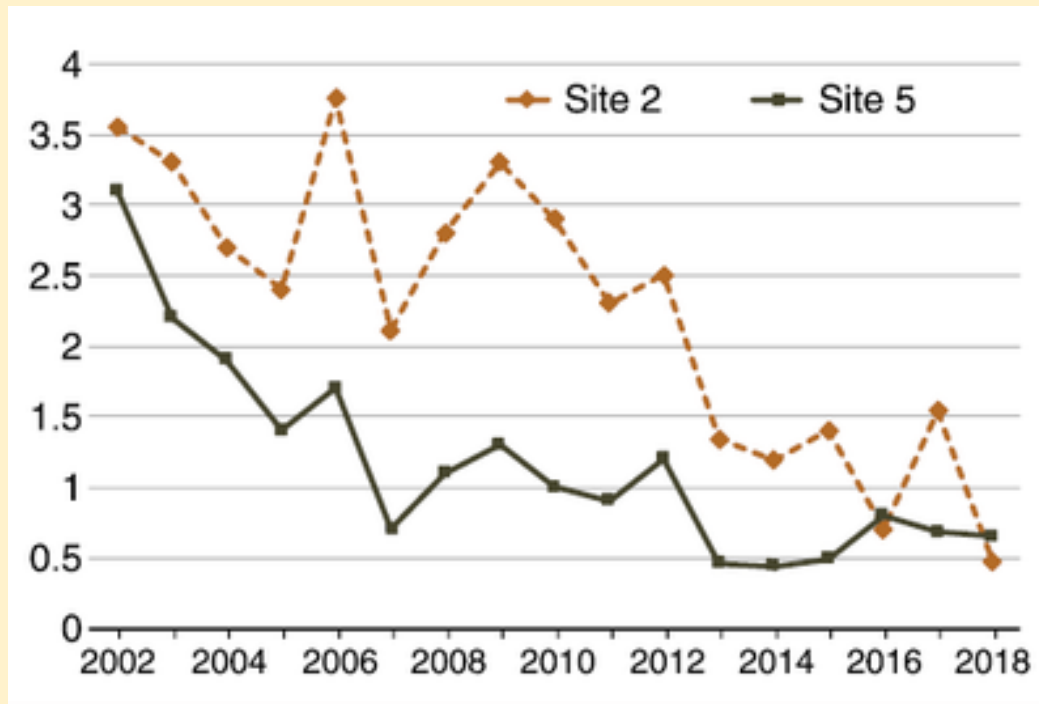


# Clearer regional patterns



# Strategies for salt mitigation

- Tile drainage.
- Maintaining crop coverage.
  - Keeping cash crops growing
  - Using cover crops
- Alfalfa buffer strips.
- Chemical treatments.



Franzen *et al.*, 2024. [www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/sites/default/files/2024-06/sf1087.pdf](http://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/sites/default/files/2024-06/sf1087.pdf)

*Wet spring, dry fall.*

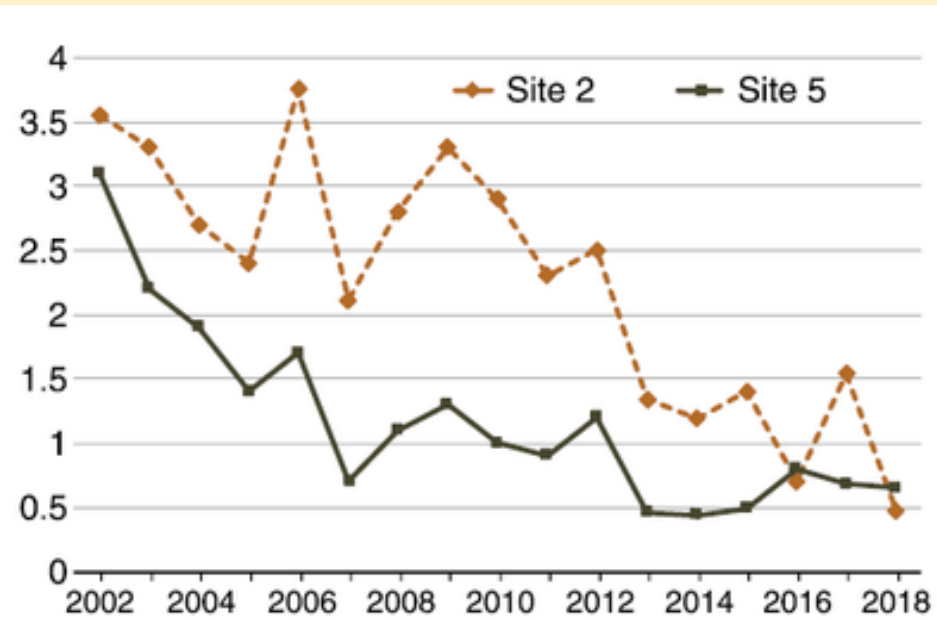


# Sunflower's place in salt mitigation

- Already moderately salt tolerant, lots of variation to select on.
- Deeper root system than most crops
- Giving options for maintaining crop presence in saline fields.



# Sunflower's place in salt mitigation





# Difficulties in breeding for salt tolerance





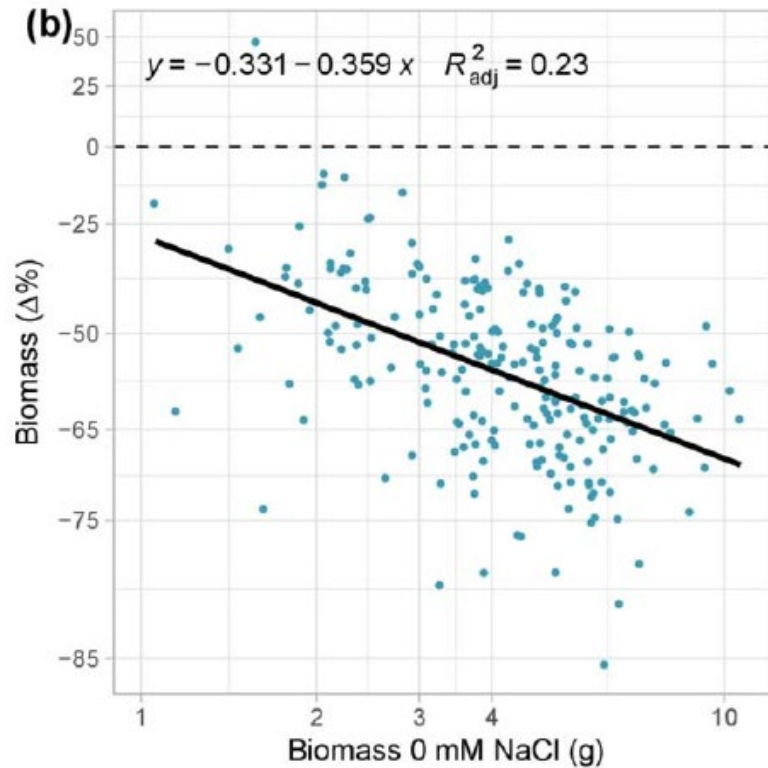
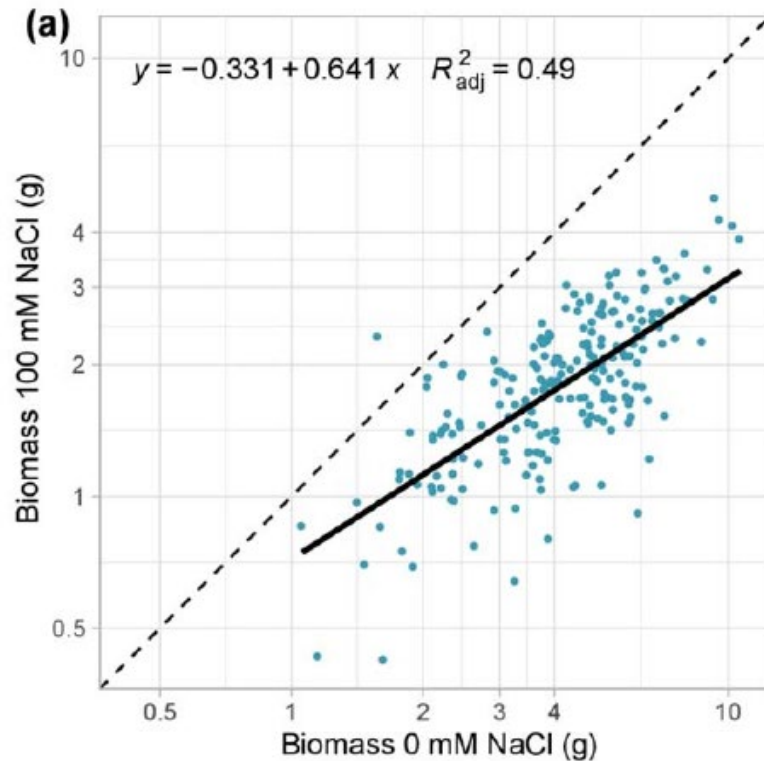
Previous work:

**Key Traits and Genes Associate with Salinity Tolerance  
Independent from Vigor in Cultivated Sunflower<sup>1[OPEN]</sup>**

Andries A. Temme,<sup>2</sup> Kelly L. Kerr, Rishi R. Masalia, John M. Burke, and Lisa A. Donovan<sup>3</sup>


Department of Plant Biology, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30602

# Previous work: Temme *et al.* 2020



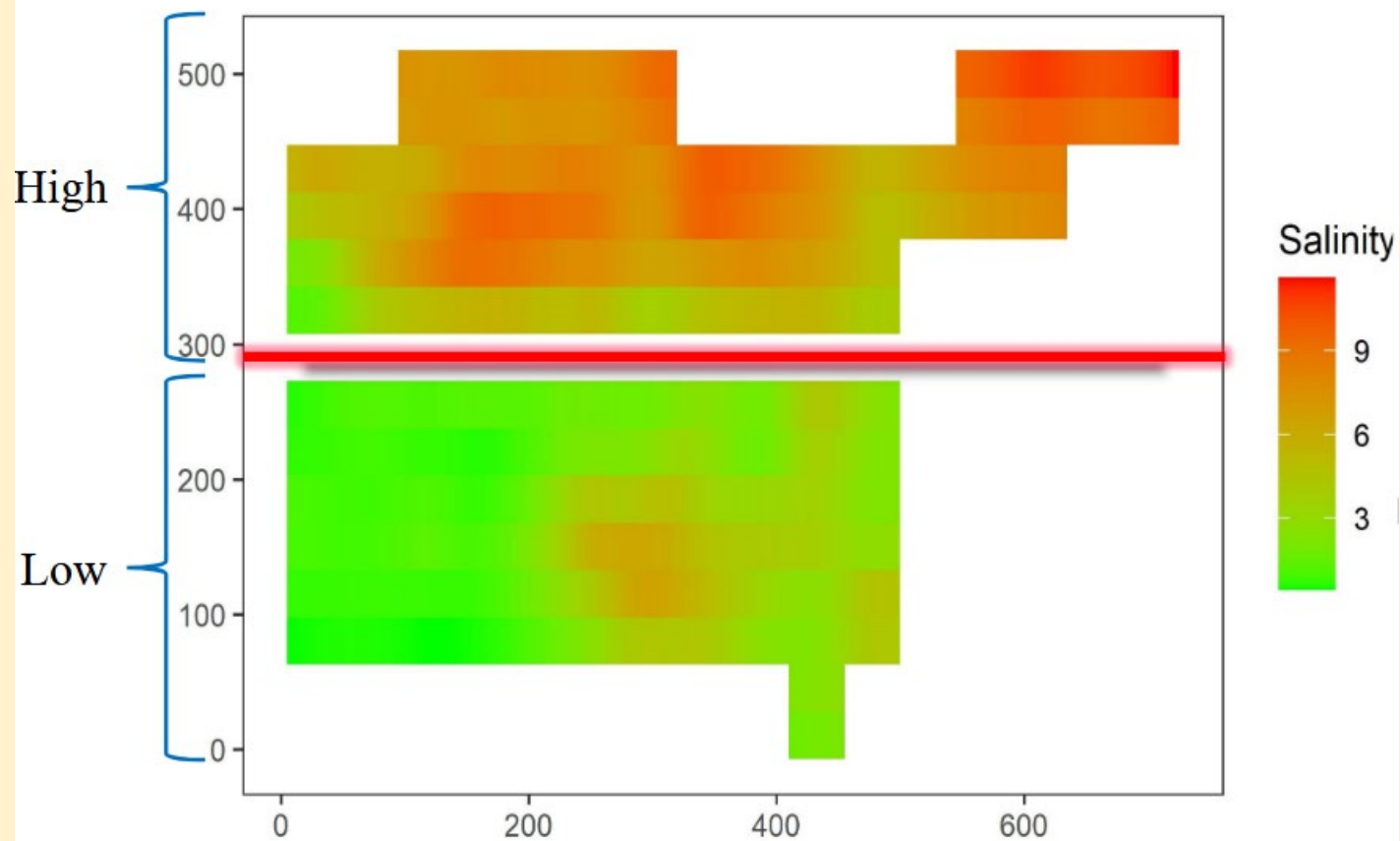
## Previous work:

### **Association studies of salinity tolerance in sunflower provide robust breeding and selection strategies under climate change**

**James P. McNellie<sup>1</sup> · William E. May<sup>2</sup> · Loren H. Rieseberg<sup>3</sup> · Brent S. Hulke<sup>1</sup> **

Received: 13 March 2024 / Accepted: 8 June 2024 / Published online: 15 July 2024

This is a U.S. Government work and not under copyright protection in the US; foreign copyright protection may apply 2024



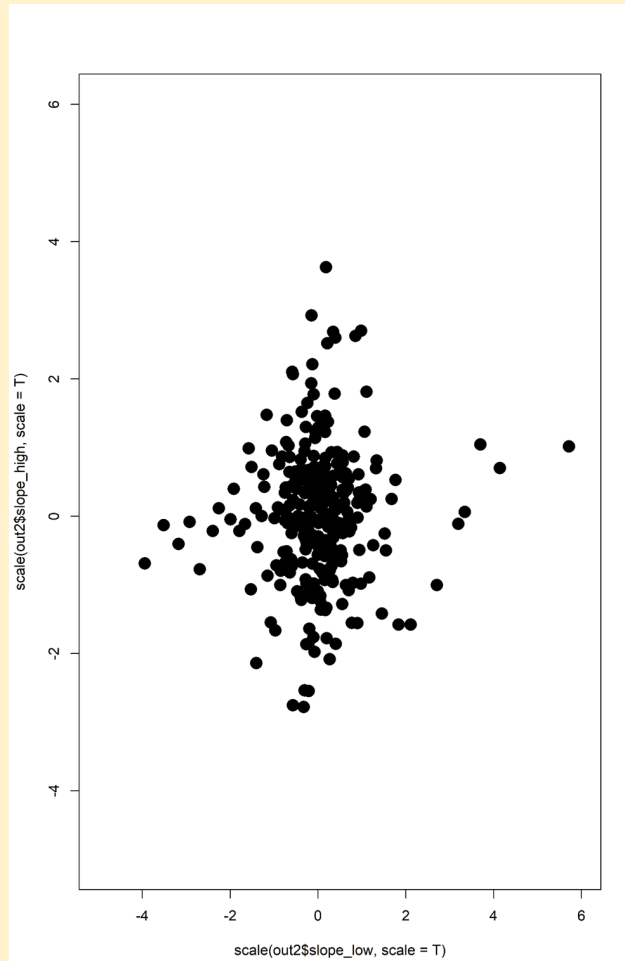
2017  
Depth: 6"-24"



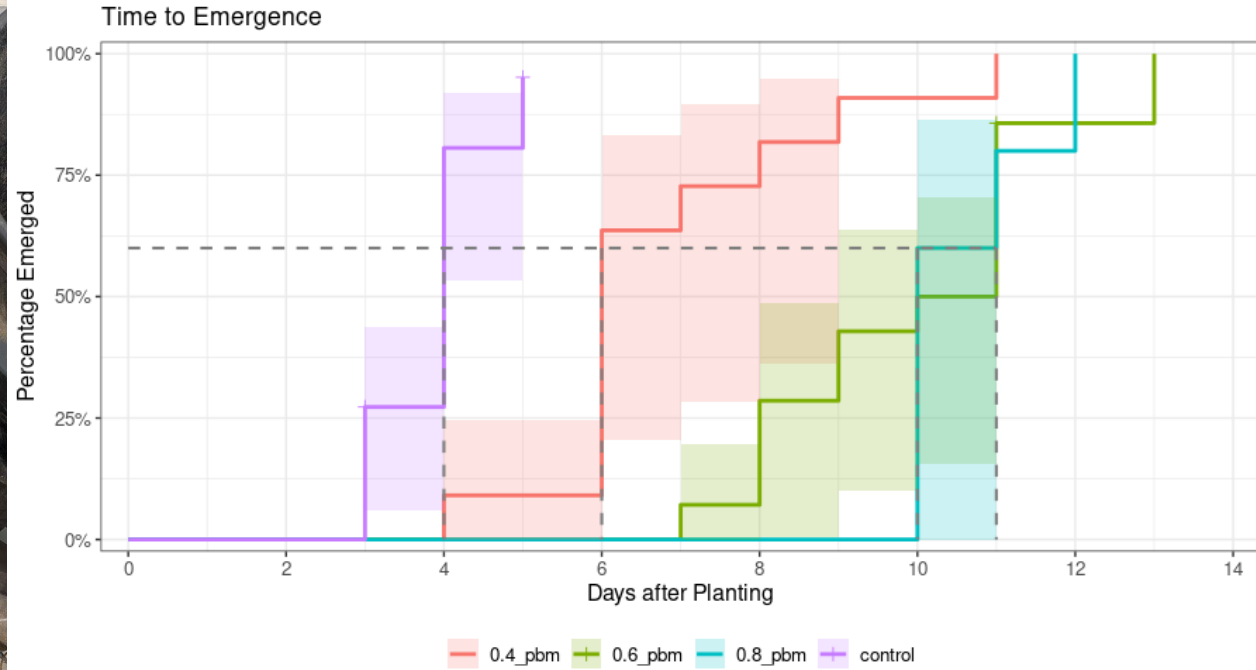
# Results of McNellie *et al.* and Temme *et al.*:

Trait	Salinity	Chr.	Position		<u>Temme et al. 2020</u>
Leaf Area	Slope	12	61,311,476	➡	• Height & plant mass
Leaf Weight (suggestive)	High	10	20,541,564	➡	• Leaf & plant mass

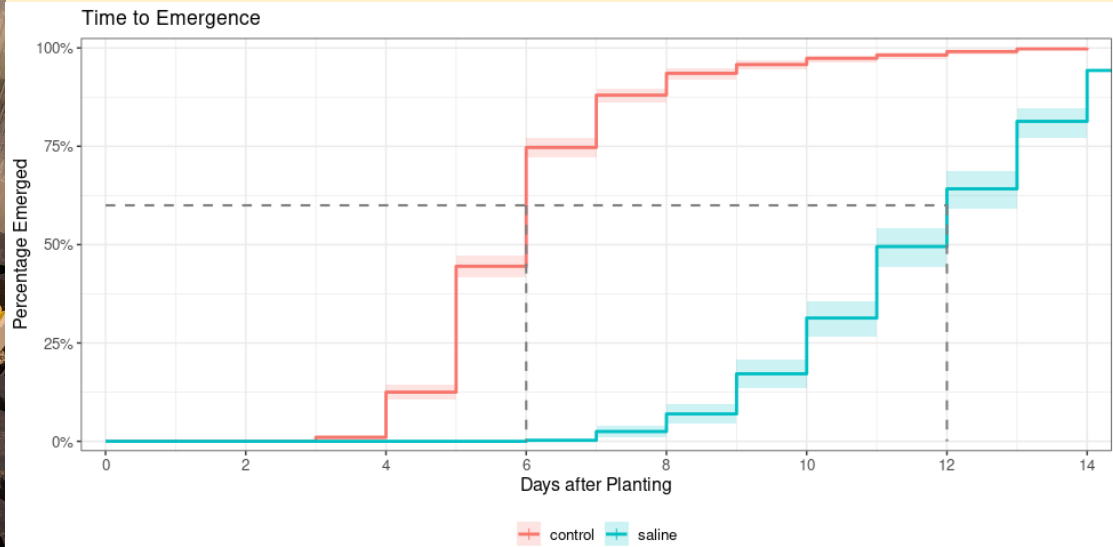
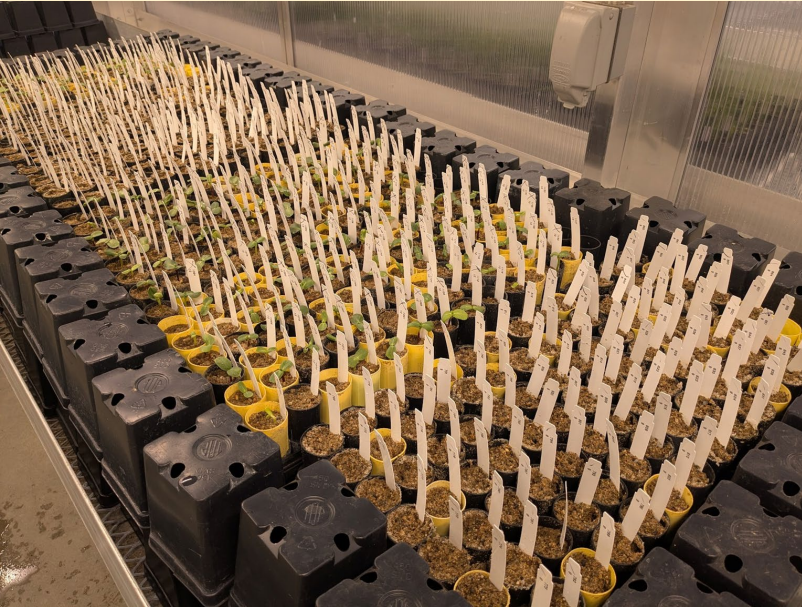
# Motive for continuing the search



# Methodology

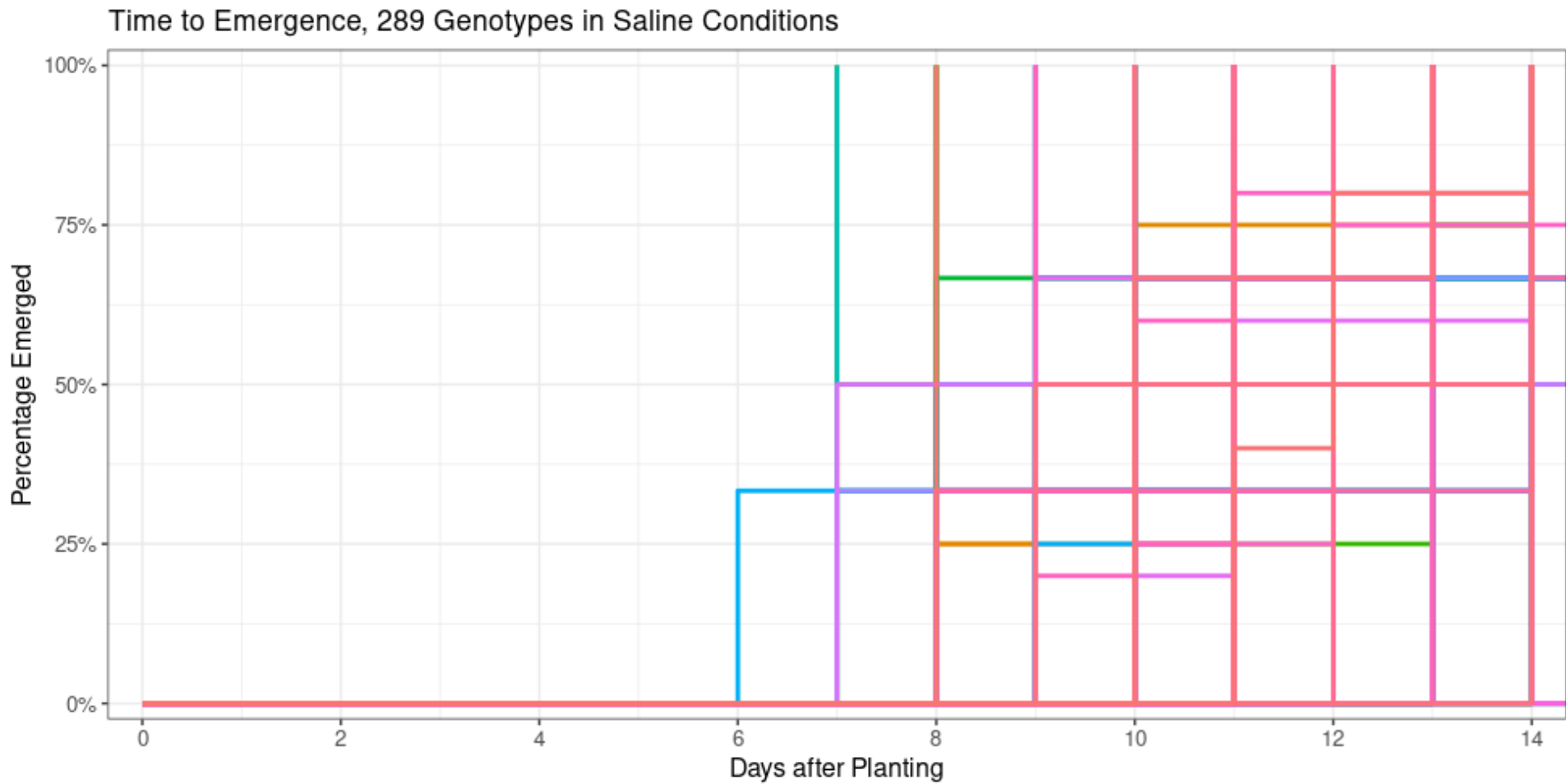


# Preliminary Results





# A truly ugly plot



# What's Next:

- With phenotyping winding down, the project should wrap up shortly.
- Some additional replicates may be necessary.
- Various models to test.
- Reconnecting this greenhouse work to field data.

# Questions!

## Authors:

Joseph A.M. Barham – NDSU

Brent Hulke – USDA

Qi Zhang – NDSU

Tom DeSutter – NDSU

James McNellie – USDA

(and likely more)

## Acknowledgements:

Brian Smart (Data Scientist)

Aaron Ostland (Soil Scientist)

Brady Koehler (Technician)

Landon Johnson (Technician)

Zachary Tarble (Technician)

Zy Tippins (Technician)

Megan Schneider (Intern)

Paige Mertens (Intern)

And many more...

