

I appreciate the authors' efforts in clarifying the effectiveness of the multi-year composite strategy and providing additional experiments and map comparisons to address the introduced systematic errors. By comparing the annual mapping results (2020–2025) with the five-year composite mapping, it is evident that the composite method primarily impacts the captured planting intensity. For instance, in Fig. R2, the areas identified as multiple rice have expanded significantly, and the authors should provide a physical or methodological explanation for this phenomenon in the manuscript.

Furthermore, the results demonstrate that the rice planting distribution within the study area remains relatively stable. This successfully addresses my primary concern regarding whether the five-year composite would compromise the identification of rice in alternating planting areas. Quantitatively, the improved data availability and mapping stability afforded by the five-year composite outweigh the negative effects of multi-year smoothing; missing phases in single-year imagery could otherwise lead to severe, large-scale under-identification, particularly in earlier periods (e.g., pre-2000) when available data were scarcer. Based on the provided experiments and comparative analyses, I agree that the five-year composite strategy is reasonable and its impact within the study area is well within a controllable range. I suggest the authors reorganize these findings and incorporate them into the Discussion Section of the main text to provide clearer insights for data users.

Finally, to ensure a fairer and more comprehensive comparison, I recommend adding local image visualizations to Figure 6 of the revised manuscript to facilitate qualitative evaluation.

It is recommended to cite the article “25-year, quarterly land change maps of China's Loess Plateau reveal long-term and substantial water-induced soil erosion mitigation.”