



1	Development of high spatial resolution annual
2	emission inventory of greenhouse gases from open
3	straw burning in Northeast China from 2001 to 2020
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23	WORD COUNT: 4800
24	6 FIGURES
25	1 TABLE





26 Abstract

27	Open straw burning has been widely recognized as a significant source of greenhouse
28	gases (GHGs), posing critical risks to atmospheric integrity and potentially
29	exacerbating global warming. In this study, we proposed a novel method that integrates
30	crop cycle information into extraction and classification of fire spots from open straw
31	burning in Northeast China from 2001 to 2020. By synergizing the extracted fire spots
32	with the modified Fire Radiative Power (FRP) algorithm, we developed high spatial
33	resolution emission inventories of GHGs, including carbon dioxide (CO ₂), methane
34	(CH4), and nitrous oxide (N2O). Results showed that the northern Sanjiang Plain,
35	eastern Songnen Plain, and eastern Liao River Plain were areas with high intensity of
36	open straw burning. The number of fire spots was elevated during 2013-2017,
37	accounting for 58.0% of the total fire spots observed during 2001-2020. The prevalent
38	season for open straw burning shifted from autumn (pre-2016) to spring (post-2016),
39	accompanied by a more dispersed pattern in burning dates. The two-decade cumulative
40	emissions of CO ₂ , CH ₄ , and N ₂ O were quantified at 202 Tg, 568 Gg, and 16.0 Gg,
41	respectively, amounting to 221 Tg of CO2-eq. Significant correlations were identified
42	between GHGs emissions and both straw yields and straw utilization ($p < 0.01$). The
43	enforcement of straw burning bans since 2018 has played a pivotal role in curbing open
44	straw burning, and reduced fire spots by 50.7% on annual basis compared to 2013-2017.
45	The novel method proposed in this study considerably enhanced the accuracy in
46	characterizing spatiotemporal distributions of fire spots from open straw burning and





- 47 quantifying associated pollutants emissions.
- 48 Keywords: Open straw burning; Fire spot; Crop cycle; Greenhouse gas; Emission
- 49 inventory
- 50 Keywords Plus: Open straw burning; MODIS; Fire spot; Accurate extraction; Crop
- 51 cycle; Crop type; Phenology; Greenhouse gas; Emission inventory; Driving factor;
- 52 Policy
- 53





54 1 Introduction

55	Open straw burning, a customary practice in agricultural areas, serves multiple purposes,
56	including rapid straw disposal, weed control, nutrient release, and pest management
57	(Korontzi et al., 2006; Wen et al., 2020). This practice results in short-term yet intense
58	emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs), such as carbon dioxide (CO ₂), methane (CH ₄),
59	and nitrous oxide (N_2O). The accumulation of these gases in the atmosphere adversely
60	impacts climate and atmospheric chemistry (Weldemichael and Assefa, 2016; Tang et
61	al., 2020; Hong et al., 2023). To date, open straw burning remains to be prevalent in
62	grain-producing areas globally, despite the many drawbacks of such a practice (Gadde
63	et al., 2009; Huang et al., 2013; Zhu et al., 2015; Ahmed et al., 2019; Mehmood et al.,
64	2020; Fu et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2023a). Thus, accurate and high spatial resolution
65	emission inventories for GHGs from this source sector are needed from regional to
66	global scales to assess potential climate and air quality impacts and formulate carbon
67	mitigation policies.

68

The "bottom-up" approach, which is based on the amount of straw burned and corresponding emission factors, has been widely employed to establish emission inventories for various pollutants emitted from open straw burning (van der Werf et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2021; Zheng et al., 2023). Emission factors for diverse pollutants released from different types of straw burning have been extensively investigated in laboratory studies (Li et al., 2007; Liu et al., 2011; Stockwell et al., 2014;





75	Pan et al., 2017; Peng et al., 2016; Sun et al., 2016). However, estimation of the amount
76	of straw burned is subject to large uncertainties since it involves many parameters, such
77	as grain yield, ratio of straw and grain, open burning proportion, burning efficiency,
78	and dry matter fraction (Guan et al., 2017; Zhou et al., 2017). Consequently, existing
79	regional-scale emission inventories based on the "bottom-up" approach generally have
80	large uncertainties and low spatiotemporal resolutions (Tian et al., 2011; Jin et al., 2017)
0.1	

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The advent of satellite technologies, such as Moderate Resolution Imaging 82 Spectroradiometer (MODIS, remote sensing instrument), Visible Infrared Imaging 83 84 Radiometer Suite (VIIRS, remote sensing instrument), and Himawari-8 (geostationary 85 satellite), has markedly revolutionized the monitoring of open straw burning, enabling 86 real-time and high spatiotemporal resolution fire spot products to be accessible to the general public (Schroeder et al., 2014; Giglio et al., 2016; Xu et al., 2017; Wu et al., 87 2018; Zhuang et al., 2018; Lv et al., 2024). Many studies have effectively utilized the 88 89 satellite fire spot products for constructing emission inventories, based on either the 90 burned area or fire spot counts (FC) (Jin et al., 2018; Ke et al., 2019; Li et al., 2019; 91 Zhang et al., 2019; Cui et al., 2021), and have improved the spatiotemporal resolutions 92 of the emission inventories (Wu et al., 2023). With continuous enrichment of satellite 93 data, a strong relationship was observed between fire radiative power (FRP) and 94 emission amounts from open straw burning (Wu et al., 2023). Consequently, the FRP 95 algorithm has been widely accepted for estimating emissions (Wooster et al., 2005;





96	Freeborn et al., 2008; Vermote et al., 2009; Yang et al., 2019). More recently, Yang et
97	al. (2020) improved the FRP algorithm by calibrating the contributions of open straw
98	burning to ground observation data based on model simulation results using the coupled
99	Weather Research and Forecasting model and Community Multiscale Air Quality
100	(WRF-CMAQ) model.
101	
102	At present, the identification of straw types in open straw burning typically relies on
103	crop data, such as the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP)-Modified
104	MODIS Land Use and MapSPAM datasets (Ke et al. 2019; Yang et al. 2020). These
105	low spatiotemporal resolution crop data contribute to errors in both the extraction of
106	fire spots and the identification of straw types (Ke et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2022).
107	Additional errors come from planting structure adjustment and frequent variations in
108	crop phenology. For instance, fire spots occurred during crop growth might be
109	incorrectly classified as open straw burning, while those occurred prior to crop growth
110	could be inaccurately attributed to burning of straws from subsequent harvests (Zhou
111	et al., 2022). Therefore, high spatiotemporal resolution data on crop types and
112	phenology are critical, and such data should be integrated into the extraction and
113	classification of fire spots from open straw burning to accurately estimate emissions of
114	various pollutants from this source sector.

115

116 To control emissions from open straw burning, the "Air Pollution Prevention and





117	Control Action Plan" (APPCAP) took into effect in 2013 in China (Huang et al., 2021).
118	In addition, China committed to achieve carbon peak by 2030 and carbon neutrality by
119	2060, which draws unprecedented challenges in reducing carbon emissions from open
120	straw burning (Wu et al., 2023). As a significant grain-producing region in China,
121	Northeast China produced 135 million tons of major grains (corn, rice, beans, and wheat)
122	in 2020, accounting for 21.4% of total production in China (National Bureau of
123	Statistics of China, 2021). During 2013-2018, open straw burning in Northeast China
124	exhibited an increasing trend, while decreasing in all other regions of China (Huang et
125	al., 2021). The constant increase reflects the expansion of the agricultural sector and
126	economic development in Northeast China yet relatively unconstrained open burning
127	activities (Huang et al., 2021). Liu et al. (2022) estimated CO ₂ emissions from open
128	straw burning in Northeast China as high as 344 Tg from 2012 to 2020.

129

130 In this study, high spatial resolution fire spot products were used to develop annual 131 emission inventories of GHGs, including CO2, CH4, and N2O, from open straw burning in Northeast Chian for the period of 2001-2020. To improve the accuracy of the 132 133 developed emission inventory, a novel concept that integrates the crop cycle 134 information into fire spot extraction and classification was adopted. Furthermore, this study conducted a thorough analysis to assess the driving factors influencing GHGs 135 136 emissions during the two decades. This study comprehensively examined GHGs 137 emissions from open straw burning in Northeast China and offered valuable insights to





138 policy makers for mitigating carbon emissions and air pollution in agricultural areas.

139 2 Methodology

140 **2.1 Extraction and classification of fire spots**

141 The MODIS fire product (MCD14ML, Collection 6.0 Process Version 3) was selected 142 from 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2020 for the whole region of Northeast China. 143 MCD14ML shows active fire detections and thermal anomalies, including forest fires, 144 grass fires, and open straw burning. The spatial resolution of the dataset is about 1 km², 145 and essential variables, such as latitude, longitude, acquisition date and time (in UTC), 146 and FRP, among others, were available (Giglio et al., 2016, 147 https://firms.modaps.eosdis.nasa.gov/).

148

149 This study selected ChinaCropArea1 km and ChinaCropPhen1 km datasets to extract 150 and classify fire spots from open straw burning (Luo et al., 2020a; Luo et al., 2020b). 151 These datasets present annual data on the type and phenology (Day of Year (Doy) of 152 emergence and maturity) of grain crops (corn, rice, and wheat), respectively. 153 Considering that Northeast China is a major bean-producing area, we also compiled 154 bean distribution datasets (Li et al., 2021; Xuan et al., 2023). There are some gaps in 155 these datasets compared to the comprehensive information required for this study, as 156 detailed in Table S1.

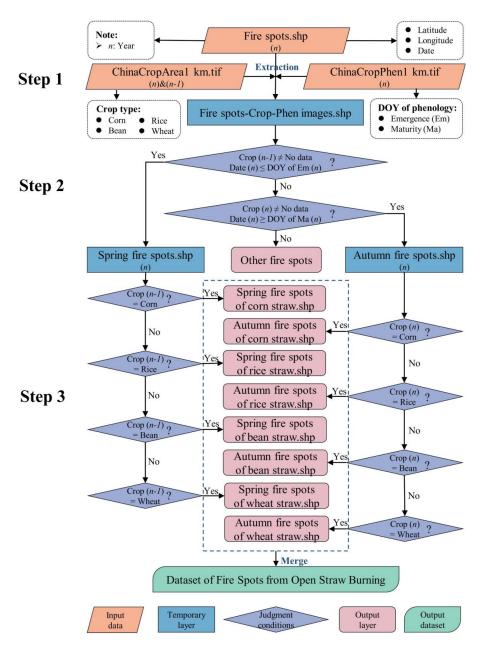




- 158 Fig. 1 describes the meticulous process to accurately extract and classify fire spots from
- 159 open straw burning in areas experiencing one-harvest season every year. The process
- 160 involves several key steps:
- 161 Step 1) The current year's ChinaCropPhen1 km and ChinaCropArea1 km, along with
- 162 the previous year's ChinaCropArea1 km data, were extracted to Fire spots (MCD14ML)
- 163 by ArcGIS 10.2 software, to obtain the Fire spots-Crop-Phen dataset.
- 164 Step 2) Considering the crop cycle, the extraction of fire spots was divided into two
- 165 stages. The first stage is before crop growth (spring) and requires the fire spot to satisfy
- 166 two conditions: a) there was a crop planted in the previous year, and b) the burning date
- 167 is before emergence. The second stage is after crop growth (autumn) and also involves
- 168 two conditions: a) there was a crop planted in the current year, and b) the burning date
- 169 is after maturity.
- 170 Step 3) For fire spots in spring, the type of straw burned is identified based on the
- 171 previous year's crop type. For autumn fire spots, the straw type is determined according
- 172 to the crop type of the current year.







174 Fig. 1 Extraction and classification method for fire spots from open straw burning





175 2.2 Development of high spatial resolution emission inventories for GHGs and

176 exploration of driving factors

- 177 Annual emission inventories for GHGs were developed for the region of Northeast
- 178 China at a grid resolution of 5 km × 5 km for the years 2001 to 2020. The domain grids
- 179 were created using Fishnet of ArcGIS 10.2 software.
- 180
- 181 The modified FRP algorithm (Yang et al., 2020) is used to estimate the emissions of
- 182 GHGs from open straw burning in this study:

183
$$E = \alpha \times \int_{t_1}^{t_2} FRP^* dt \times \beta \times F = \alpha \times FRP \times f_{FRP} \times (t_2 - t_1) \times \beta \times F$$
(1)

184 where E (in g) is the emissions of GHGs; α is a correction factor to adjust for satellite 185 data errors and a value of 2.5 is used here (Vadrevu and Lasko, 2018); t_1 and t_2 are the 186 beginning and ending time of fire spots, respectively, and the average burning time (3 187 hours) of a fire spot in Northeast China was obtained by delivering questionnaires to local farmers (Yang et al., 2020); FRE* (in MW) is adjusted satellite detected FRP; FRP 188 189 (in MW) is the instantaneous *FRP* observed by satellite; f_{FRP} is a correction factor that 190 is used for adjusting the underestimated emissions by fire spots and an optimal value 191 of 5 was obtained for f_{FRP} by Yang et al. (2020); β (in kg·MJ⁻¹) is biomass combustion rate and the average value of 0.411 kg·MJ⁻¹ from previous studies is used here (Wooster 192 et al., 2005; Freeborn et al., 2008); and $F(in g \cdot kg^{-1})$ is the emission factor for individual 193 194 straw type (Table 1) (Li et al., 2007; Liu et al., 2011; Peng et al., 2016).





Crop	Emission factors (g·kg ⁻¹)		
Crop	CO_2	CH_4	N_2O
Corn	1350	4.4	0.12
Rice	1460	3.2	0.11
Bean	1445	3.9	0.09
Wheat	1460	3.4	0.05

196 **Table 1.** Emission factors of open straw burning for different crop types

197

Driving factors such as the output of major grains and rural residential coal
consumption for temporal variations of annual GHGs emissions were explored through
Pearson correlation analysis using SPSS 20.0. Information on the above data is also
detailed in Table S1.

202 3 Results and discussion

203 3.1 Spatial and temporal distributions of fire spots

204 Cultivated lands in Northeast China primarily distribute in Sanjiang Plain (Northeast 205 Heilongjiang Province), Songnen Plain (West Heilongjiang Province and Midwest Jilin 206 Province), and Liao River Plain (Central Liaoning Province) (Fig. 2(a)). Fire spots were 207 widely spread, covering most cultivated lands, including both dry and paddy fields 208 across Northeast China (Fig. 2(a) and 2(b)). A total of 160,583 fire spots from open 209 straw burning were recorded during 2001-2020. Note that traditional methods that do 210 not consider crop cycle overestimated the total number of fire sports by 8686 over the 211 20-year period, with the largest error in 2017 (an overestimation of 4300) (Fig. 2(c)). 212 This highlights the importance of integrating crop cycle information into fire spot



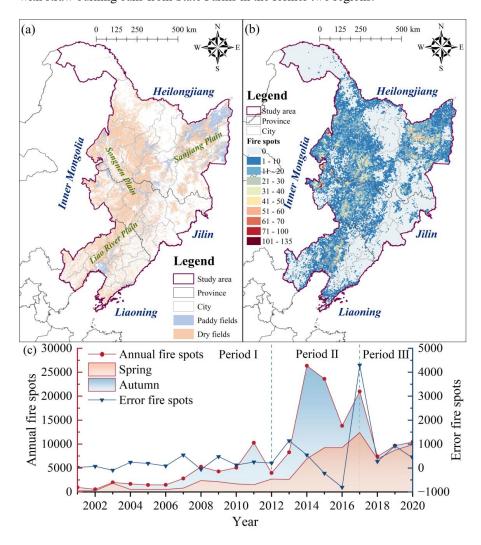


213	extraction for open straw burning to enhance data accuracy and reliability. Considering
214	the 20-year together (2001-2020), high occurrence frequencies of open straw burning
215	(also referred to as intensity of fire spots below) appeared in the northern Sanjiang Plain,
216	eastern Songnen Plain, and eastern Liao River Plain, as well as scattered areas close to
217	Inner Mongolia (Fig. 2(a) and 2(b)).
218	
219	Interannual variations of fire spots distributions are shown in Fig. S1. In the Sanjiang
220	Plain, low occurrence frequencies of fire spots were observed in a few cultivated lands
221	during 2001-2006 (Fig. S1(a) to Fig. S1(f)) and in most cultivated lands in the northern
222	part of the Plain during 2007-2013 (Fig. S1(g) to Fig. S1(m)). Note that in 2014 and
223	later years, fire spots were extended to the entire Sanjiang Plain, and the northern part
224	of the Plain became an area with high intensity of fire spots (Fig. S1(n) to Fig. S1(q)),
225	although a few cultivated lands in this Plain recorded low intensity of fire spots after
226	2018 (Fig. S1(r) to Fig. S1(t)). In the Songnen Plain, most cultivated lands recorded
227	fire spots during 2014 to 2017, with highest intensity in the northern and eastern parts
228	of the Plain (Fig. S1(n) to Fig. S1(q)). The occurrence frequencies of fire spots
229	decreased across the plain since 2018, particularly in the northern part of the Plain (Fig.
230	S1(r) to Fig. S1(t)). In the Liao River Plain, although fire spots were observed in most
231	cultivated lands in the eastern part of the Plain during 2014-2017, high occurrence
232	frequency was only recorded in 2014 (Fig. S1(n) to Fig. S1(q)).





Apparently, open straw burning events decreased in all of the three Plains since 2018 (Fig. S1(r) to Fig. S1(t)), which was likely due to the intensified effort from the Chinese government banning open straw burning (Hong et al., 2023). Furthermore, the reduction in the number of fire spots was more significant in the Sanjiang Plain and northern Songnen Plain than Liao River Plain (Fig. S1), indicating more compliance with straw burning bans from State Farms in the former two regions.







241	Fig. 2 (a) Spatial distributions of cultivated land in 2020 in Northeast China
242	(https://www.resdc.cn), (b) spatial distributions of the total number of fire spots during 2001-
243	2020 in Northeast China, and (c) seasonal distributions and errors (error = misclassification -
244	corrected classification) of the annual fire spots from 2001 to 2020.
245	
246	Fire spots from open straw burning concentrated in spring and autumn, with few
247	burning events in the other two seasons in Northeast China. Open straw burning events
248	in this region during 2001-2020 can be roughly divided into three distinctive periods
249	(Fig. 2(c)). During Period I (2001-2012), the annual average number of fire spots in
250	this region was 3,328. There were more fire spots in autumn than spring in most of
251	these years. During Period II (2013-2017), there was a substantial surge in fire spots,
252	with an annual average of 18,622 spots, accounting for 58.0% of the 20-year total.
253	Notably, the number of fire spots peaked at 26,359 in 2014. Spring fire spots
254	consistently increased annually, reaching the highest in 2017 at 12,419 spots. The
255	variations for autumn fire spots were fluctuating, with a peak of 19,408 spots in 2014.
256	During 2013-2015, autumn fire spots were higher than spring; however, this trend
257	reversed in 2016 and 2017, with spring fire spots becoming more dominant. During
258	Period III (2018-2020), the number of fire spots experienced a significant decrease,
259	averaging 9,178 spots annually, which was a 50.7% decrease from Period II. Spring
260	emerged as the primary season of fire spots, accounting for approximately 92.8% of the
261	annual total. Zhao et al. (2021) have reported a similar phenomenon, in which the





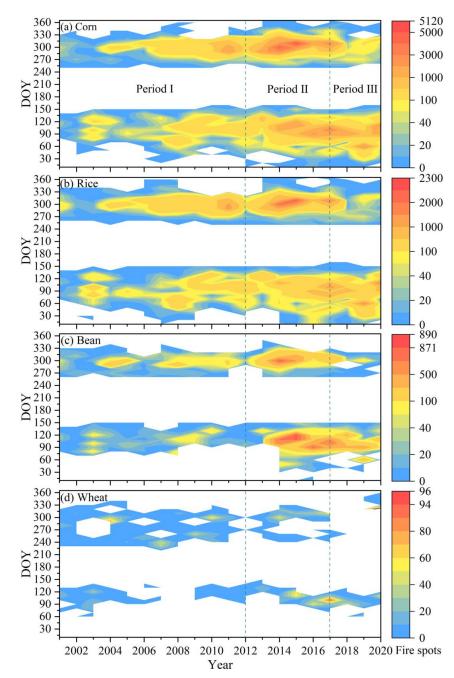
262	primary season of open straw burning in Northeast China gradually shifts to spring
263	(April to June). The apparent seasonal variations of open straw burning primarily stems
264	from strict government bans imposed after the autumn harvest (Yang et al., 2020). In
265	addition, farmers' increasing awareness regarding how open straw burning contributes
266	to the thawing of spring soil may also be a factor (Saxton et al., 1993; Song et al., 2023).

268	The burning dates of straw in Northeast China also changed during the three periods,
269	besides varying with crop type. During Period I (2001-2012), the autumn burning dates
270	of corn, rice, and bean straw were concentrated from late September to mid-November
271	(DOY range of 270 to 320) (Fig. 3(a) to Fig. 3(c)). Spring burning dates of corn and
272	rice straw were concentrated between mid-March and mid-May (DOY range of 80 to
273	140) in 2001, while dispersed to late February to mid-May (DOY range of 60 to 140)
274	in 2012 (Fig. 3(a) and Fig. 3(b)). However, no significant dispersal trend was found for
275	spring burning dates of bean straw (Fig. 3(c)). During Period II (2013-2017), the
276	dispersion of spring burning dates for corn, rice, and bean straws became more
277	pronounced, extending from early February to mid-May (DOY range 40 to 140) (Fig.
278	3(a) to Fig. 3(c)). During Period III (2018-2020), the dispersion of spring burning dates
279	for corn, rice, and bean straws persisted (Fig. 3(a) to Fig. 3(c)). Unlike other crops, the
280	burning dates for wheat straw did not conform to the aforementioned pattern of
281	variation, likely due to a limited number of fire spots (Fig. 3(d)). The changing
282	dispersion of burning dates for each crop type indicates shifts in agricultural practices





283 that may be influenced by regional straw burning ban policies, environmental



284 conditions, and farming practices (Yang et al., 2020).





286 Fig. 3 The frequency distribution of burning dates of various straws: (a), (b), (c), and (d)

287 represent corn, rice, bean, and wheat straw, respectively.

288 **3.2** High spatial resolution annual emission inventory of GHGs

289 The cumulative emissions of CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O from open straw burning in Northeast 290 China from 2001 to 2020 amounted to 202 Tg, 568 Gg, and 16.0 Gg, respectively (or 291 221 Tg CO₂-eq in total). The spatial distributions of GHGs emissions correspond well 292 with those of fire spots, particularly in high emission areas (Fig. 2 and Fig. 4). However, 293 the amounts of GHGs emissions in the northern Songnen Plain unexpectedly exceeded 294 those in the eastern Songnen Plain and eastern Liao River Plain, suggesting that even 295 low intensity fire spots can generate considerable emissions of GHGs due to higher 296 FRP detected via remote sensing. Therefore, the FRP algorithm proves more effective 297 than burned areas-based algorithms in identifying emission intensity resulted from open 298 straw burning while reducing the uncertainty associated with high spatiotemporal 299 resolution emission inventory (Wu et al., 2023).

300

The annual emissions of CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, and CO₂-eq from 2001 to 2020 are presented in **Figs. S2, S3, S4**, and **S5**, respectively. The spatiotemporal patterns of GHGs emissions correspond well to the observed trends in fire spots during **Period I** (2001-2012). However, during **Period II** (2013-2017) and **Period III** (2018-2020), the emissions of GHGs in the eastern Songnen Plain and eastern Liao River Plain did not exhibit a proportional increase with the rise in fire spots. This discrepancy can be

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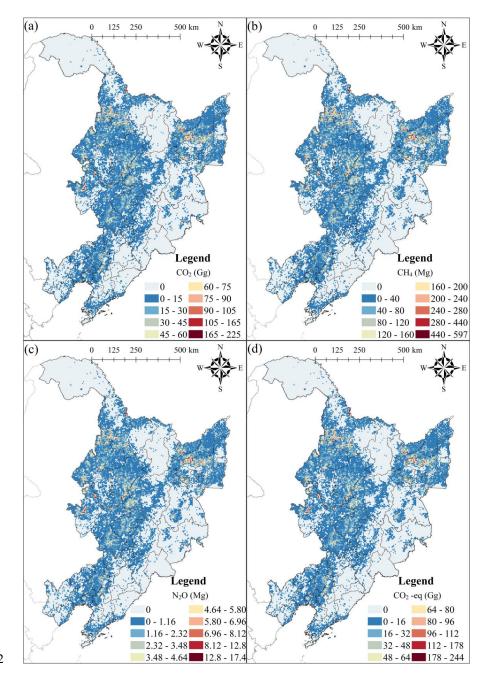


308	resulting in high intensity fire spots with relatively low emissions. In contrast, several
309	State Farms located in the northern Sanjiang Plain and northern Songnen Plain
310	demonstrated a higher level of synchronization in open straw burning activities,
311	resulting in parallel trends between fire spots and emissions (Cui et al., 2021).

attributed to the dispersed burning dates among individual farmers in these regions,







312

313 Fig. 4 The cumulative GHGs emissions from open straw burning in Northeast China from 2001

to 2020: (a)-(d) for CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, and CO₂-eq emissions, respectively.

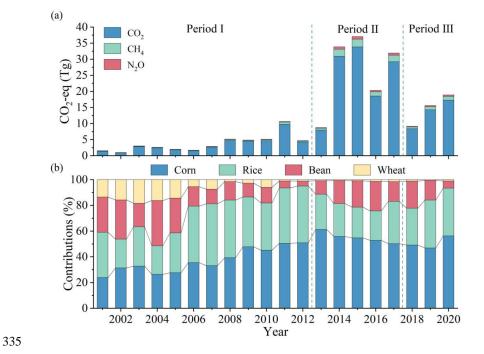




316	During Period I (2001 - 2012), average annual CO ₂ -eq emission was at 3.75 Tg, and
317	the cumulative CO ₂ -eq emission amounted to 45.1 Tg. During Period II (2013 - 2017),
318	average annual CO ₂ -eq emission increased substantially to 26.4 Tg, and the cumulative
319	emission during this period amounted to 132 Tg, which accounted for 59.8% of the total
320	emissions over the two decades. During Period III (2018 - 2020), average annual CO_2 -
321	eq emissions decreased significantly to 14.6 Tg, and the cumulative emission during
322	this period amounted to 43.7 Tg (Fig. 5(a)). The trend of CO ₂ -eq emission from 2001
323	to 2020 generally corresponds with the occurrence of fire spots, except for 2015 when
324	higher emissions were obtained despite having fewer fire spots than the case in 2014
325	(Fig. 5(a)). Such a trend is consistent with those of carbonaceous gases and aerosols
325 326	(Fig. 5(a)). Such a trend is consistent with those of carbonaceous gases and aerosols (CGA) emissions estimated by Liu et al., (2022). This discrepancy between fire spots
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326327328329	(CGA) emissions estimated by Liu et al., (2022). This discrepancy between fire spots and pollutant emissions in 2015 highlights the limitations of estimating pollutant emissions based solely on burned areas (Ke et al., 2019; Wu et al. 2023). The combustion of corn and rice straw was identified as the primary contributors to CO ₂ -eq
 326 327 328 329 330 	(CGA) emissions estimated by Liu et al., (2022). This discrepancy between fire spots and pollutant emissions in 2015 highlights the limitations of estimating pollutant emissions based solely on burned areas (Ke et al., 2019; Wu et al. 2023). The combustion of corn and rice straw was identified as the primary contributors to CO ₂ -eq emissions, accounting for 51.0% and 30.9% of the total emissions, respectively (Fig.
 326 327 328 329 330 331 	(CGA) emissions estimated by Liu et al., (2022). This discrepancy between fire spots and pollutant emissions in 2015 highlights the limitations of estimating pollutant emissions based solely on burned areas (Ke et al., 2019; Wu et al. 2023). The combustion of corn and rice straw was identified as the primary contributors to CO ₂ -eq emissions, accounting for 51.0% and 30.9% of the total emissions, respectively (Fig. 5(b)). Specifically, corn straw burning released 101.6, 8.28, and 2.69 Tg, while rice







336 Fig. 5 (a) Reginal total annual CO₂-eq emissions and (b) percentage contributions from open

- 337 burning of individual crop straw type.
- 338

Our estimated CO₂ emission for 2013 in Northeast China (7989.3 Gg) was slightly 339 higher than that estimated from the Fire Inventory from NCAR version 1.5 (FINNv1.5) 340 (5936.6 Gg) by Mehmood et al. (2018), which was likely because FINNv1.5 341 342 underestimated the open biomass burning in China (Stavrakou et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2020). Conversely, our estimated total CO2 emission from 2012 to 2020 (165 Tg) was 343 344 lower than that (344 Tg) estimated by Liu et al. (2022), the latter was based on a 345 modified FRP algorithm and fire spot products by VIIRS, which has limitations in its 346 traditional straw extraction methods in accurately identifying fire spots during certain





- times of the year (Fig. 1(b)). Therefore, integrating crop cycle information into fire spot
 extraction and classification methods is critical to enhance the accuracy of emission
 inventories.
- 350 **3.3 Driving factors of open straw burning**

Open straw burning is more prominently influenced by anthropogenic activities compared to other types of open biomass burning, such as forest, shrubland, and grassland fires (Syphard et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2020). Open straw burning is influenced by changes in straw yield and utilization rate, straw burning ban policy, and farmers' awareness of straw burning consequences (Chen et al., 2016; Li et al., 2017; Tao et al., 2018; Fang et al., 2019; Xu et al., 2023b).

357

358 Northeast China has experienced a remarkable expansion in its sown area for major 359 grain crops over the past two decades. By 2020, the sown area reached 231,937 km², 360 61.4% more than that in 2001 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2002-2021). In 361 the meantime, annual straw yield reached 143 Tg in 2020, 142% higher than that (59.2 362 Tg) in 2001 (Fig.6) (numbers are calculated based on the major grain yields in Northeast China presented in National Bureau of Statistics of China (2002-2021) and 363 364 the ratio of straw and grain (Wang et al., 2012)). Note that the annual straw yields have 365 stabilized around 140 Tg since 2017, and this trend is expected to persist for many years to come (Fig. 6). From 2001 to 2020, a strong positive correlation was observed 366 367 between the straw yields and the emissions of CO₂-eq from open straw burning across





368	Northeast China, as well as in Heilongjiang and Jilin provinces ($p < 0.01$, Table S2). If
369	looking at individual periods, significant correlations were only observed during
370	Period I for the whole of Northeast China ($p < 0.01$), as well as for Heilongjiang ($p < 0.01$)
371	0.01), Jilin ($p < 0.01$) and Liaoning provinces ($p < 0.05$) (Table S2). This highlights
372	that increased straw yields exacerbated the challenges of straw disposal in Northeast
373	China and have been a major contributor to the increase in the emissions of GHGs from
374	open straw burning in the aforementioned region and period.

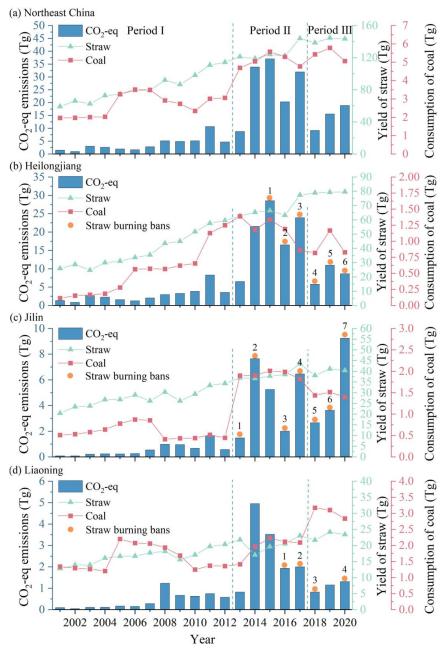
375

Besides open burning, crop straw is also used for cooking and heating in rural 376 377 households in Northeast China (Ke et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2023). Crop straw can also 378 be converted to bioenergy, used as animal feed, and returned to the fields (Alengebawy 379 et al., 2022; Fang et al., 2022). However, exact quantification of straw utilization in 380 different sectors in Northeast China is still lacking (Shi et al., 2023). Knowing that coal 381 combustion and straw burning are major energy sources for rural households in 382 Northeast China, we tried to explore potential changes in straw utilization on open straw 383 burning through coal consumption changes (Fang et al. 2019). The abrupt increase in 384 rural residential coal consumption in 2013 in Northeast China coincided with a spike in 385 CO₂-eq emissions from open straw burning (Fig. 6(a)). Furthermore, a significant 386 positive correlation between rural residential coal consumption and CO2-eq emissions in Northeast China was revealed, especially in Heilongjiang and Jilin provinces (Table 387 388 S3). We thus speculate that the increase in rural commercial energy consumption may





- 389 have reduced the demand for straw as an energy source for agricultural households,
- 390 thus facilitating the increased open straw burning. This needs to be confirmed in future
- 391 studies once various straw utilization pathways are quantified.







393	Fig. 6 Annual CO ₂ -eq emissions, yield of straw, rural residential coal consumption, and straw
394	burning bans in (a) Northeast China, (b) Heilongjiang, (c) Jilin, and (d) Liaoning from 2001 to
395	2020.

396

397 We also evaluated the efficacy of straw burning ban policy in Heilongjiang, Jinlin, and 398 Liaoning (Table S4). Despite the implementation of the policy since 2013 in this region, a significant reduction in CO2-eq emissions from open straw burning was only observed 399 after 2018 (Fig. 6). Compared to the other regions of China, the effective control of 400 401 open straw burning was delayed by several years in Northeast China (Huang et al., 402 2021). An important phenomenon was observed regarding the geographical and 403 temporal expansion of the ban policy, e.g., initially focused on key areas and specific 404 seasons (autumn and winter) and progressively extended to the entire region and throughout the whole year. (see Heilongjiang Province as an example, Table S4). 405 406 Therefore, enhanced enforcement of the ban policy likely reduced CO₂-eq emissions 407 during Period III and shifted the burning season to spring.

408

409 In conclusion, the enforcement of region-specific straw burning bans tailored to 410 spatiotemporal variations is crucial to control GHGs emissions, given the anticipated 411 sustained high straw yields in the future. Additionally, promoting diverse methods for 412 utilizing straw is highlighted as an effective strategy for mitigating carbon emissions 413 resulted from open straw burning in Northeast China. A combined effort on policy





- 414 enforcement and alternative straw usage would play a pivotal role in addressing the
- 415 environmental challenges posed by agricultural practices in the region.

416

417 4 Conclusions

418 This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the spatiotemporal variations of open 419 straw burning across Northeast China from 2001 to 2020 and develops regional scale 420 high spatial resolution annual emission inventories of GHGs. Open straw burning in 421 Northeast China emitted a total of 221 Tg of CO2-eq during 2001-2020, of which 20.4% 422 was from Perido I (2001-2012), 59.8% from Perido II (2013-2017), and 19.8% from 423 Period III (2018-2020). Analysis results demonstrate the necessity of integrating the 424 crop cycle information into the extraction and classification of fire spots from open 425 straw burning to enhance the accuracy of emission inventories of various pollutants. 426 This study also highlights the inconsistencies between the number of fire spots and 427 pollutant emissions caused by remote sensing detection techniques. In Northeast China, 428 regions such as the northern Sanjiang Plain, eastern and northern Songnen Plain, and 429 eastern Liao River Plain are identified as high-emission areas of GHGs from open straw 430 burning, which emitted 38.9, 49.0, 33.3, and 12.2 Tg of CO₂-eq, respectively, during 431 2001-2020. Additionally, it is observed that the season for open straw burning has 432 shifted from autumn to spring, with dispersed burning dates. This spatiotemporal 433 analysis provides crucial insights into policy effectiveness as well as geographical





434	variations regarding compliance with regulations banning open straw burning.
435	Consequently, government policies prohibiting open straw burning should be adjusted
436	according to the observed spatiotemporal variations in different regions.
437	Simultaneously promoting diversified applications of straw, such as bioenergy
438	conversion, animal feeding, and soil amendment, is recommended — a strategy that is
439	aligned with China's dual-carbon objectives aiming at achieving carbon peak and
440	carbon neutrality.

441 Data availability

442 All raw data can be provided by the corresponding authors upon request.

443 Supplement

444 The supplement related to this article is available online at:

445

446 Author contributions

- 447 SC designed the research. ZS, LZ, CT, and QF developed the methodology. ZS
- 448 performed the formal analysis and wrote the initial draft. All the authors reviewed and
- edited the draft.

450

451 Competing interests

452 One of our co-authors is a member of the Editorial Board of ACP.





453 Disclaimer

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- 458

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