

应重视硝态氮同化过程在降低土壤硝酸盐浓度中的作用*

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摘 要 在保证生产力条件下, 采取合理的氮肥管理措施降低土壤硝态氮浓度对降低氮污染至关重要。当前, 应用硝化抑制剂能够有效延缓铵态氮的硝化速率, 进而降低土壤硝态氮淋溶损失和氮氧化物排放, 但是其缺点显而易见: 促进氨挥发并引起硝化抑制剂污染。好氧条件下, 土壤硝态氮净变化量取决于产生(硝化)和消耗(硝态氮同化)的量。但是, 一直以来, 受微生物优先利用铵态氮这一传统观点的影响, 人们普遍认为农田土壤微生物较少利用硝态氮, 很大程度上忽视了对硝态氮同化过程的研究。该过程独具优势, 它将硝态氮转变为微生物生物量氮进行短期储存并发生再矿化, 具有保氮功能且环境友好。加入特定的碳源可以提高硝态氮同化这已是不争的事实, 未来应加强硝态氮同化降低土壤硝酸盐累积方面的研究: (1) 外源碳影响硝态氮同化的微生物驱动机制是什么? (2) 怎样才能操控硝态氮同化和再矿化过程, 使得作物氮需求和土壤氮供应相匹配, 进而降低氮损失? (3) 在碳源充足的条件下, 反硝化作用亦会增强, 如何才能做到在提高硝态氮同化的同时避免反硝化氮损失?

关键词 硝态氮累积; 硝态氮同化; 硝化抑制剂; 碳源

中图分类号 S153 **文献标识码** A

施用氮肥是提高农作物产量、保证粮食安全必不可少的措施。仅从2008—2012年的这四年间, 世界化肥氮施用量从0.99亿吨增加至1.2亿吨, 年平均增幅达5.3%^[1]。随着世界人口不断增长, 预计到2050年世界氮肥需求量将进一步增长至2.4亿吨^[2]。在农田土壤中, 氮肥是养分, 一旦脱离农田土壤, 它就可能成为污染物质。因此, 迫切需要研究使氮肥既能被土壤固持又能被植物和土壤微生物快速利用的关键技术, 尽可能地阻止氮肥从农田扩散至水体、大气和陆地生态系统^[3]。

1 控制农田土壤硝态氮浓度是关键

土壤中的氮以有机氮、铵态氮、硝态氮等不同的形态存在。铵态氮是还原态, 为阳离子, 在带阴离子的土壤胶体中容易被吸附; 硝态氮是氧化态, 为阴离子, 具有更大的移动性^[4]。以尿素、碳酸氢铵等铵态氮形式施入的氮肥一般在2~3周内即可通过硝化作用迅速转变为移动性较强的硝态氮^[5]。在我国北方旱作土壤中这种转化更为迅速(1~2周)^[6-7]。对于喜铵态氮的植物, 如水稻和

* 国家自然科学基金项目(41671231, 41571294)和国家重点研发计划项目(2017YFD0200106, 2017YFD0800103)资助
Supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (Nos. 41671231 and 41571294) and the National Key Research and Development Program of China (Nos. 2017YFD0200106 and 2017YFD0800103)

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收稿日期: 2017-06-01; 收到修改稿日期: 2017-08-11; 优先数字出版日期(www.cnki.net): 2017-08-18

茶树，铵态氮迅速转变为硝态氮，不利于作物对肥料氮的吸收。即使对于玉米、小麦和蔬菜等喜硝态氮的植物，当氮肥投入超过了植物对氮的需求时，也会造成农田土壤硝态氮的大量累积。近期，对中国主要旱地土壤剖面硝酸盐累积的综合分析表明，小麦、玉米、菜地和果园0~4 m土壤剖面的硝态氮累积量分别高达453、749、1230、2 155 kg hm⁻²（以纯氮计），土壤剖面硝态氮累积最容易发生在降水量为400~800 mm区间的华北地区，且降水强度、氮肥用量以及盈余氮量是旱地土壤剖面硝态氮累积的驱动因子^[8]。此外，我国农田还面临着严重的土壤硝态氮径流、反硝化等损失^[9-11]。因此，控制农田土壤中硝态氮的产生和累积是提高氮肥利用率、减少氮素损失的关键手段之一。

2 硝化抑制剂未必是最佳的选择

目前，人们常常施用硝化抑制剂来抑制亚硝化单胞菌属（*Nitrosomonas*）的活性，从而起到抑制NH₄⁺至NO₂⁻的氧化、减少硝态氮产生的作用^[5, 12]。大量的室内和田间试验均表明，硝化抑制剂可以降低硝化速率、N₂O排放以及径流水和渗漏水中硝态氮的浓度^[13-14]。但是，硝化抑制剂的施用使得土壤中铵态氮浓度长时间保持在较高水平，极大地增加了氨挥发损失风险，尤其是在pH较高的土壤中增加更显著^[4, 10-11]。Qiao等^[13]分析了62篇关于田间硝化抑制剂应用效果的文章，发现硝化抑制剂能够降低48%的无机氮淋洗、44%的N₂O排放和24%的NO排放，增加20%的氨挥发排放，但从整体来看，硝化抑制剂表现正环境效应，净减少16.5%的氮损失。最佳的氮肥管理策略应该满足作物氮需求与土壤氮供应相匹配。对于喜硝态氮植物，硝化抑制剂施用虽然减缓了铵态氮肥的硝化速率，但可能不利于作物对肥料氮的吸收。此外，硝化抑制剂的抑制效率高、有效期长短及施用效果除取决于该抑制剂本身的性质和生物活性外，还受土壤类型、有机质含量、氮肥品种、施氮量、施氮时间、作物种类、温度、水分以及土壤管理措施等诸多因素的影响^[15-16]。鉴于硝化抑制剂的诸多局限性，是否可以在继续加强硝化抑制剂研究的同时，从另一个角度，即通过提高好氧条件下土壤硝态氮消耗速率来研究呢？答案是肯定的。

3 土壤硝态氮同化过程大有可为

硝态氮在土壤中的净变化量取决于多个微生物过程综合作用的结果^[17]。一般而言，硝态氮的产生过程主要是硝化过程，消耗过程包括反硝化和微生物同化（又称微生物固持）。因此，提高硝态氮在土壤中的消耗速率很有可能成为降低土壤硝酸盐累积的有效措施之一。在好氧条件下，反硝化速率常常可以忽略不计^[18]，而在厌氧条件下，反硝化会产生大量的中间产物如N₂O和NO^[19]。土壤中硝态氮反硝化的最终结果均会引起农业中氮素的损失，并影响大气环境^[4]。而硝态氮同化过程则是指土壤微生物利用硝态氮作为氮源并转化为微生物生物量氮。这个过程独具优势，因为它不仅具有保氮功能，且对环境不会造成负面影响，此外，微生物生物量氮可以短期储存，进一步发生再矿化释放出铵态氮，最终提高可供植物利用的有效态氮数量^[20-22]。旱地土壤在大部分时间处于好氧条件下，反硝化作用比较微弱。因此，提高农田土壤微生物同化硝态氮速率，将有助于降低土壤中硝酸盐的累积及其向环境扩散引起的环境污染。

然而，长期以来，受微生物优先利用铵态氮这一传统观点的影响，人们普遍认为农田土壤微生物不利用硝态氮^[23-28]，因此，硝态氮同化作为一个具有保氮功能且环境友好的氮转化过程一直不受重视，尤其是在我国，描述土壤氮素问题和研究成果的经典专著《中国土壤氮素》^[4]也未记录此过程。与铵态氮相比，微生物利用硝态氮需要消耗更多的能量，且土壤铵态氮浓度高时会抑制硝态氮的转运或硝态氮还原酶的合成^[29-30]。但是，旱地耕作土壤中硝态氮浓度常常高于铵态氮，而土壤中又存在着硝化细菌和异养微生物对铵态氮的强烈竞争作用，因而，当铵态氮含量不足以满足微生物需求时，硝态氮的微生物同化作用就有可能发生^[21]。此外，有效态碳（C）数量亦是限制硝态氮同化的关键因子。在森林和草地土壤中发现了显著的硝态氮同化作用^[20, 31]。一般而言，森林和草地土壤的有机质含量高于农业土壤，这可能意味着农业土壤所含的有效态碳数量较少，限制了微生物对硝态氮的利用。Recous等^[25]发现，耕作土壤中仅加入KNO₃时，微生物硝态氮同化速率忽略不计，而

在相同 KNO_3 施用量的基础上加入 500 mg kg^{-1} (以碳计,下同)的葡萄糖时立即发生硝态氮同化。Romero等^[32]也发现,农业土壤中同时加入葡萄糖和硝酸钠可以明显提高硝态氮同化速率,且硝态氮同化速率随着葡萄糖加入量增加而提高,尤其当葡萄糖加入量达 $5\ 000 \text{ mg kg}^{-1}$ 时,高达65.9%的标记硝酸钠可被微生物同化。可见,土壤中加入足够数量的纯碳源完全可以刺激硝态氮同化。但是,农业和养殖业废弃物施入对硝态氮同化速率的影响却明显不同。大量的研究表明,土壤中加入动物粪肥不能刺激硝态氮同化^[26-27, 33],而施用小麦秸秆可以提高硝态氮同化^[34-35]。因此,有机物料能否促进土壤微生物利用硝态氮可能取决于碳源类型。与小麦秸秆相比,堆肥、菜籽饼和鸡粪的C/N较低,常常小于20,碳可利用性可能不足以支持微生物的生长需求。与此相反,高C/N有机物料的施入则会激发异养微生物吸收更多的外源氮来满足自身生长对氮的需求,致使微生物在利用铵态氮的同时也利用硝态氮。这就解释了为什么加入足够数量的高C/N的有机物料才有可能提高微生物硝态氮同化速率。

此外,对于哪类微生物是土壤微生物硝态氮同化作用的执行者目前尚不清楚。研究表明,细菌和真菌均参与土壤氮素的转化过程^[36]。目前,关于真菌与细菌在土壤 N_2O 排放、自养硝化、异养硝化和反硝化过程的相对贡献大小已有大量的报道^[37-39],然而,鲜有研究关注真菌与细菌对硝态氮同化过程的相对贡献^[40]。从微生物选择性看,细菌优先利用 $\text{NH}_4^+\text{-N}$ 作为氮源^[29],其他微生物如真菌可能更倾向于将 $\text{NO}_3^-\text{-N}$ 作为氮源^[41]。然而,目前为止,真菌是否参与土壤硝态氮同化过程仍然不清楚。Romero等^[32]发现,加入葡萄糖后细菌数量呈爆发性增长,且随着葡萄糖用量的增加而增长。然而,他们并未测定真菌数量,无法明确真菌和细菌的相对贡献。此外,微生物对氮源的选择是与环境相适应的,不同生态系统微生物的群落结构不同,氮循环也随之而变。越来越多的证据表明,真菌与细菌生物量的比值随pH下降而增加,这意味着在酸性土壤中,真菌可能起更重要的作用^[42-43]。可见,真菌和细菌对土壤硝态氮同化的相对贡献可能还受土壤pH的影响。但是,在硝态氮同化过程中,起作用的细菌和真菌的群落结构和多样性至今未知。因此,有待于深入研究不同环境条件下参与硝态氮

同化作用的细菌和真菌群落组成与结构的变化,从而揭示细菌和真菌在硝态氮同化过程中的作用。

4 展 望

尽管国内外关于外源碳对土壤硝态氮同化过程的影响研究非常有限,但是加入特定的碳源可以刺激硝态氮同化这已是不争的事实。硝态氮同化作为一个可降低土壤硝态氮浓度的保氮过程应该获得广泛的关注。但是,针对该过程,目前尚有以下问题值得进一步研究:(1)在大量碳源加入下,微生物同化硝态氮能力究竟有多大?(2)已被同化的硝态氮何时能再矿化,能矿化出来的比例是多少?

(3)怎样才能操控硝态氮同化和再矿化过程,使得作物氮需求和土壤氮供应相匹配,进而降低氮损失?(4)外源碳影响硝态氮同化的微生物驱动机制是什么?(5)如何做到使土壤硝态氮浓度控制在一定范围,既能满足作物对氮的需求而又不造成土壤硝态氮过量累积?(6)在碳源充足的条件下,反硝化作用亦会增强,如何才能做到在提高硝态氮同化的同时避免反硝化氮损失?

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Role of Microbial Assimilation of Soil NO_3^- in Reducing Soil NO_3^- Concentration

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Abstract NO_3^- accumulation in the soil would trigger N losses through runoff, leaching and N_2O emission. It is, therefore, of particular importance to take appropriate nitrogen (N) management strategies to reduce soil NO_3^- accumulation, and hence to enhance N use efficiency and reduce N losses to the environment. Application of nitrification inhibitor (NI) has been demonstrated to be effective in reducing soil NO_3^- concentration, NO_3^- leaching and N_2O emission, and simultaneously increasing crop yield. However, there is an indisputable fact that NI application increases ammonia (NH_3) emission and causes NI contamination. As a matter of fact, soil NO_3^- concentration varies with NO_3^- generation (nitrification) and consumption (assimilation) rates in aerobic conditions. Under the influence of the viewpoint that soil microbes prefer $\text{NH}_4^+\text{-N}$ for their growth, it is commonly held that soil microbes rarely use NO_3^- in farmlands. Consequently, the study on processes of soil microbial NO_3^- assimilation has been neglected to a certain extent. The process of soil microbial NO_3^- assimilation is found to be unique in advantage. It turns NO_3^- into microbial biomass N for temporary storage before mineralization to be available to crops for a longer season or crops in the following season. There is no doubt that soil microbial NO_3^- immobilization is stimulated by specific extraneous C input, which deserves more attention in future studies concerning how to reduce soil NO_3^- accumulation. Further studies should primarily focus on the following several aspects: (1) to elucidate mechanism of the microbe driving NO_3^- assimilation under elevated C availability, (2) to explore how to control microbial assimilation and remineralization of NO_3^- to match soil N supply with crop N demand and reduce N losses, and (3) to explore how to avoid stimulating denitrification and associated N losses while enhancing microbial NO_3^- assimilation under the condition of sufficient C supply.

Key words NO_3^- accumulation; NO_3^- immobilization; Nitrification inhibitor; Carbon source

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