

1 **Direct analysis of Volumetric Absorptive Micro Sampling (VAMS) devices by ATR-**  
2 **FT-MIR and chemometric analysis: a new challenge**

3 Giulia Gorla<sup>a</sup>, A. Pasamontes<sup>b</sup>, L. Rampazzi<sup>a</sup>, Jordi Riu<sup>b</sup>, Barbara Giussani<sup>a</sup>

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5 <sup>a</sup> Dipartimento di Scienza e Alta Tecnologia. Università degli Studi dell'Insubria. Via Valleggio,  
6 9. 22100 Como, Italy

7 <sup>b</sup> Department of Analytical Chemistry and Organic Chemistry, Universitat Rovira i Virgili, C/  
8 Marcel·lí Domingo s/n, 43007 Tarragona, Spain

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12 corresponding author:

13 Barbara Giussani

14 Dipartimento di Scienza e Alta Tecnologia

15 Università degli Studi dell'Insubria

16 via Valleggio, 9 - 22100 Como – Italy

17 tel: +39 031 234 6434

18 email: [barbara.giussani@uninsubria.it](mailto:barbara.giussani@uninsubria.it)

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22 **HIGHLIGHTS:**

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- 24 • Volumetric Absorptive Micro Sampling (VAMS) is a promising strategy in liquid food  
25 analysis because of its ease of use and handling
- 26 • Direct analysis of VAMS devices using ATR-FT-MIR spectroscopy without the need of an  
27 extraction process
- 28 • PLS regression models of the VAMS spectra can be used to estimate major components in  
29 milk samples

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33 **ABSTRACT:**

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35 Volumetric Absorptive Micro Sampling (VAMS) strategy, in its simplicity, has made a major  
36 contribution to the development of at-home sampling strategies. Mainly used for blood analysis, it  
37 absorbs a fixed volume of sample. Folded into its cover, the VAMS device dries, and it can be sent  
38 to a lab via mail.

39 In this article, for the first time in our knowledge, we explored the possibility to use this sampling  
40 strategy to expand the scope of VAMS to other samples than clinical ones. In this way we used VAMS  
41 to sample and analyze milk, which is one of the most important and analyzed samples all over the  
42 world. VAMS devices were employed to sample commercial milk samples from Italy, Switzerland  
43 and Spain, and for the first time the device was directly analyzed by ATR-FT-IR to predict protein,  
44 carbohydrate and fat content in the milk samples. Samples were collected in different sessions from  
45 different persons and analyzed by different lab operators to include in the models these sources of  
46 variability. Multivariate regression was used to correlate ATR-FT-IR spectra with the investigated  
47 properties: models were validated with external validation.

48

49 **KEYWORDS:**

50 VAMS, Volumetric Absorptive Micro Sampling, ATR-FT-MIR, milk, milk major constituents, multivariate  
51 regression

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53 **INTRODUCTION**

54

55 The development of modern microsampling technologies was initially born from the need to  
56 overcome the limits of biological fluids sampling. Sampling of biological fluids is, in fact, a main  
57 concern of modern bioanalytical chemistry. The conventional sampling techniques are often highly  
58 invasive, and samples have to be collected in dedicated laboratories, which means that often

59 patients need to travel frequently, especially for diseases that need to be recurrently monitored.  
60 Modern microsampling techniques enable at-home sampling and less invasive sampling strategies.  
61 Different strategies were developed and carried out using Volumetric Absorptive Microsampling  
62 (VAMS) on blood samples and other biological matrices for application with bioanalytical purposes  
63 [1,2]. Studies were reported for plasma, urine and saliva [3,4].

64 VAMS holds several interesting advantages in comparison with any other analytical sampling  
65 system. It allows to collect small and accurate volumes (10, 20 or 30  $\mu$ l) of the samples under study  
66 by using a porous hydrophilic tip that dries out in 1-2 hours, as reported by Protti et al. in [5] and by  
67 Hecht in [6], and they can be stored at room temperature [7,8]. VAMS microsamplers are lightweight  
68 and easily transportable with the included clamshells (2–4 samplers) or cartridges (2 samplers),  
69 therefore allowing for samples to be stored along time (allowing for a timescale of different days)  
70 and for logistic costs to be reduced [9].

71 In the applications found in the literature [10], all of them in the field of biological samples, an  
72 extraction phase follows the sampling of the fluid by the micro sampler: the tip of the device is  
73 immersed in a suitable solvent to extract the analyte under investigation. After this extraction, a  
74 subsequent analysis of the extracted solution is carried out with a tandem chromatography-mass  
75 spectrometry system. In each case the optimal extraction conditions must be determined as well as  
76 the recovery factor.

77 In this study, we propose to expand the fields of application of VAMS using for the first time to the  
78 best of our knowledge the VAMS sampling system in cow milk analysis. We have chosen this  
79 application because cow milk analysis is an issue of worldwide interest and of main concern in dairy  
80 industry, and because milk is a complex matrix and thus an ideal sample to test new application of  
81 the micro sampler [11]. Moreover, we propose the direct analysis of VAMS devices (after milk  
82 sampling) using ATR-FT-MIR without the need of a further extraction process as a way to  
83 significantly reduce the time of the analysis and also to reduce the use of chemicals involved in the  
84 process.

85 To test the procedure and its applicability, major milk components such as fats, proteins and  
86 carbohydrates were quantified in milk samples.

87 The overall method is thought for an in-situ sampling, and an easy storage and shipment of the  
88 sampling device to a laboratory, which would be able then to provide results analyzing the  
89 microsampler without any pretreatment and with a small necessity of reagents.

## 90 MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 91 Sampling devices and procedure

92

93 Mitra VAMS devices (volume capacity of 10  $\mu$ L) were purchased from Neoteryx, LLC. (Torrance, CA,  
94 USA). For the sampling of milk, the tips of the VAMS devices were held in beakers containing 50 mL  
95 of milk at room temperature for 30 sec. After that, the devices were deposited in their clamshells.  
96 They were left to dry for 48 hours at ambient temperature (21°C controlled but not monitored) to  
97 simulate real conditions of use and then they were directly analyzed with the ATR-FTIR  
98 spectrometer. A scheme of the sampling protocol is presented in Figure 1. Each milk was sampled  
99 in triplicate. Samples were collected and analyzed during different seasons along 12 months to  
100 construct models containing also the variability related to temperature and humidity in the drying  
101 phase. They were sampled by different persons. No chemical was used during this phase.

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105 Figure 1 – Sampling protocol. Each VAMS sampler was immersed for 30 seconds in 50 mL of milk,  
106 being careful to not go over the edge of the tip. Then, it was stored in a clamshell box provided by  
107 the manufacturer and left to dry for 48 h before the analysis.

108

### 109 Milk samples

110

111 43 commercial cow milks were acquired in supermarkets in Spain, Italy and Switzerland (see  
112 supplementary material for the composition). Ranges for the major components are reported in

113 Table 1 (data taken from the commercial labels). The samples were selected to obtain a  
114 representative population of the commercial samples, including the maximum variation range of  
115 protein, fat and carbohydrate contents. It is worthwhile to note that, according to the European  
116 regulation [12] these ranges are quite restricted. All samples were cow milk in liquid form, most of  
117 them UHT (Ultra-High-Temperature processing) treated and, to include more variability and enlarge  
118 the dataset, some infant formula milk samples were included in the analysis.

119 Observing the nutrient values, we noticed that the range of high proteins and low carbohydrates  
120 were not well represented in the commercial samples. This is probably due to the restriction of the  
121 European Legislation on milk production. To increase the number of samples in those regions, we  
122 constructed five other milk samples (identified in the models with the label “M”) by mixing two  
123 commercial milks.

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Macronutrients	Range (g/100mL)
Proteins	1.3 – 7.2
Fats	0.1 - 3.9
Carbohydrates	2.5 - 9.3

130 Table 1 - Range of variation of macronutrients in the milk samples under study

131

### 132 Instrumentation: ATR-FT-MIR spectroscopy

133

134 Spectra were collected using an ATR-FT-MIR instrument (Nicolet™ iS10 FTIR Spectrometer, Thermo  
135 Scientific™ equipped with the Smart iTR™ accessory with a diamond crystal). The VAMS sticks were  
136 used as a guideline to lay and align the tips on the diamond crystal. The needle hubs were  
137 maintained in position using the pressure tower of the Smart iTR™ Accessory.

138 Spectra were recorded in absorbance mode from 600 to 4000  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  with 32 scans and at 4  $\text{cm}^{-1}$   
139 resolution (7053 data points) in order to obtain well detailed spectra. A background with the crystal  
140 empty (air background) was acquired before each measurement. Ethanol was used after each  
141 measurement to remove any residue from the equipment. It was the only chemical used throughout  
142 the study and only for cleaning. Spectra used to construct the multivariate models were obtained  
143 by different lab operators.

## 144 Chemometric tools and data processing

145

146 Preprocessing and data elaboration were conducted using the open source software environment  
147 R (3.6.3) with the IDE RStudio (1.2.5001) [13]. A list of the packages used is available in the  
148 supplementary information.

149 As previously said, each milk sample was sampled in triplicate. The average spectrum of the three  
150 experimental replicates was calculated and used for the multivariate models: thus, each milk sample  
151 was represented by one average spectrum in all the computed models.

152 After some preliminary investigations (data not reported), the wavenumbers range was restricted  
153 between 700 and 3700  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  to avoid high noise regions with low information (spectra were  
154 described with 6223 data points). To further reduce the dataset dimensionality and speed up the  
155 computation, one wavelength over five was considered obtaining a final data matrix with 1245  
156 columns (wavelengths), without significant loss of information.

157 Savitzky-Golay filter [14] with a window size of eleven points and a second-order polynomial degree  
158 gave the best results as data pretreatment method.

159 The spectra were then organized in an  $\mathbf{X}$  matrix with samples in the rows and variables in the  
160 columns. PLS regression models were calculated to establish the relationship between the spectra  
161 and the major components, organized in the  $\mathbf{y}$  vectors. Subsequently, some filter-based [15] variable  
162 selection methods were used to find subsets of wavenumbers that allowed for better prediction  
163 capabilities with lower computation weight. Loadings weights (LW), regression coefficients (RC),  
164 variable importance in projection (VIP) and a combination of them were tested as variable selection  
165 methods.

166 Samples were divided in calibration (36 samples) and validation sets (12 samples) using two  
167 selection algorithms: CADEX [16, 17], also known as Kennard Stone algorithm, and HONIGS  
168 [18,19,20]. These algorithms aimed at selecting a chosen number of samples for the calibration set  
169 to uniformly cover the multidimensional space of  $\mathbf{X}$ .

170 The variable selection was carried out on the calibration set samples to improve the models, which  
171 models were validated using samples not used in the variable selection steps (the validation set).

172 The model performances were evaluated in terms of Root-Mean-Square-Error (RMSE) in venetian  
173 blinds (CV) cross-validation (after the variable selection step), Root-Mean-Square-Error of prediction  
174 (RMSEP – final models) and goodness of fit ( $r^2$ ) of the predicted versus the measured values.

## 175 RESULTS & DISCUSSION

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### 177 Method optimization: from sampling to spectra

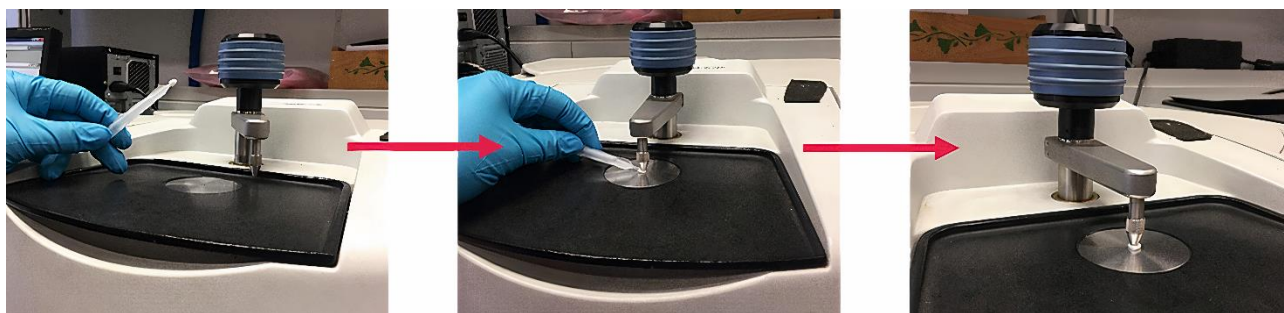
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179 Milk, as a well-known sample, was chosen to evaluate the possibility of the use of VAMS in food  
180 analysis coupled with direct spectroscopy. All the spectra acquisitions were performed about 48  
181 hours after the sampling procedure in order to obtain information simulating a possible shipment.

182 Several optimization tests were conducted to investigate the sampling variability. Beakers with  
183 different capacities (50, 100, 200 mL) were used as sample containers and no significant variation  
184 in the spectra were detected making possible to infer the independence from the initial volume as  
185 expected.

186 Once the VAMS samplers had dried, the position of the tip on the ATR crystal was evaluated. Holding  
187 the tip vertically was found to compromise the tip by breaking it. The horizontal positioning, shown  
188 in Figure 2, was found more convenient and reproducible.

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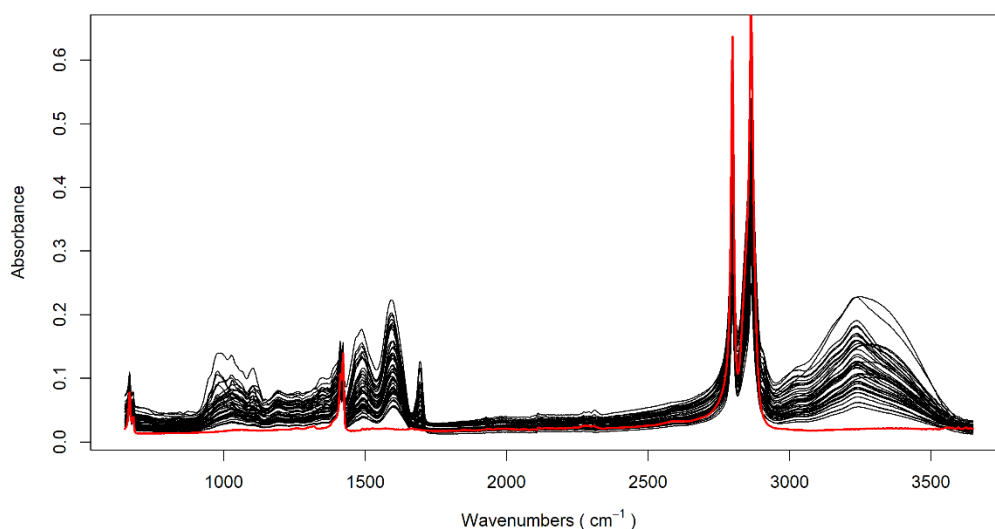
191 Figure 2 – Photos taken during the tip horizontal positioning on the ATR-FTIR instrument. The VAMS  
192 sticks were used as a guideline to place the tips in position on the diamond crystal. The pressure  
193 tower of the Smart iTR™ accessory were used to maintain the needle hubs in position during the  
194 spectra acquisition.

195 Some studies were conducted to gain information about the possibility of making spectral replicates  
196 from the same tip. Results showed that after one measurement the deformation of each tip  
197 significantly hindered the possibility of rotating it to acquire further spectra.

198 After this first optimization step, sample spectra were acquired and three blank tips also were  
199 analyzed in order to investigate the influence of the VAMS tip in the spectra.

200 A driving force in the use of this sampling system is that the water signal does not emerge in the  
201 spectra because water has been completely removed from the sample. This represents an  
202 interesting aspect for the analysis, because dealing with the strong signal of the O-H stretching  
203 usually obtained for this kind of samples can be difficult, as repeatedly reported in literature [20].  
204 Figure 3 shows the signal of the porous hydrophilic tip with and without milk.

205 The IR absorbance bands mainly due to the tip of the microsampler are those of the CH<sub>2</sub> asymmetric  
206 stretching around 2860 cm<sup>-1</sup>, the aldehyde CH stretching at 2800 cm<sup>-1</sup>, the O-H bending at 1420 cm<sup>-1</sup>,  
207 the S=O stretching at 1410 cm<sup>-1</sup> and the fingerprint region around 680 and 670 cm<sup>-1</sup>. The main  
208 features concerning the milk contents are the C=O stretching at 1690 cm<sup>-1</sup>, the peak from the  
209 interaction of the C=O stretching and the NH bending around 1600 cm<sup>-1</sup>. Other important  
210 absorbance bands are the broad band of the O-H stretching around 3300 cm<sup>-1</sup>. At 1490 the O-H, C-  
211 O-H and C-C-H deformation due to carbohydrates are partially covered by the tip spectra. Between  
212 993 cm<sup>-1</sup> and 1110 cm<sup>-1</sup> there are some overlapped peaks due to C-O, C-C, C-H stretching and C-  
213 O-C ether stretching [21–23]. It is worthwhile to note that the quality of spectra in the 1800-2700  
214 cm<sup>-1</sup> range is noticeably influenced by a strong diamond absorption by the diamond ATR crystal, but  
215 in this range neither the microsampler tip nor the milk show their more intense absorption bands.



216

217 Figure 3 – Spectra registered for milk samples dried over the sampling system (black) and spectra of  
218 the blank VAMS (red).

## 219 Prediction of major nutritional components

220

221 Calibrations for each one of the main components of milk samples were developed after a  
222 preliminary investigation related to the exclusion of grossly outlying samples (bad measurements  
223 or similar) and the best preprocessing method. Only two samples, labelled as L31 and L34, were  
224 identified as outliers mainly because of spectral intensity anomalies. Another sample (L24)  
225 presented ~~or~~ peculiar peaks shoulders. We tried to perform the average of only two replicates and  
226 to use these samples in the model but, unfortunately, they showed anomalous residual values. We  
227 tried to use them in the validation phase, but again they showed high residual values, confirming  
228 the need of three replicates to describe the milk samples. A similar conclusion is obtained  
229 constructing the entire models using only one replicate with even worse results (Table S2 in  
230 Supporting Material).

231 It is worthwhile to note that considering the high number of Mitra VAMS analyzed (147 devices) the  
232 fact that only 2 sampling procedures went wrong (less than 1.5%) can be considered as a symptom  
233 of the easiness and user-friendliness of the technique proposed. In addition, no further evident  
234 outliers were identified during the calculation of the regression models and this low number of  
235 outliers reinforce the possibility of using VAMS as a sampling method for this type of samples.

236 No tendencies were observed according to the sampling time, thus spectra collected over different  
237 seasons were safely included in the models.

238 As data preprocessing methods Standard Normal Variate, Multiplicative Scatter Correction and  
239 Savitsky Golay filter with different window widths (7-9-11-13-15 data points) and derivative order  
240 (first and second order) were considered. The best preprocessing method was found as the second  
241 Savitsky Golay filter with a window width of 11 data points and second polynomial order. This data  
242 pretreatment allowed the emphasis of the signal variations useful for the predictions of the  
243 macronutrients in milk samples, and led to a reduction of the signal scattering. The application of  
244 scattering correction methods did not improve the modeling performances.

245 Three blank VAMS were also measured, and their spectra were averaged to obtain a blank VAMS  
246 spectrum. The subtraction of the blank VAMS spectrum to the sampled VAMS spectra was also  
247 considered. The model capabilities did not improve, so this possible additional preprocessing step  
248 was discarded. Because of the high intensity of the blank VAMS spectra in the region over 2500 cm<sup>-1</sup>

249 <sup>1</sup>, models were calculated with and without this spectral region. No significant improvement of the  
 250 models was observed, and thus models were optimized starting from the whole VAMS spectra.

251 Data were mean centered before the PLS modeling. The split of the data into the calibration and  
 252 validation sets with two algorithms led, as expected, to different sample selection depending on the  
 253 algorithm, with most of the samples chosen for the calibration sets in common.

254 Several PLS models were performed to predict the fat, protein and carbohydrate content of the  
 255 samples, combining data pretreatments and variable selection algorithms as above mentioned. The  
 256 best results are presented in Table 2. They are the best compromise between the model complexity  
 257 (number of factors required), the  $r^2$  and the prediction error.

258 The plots of the predicted versus measured data for the best models are depicted in Figure 4.

259

Major component	Variable Selection Method	Number of variables selected	LVs	$r^2_{cv}$	RMSECV	Validation Algorithm	$r^2_{prediction}$	RMSEP
Fats	LW	87	6	0.838	0.49	CADEX	0.972	0.27
	LW	89	6	0.833	0.50	HONIGS	0.965	0.32
Proteins	RC	306	5	0.788	0.68	CADEX	0.806	0.51
	RC	125	5	0.793	0.68	HONIGS	0.788	0.45
Carbohydrates	RC	117	4	0.797	0.71	CADEX	0.806	0.41
	RC	81	3	0.802	0.73	HONIGS	0.748	0.36

260

261 Table 2- Best prediction models obtained for the macronutrients quantification in milk samples. LW  
 262 = loading weights, RC = regression coefficients.

263 Concerning the fat prediction, the most promising models are the ones obtained when the loadings  
 264 weights filter was applied to select 87 or 89 variables. The models showed a bias equal to -0.0217  
 265 and -0.0483 in the cross-validation phase respectively. This low bias is indicative ~~for~~ of the absence  
 266 of systematic errors. The selected variables are distributed along the whole spectrum, and they  
 267 belong to both milk and VAMS spectroscopic signals.

268 The best model to predict proteins was found when applying the regression coefficient filter as the  
 269 variable selection method, obtaining an RMSEP of 0.45 and a bias in the cross-validation phase of -  
 270 0.0447 which is indicative of the absence of systematic errors. The selected variables come from  
 271 peaks around 1100  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  and mainly from the VAMS signals.

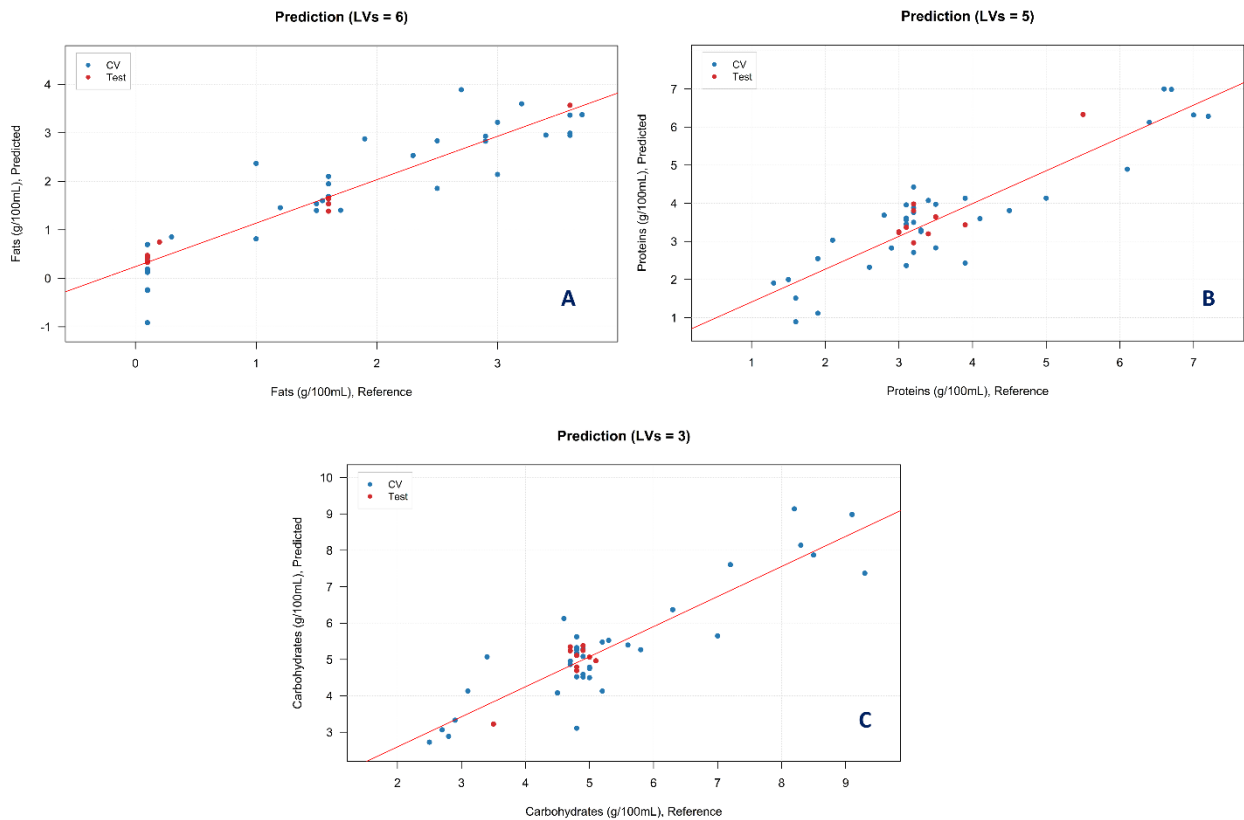
272 The best model for carbohydrates prediction is the one obtained with the use of 81 variables  
273 selected with the regression coefficient filters. 3 factors were needed to obtain an RMSEP of 0.36  
274 and an  $r^2$  of 0.802. Even in this prediction, the variables selected belonged to both milk and VAMS  
275 spectroscopic signals. The bias calculated was -0.069 in the cross-validation phase. Also in this case,  
276 this is indicative of the absence of systematic errors.

277 The obtained error values are very satisfactory considering that the reference values for the samples  
278 under study, according to the European Regulation 1169/2011/EC, include a tolerance of 2 g/100 g  
279 for proteins and carbohydrates and 1.5 g/100 g for fat [24]. It is worthwhile to recall that the  
280 contents of macronutrients declared by the producers were used as the reference values, and this  
281 influenced the quantification errors.

282 Under these premises, it is worthy to note that two algorithms for the selection of the calibration  
283 and the validation sets were used, obtaining results completely comparable as showed in table 2,  
284 proving the robustness of the models presented.

285 Moreover, the models include the variability between the different sampling conditions over the  
286 seasons, as samples were sampled in different sampling campaigns. The obtained error of prediction  
287 can be considered a robust estimation.

288 The obtained results for the fat content are even better to those obtained in a previous work [25]  
289 on a similar dataset (commercial milk samples) using the direct application of a drop of milk on the  
290 same ATR-FT-MIR instrument. Concerning protein and carbohydrate contents, the models appear  
291 to be slightly better when using the direct drop analysis with the ATR-FT-MIR instruments. Iñón et  
292 al. [26] reported very similar results on commercial milk samples.



293

294 Figure 4 - Predicted vs measured values for the fats (A), proteins (B) and carbohydrates(C) contents.

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## 296 Stability

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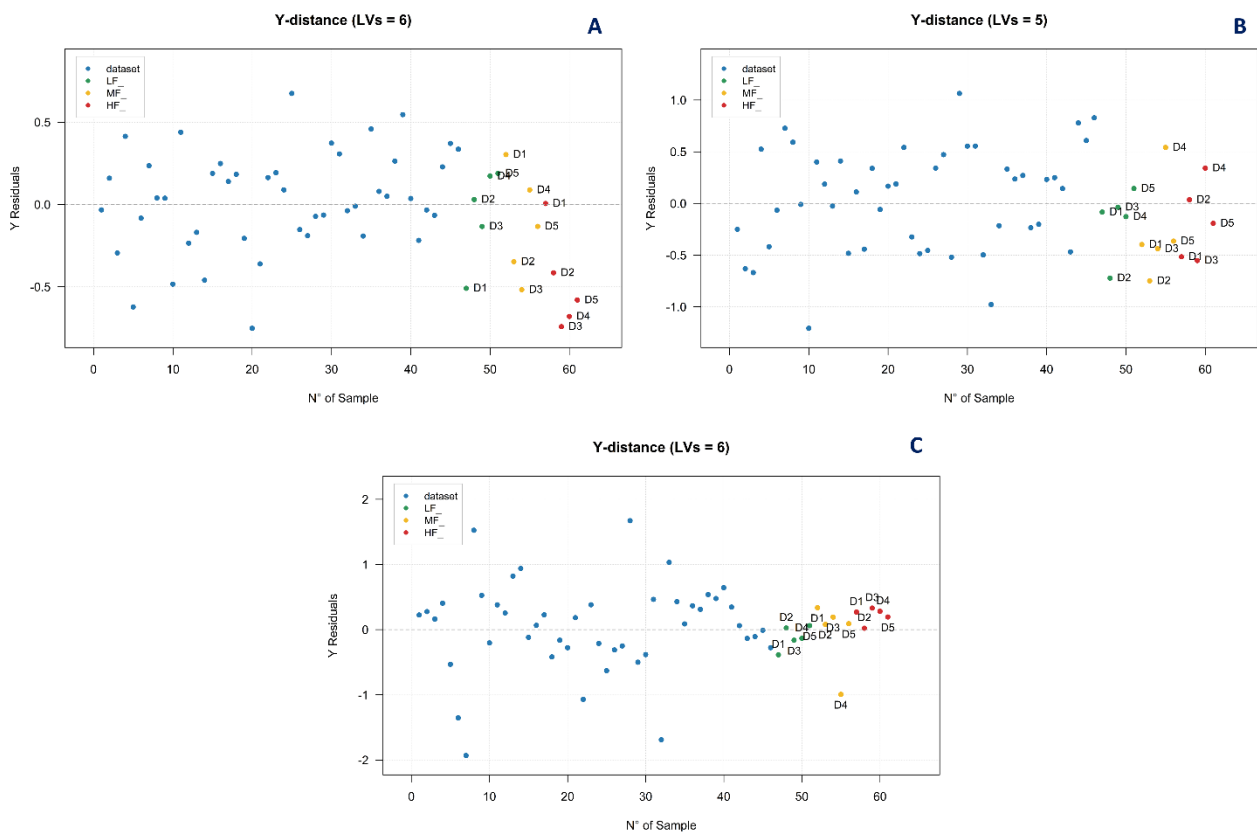
298 Investigations about variability in spectra depending on the day of analysis were carried out.

299 Three milk samples were chosen from the commercial milk population. Considering that the  
 300 variability of available commercial milk is mainly due to fat levels (high or whole, medium or semi-  
 301 skimmed and low or skimmed according to the EU regulation [12]), the three samples were selected  
 302 to be one for each fats category with protein and carbohydrate content around the mean value for  
 303 commercial samples.

304 Each milk sample was sampled with 15 VAMS devices simultaneously. The spectroscopic analysis  
 305 was carried out then at 2h (D1), 24h (D2), 48h (D3), 72h (D4) and 96h (D5) from the time of sampling,  
 306 according to the following scheme: for each milk sample, three sampled VAMS were randomly  
 307 selected from the 15 devices and analyzed after 2 hours of sampling. Then, other three VAMS  
 308 sampled devices were randomly selected and analyzed after 24 hours from the time of sampling, up  
 309 to 96h after sampling (see Figure S5 - Supplementary Material). Replicates were averaged, obtaining

310 one mean spectrum for each milk and sample time. The spectra were then pretreated as required  
311 by the models and the fats, proteins and carbohydrates values were predicted to assess if some  
312 error in prediction was dependent on time.

313 The mean error in prediction obtained for fats was 0.34, that for the proteins was 0.32 and that for  
314 the carbohydrates 0.23. For all the compounds the range of the errors in prediction was found in  
315 agreement with that of the respective model and no trends were identified among the five different  
316 measures over time (Figure 5).



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318

319 Figure 5 – y residuals plots for the fats (A), proteins (B), and carbohydrates (C) models. “dataset” represents  
320 the residuals on y of the samples used to construct and validate the models. “LF\_”, “MF\_” and “HF\_” are the  
321 residuals values when the y value of the samples used for the stability studies were predicted. They stand for  
322 low fat, medium fat and high fat, respectively.

323

324 From the data obtained it was demonstrated that, even if the sampler was delivered late to the  
325 laboratory, it can be correctly analyzed by the models. This is checked for a delivery time of up to  
326 96 hours.

## 327 CONCLUSIONS

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329 For the first time, major components in commercial milk samples were determined by means of a  
330 microsampling strategy. This strategy allows the direct analysis of the microsampler devices by ATR-  
331 FT-MIR without the need of further extraction processes, and therefore without the need of any  
332 chemical in the whole process of analysis. Multivariate regression was used to find the  
333 concentrations of major components in commercial cow milk samples. Results were very  
334 satisfactory and comparable with other portable technologies, as mentioned in the manuscript.

335 This application paves the way for a new logic of portable milk analysis. When it is not possible to  
336 reach the sampling point with an instrument of measure, or it is complicated to send the liquid  
337 sample to a laboratory, a microsampler device may be the solution. A very small quantity of sample  
338 is required, and after sampling VAMS proved to be stable for several days, making the application  
339 truly usable in real contexts.

340 Moreover, this research firstly suggests new possible applications of VAMS devices out from the  
341 clinical field, expanding therefore its scope of application. They are now mainly employed in  
342 biological and biomedical applications, but they can represent a valid alternative for sampling,  
343 sample storage and transportation of different kind of liquid materials, in many different fields of  
344 application. Secondly, analytes of interest have always been extracted from VAMS devices in  
345 previous works with solvents, making the whole procedure less green than it could be. In this article,  
346 we demonstrate that spectroscopic techniques and multivariate analysis prove to be powerful tools  
347 for the direct analysis of the microsampling devices, avoiding thus solvent use, manipulation, and  
348 wastes.

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## 430 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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432 S1) Table S1. Milk samples major components composition expressed in g/100 mL. Infant formula is indicated  
433 by \* in the table.

Label	Fats (g/100mL)	Carbohydrates (g/100mL)	Proteins (g/100mL)
L1	1.6	4.8	3.1
L2	3.6	4.7	3
L3	0.3	5.6	3.9
L4	1.7	4.8	3.1

L5	1.6	4.9	3
L6	3.6	4.7	3.9
L7	3.6	4.8	3.3
L8	0.1	5	3.5
L9	1.6	5.1	3.9
L10*	2.9	5.3	2.6
L11	2.3	5.2	3.1
L12	0.1	4.7	5
L13*	3.4	7.2	1.9
L14	1.6	5.8	4.1
L15*	3	7	2.9
L16	1.5	4.7	3.2
L17*	2.5	9.3	2.1
L18	1.55	4.9	3.4
L19	1.5	4.6	2.8
L20	0.2	4.8	3.3
L21*	3.2	8.2	1.3
L22*	3	9.1	1.6
L23*	1.9	6.3	1.5
L24	0.1	2.5	7
L25	0.1	4.5	3.5
L26*	2.5	8.3	1.6
L27	1.2	4.8	3.2
L28	1	4.9	3.1
L29	1.6	5.2	3.4
L30	2.7	4.9	3.2
L31	3.9	4.9	3.2
L32	3.7	5	3.5
L33*	2.9	8.5	1.9
L34	3.7	5.1	3.4
L35	1	4.9	3.1
L36	1.6	5	3.2
L37	0.1	3.4	4.5
L38	1.6	4.8	3.2
L39	0.1	5	3.2
L40	0.1	4.9	3.1
L41	3.6	4.8	3.2
L42	1.6	4.8	3.2
L43	0.1	4.8	7.2
M1	0.1	3.5	5.5
M2	0.1	3.1	6.1
M3	0.1	2.9	6.4
M4	0.1	2.8	6.6
M5	0.1	2.7	6.7

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437 S2) Table S2. Best results obtained for the prediction model of the macronutrients in milk samples  
438 using one replicate instead of the mean of three. LW = loading weights, RC = regression coefficients.

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Major component	Variable Selection Method	Number of variables selected	LVs	$r^2_{cv}$	RMSECV	Algorithm	$r^2_{prediction}$	RMSEP
Fats	LW	91	4	0.808	0.56	CADEX	0.667	0.68
	LW	118	6	0.809	0.51	HONIGS	0.814	0.67
Proteins	LW	480	3	0.637	0.90	CADEX	0.668	0.67
	RC	154	3	0.615	0.93	HONIGS	0.692	0.61
Carbohydrates	RC	115	4	0.823	0.67	CADEX	0.947	0.39
	RC	357	4	0.850	0.63	HONIGS	0.704	0.42

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444 S3) List of R packages used for data preprocessing and analysis

Package	Version	Main use	References
ChemoSpec	5.3.2	Manipulation and data pretreatments	<a href="https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=ChemoSpec">https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=ChemoSpec</a> (available on 26.04.2021)
ChemoSpecUtil	0.4.51	Manipulation and data pretreatments	<a href="https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=ChemoSpecUtils">https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=ChemoSpecUtils</a> (available on 26.04.2021)
signal	0.7-6	Data preprocessing	<a href="https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=signal">https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=signal</a> (available on 26.04.2021)
Chemometrics	1.4.2	Exploratory analysis and prediction models	<a href="https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=chemometrics">https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=chemometrics</a> (available on 26.04.2021)
ChemometricswithR	0.1.13	Exploratory analysis and prediction models	[27]
pls	2.7-3	Exploratory analysis and	[27]

		prediction models	
mdataools	0.11.2	Predictive models	[28]
prospectr	0.2.1	Samples split into calibration and validation sets	<a href="https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=prospectr">https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=prospectr</a> (available on 26.04.2021)
plsVarSel	0.9.6	Variable selection	[15]

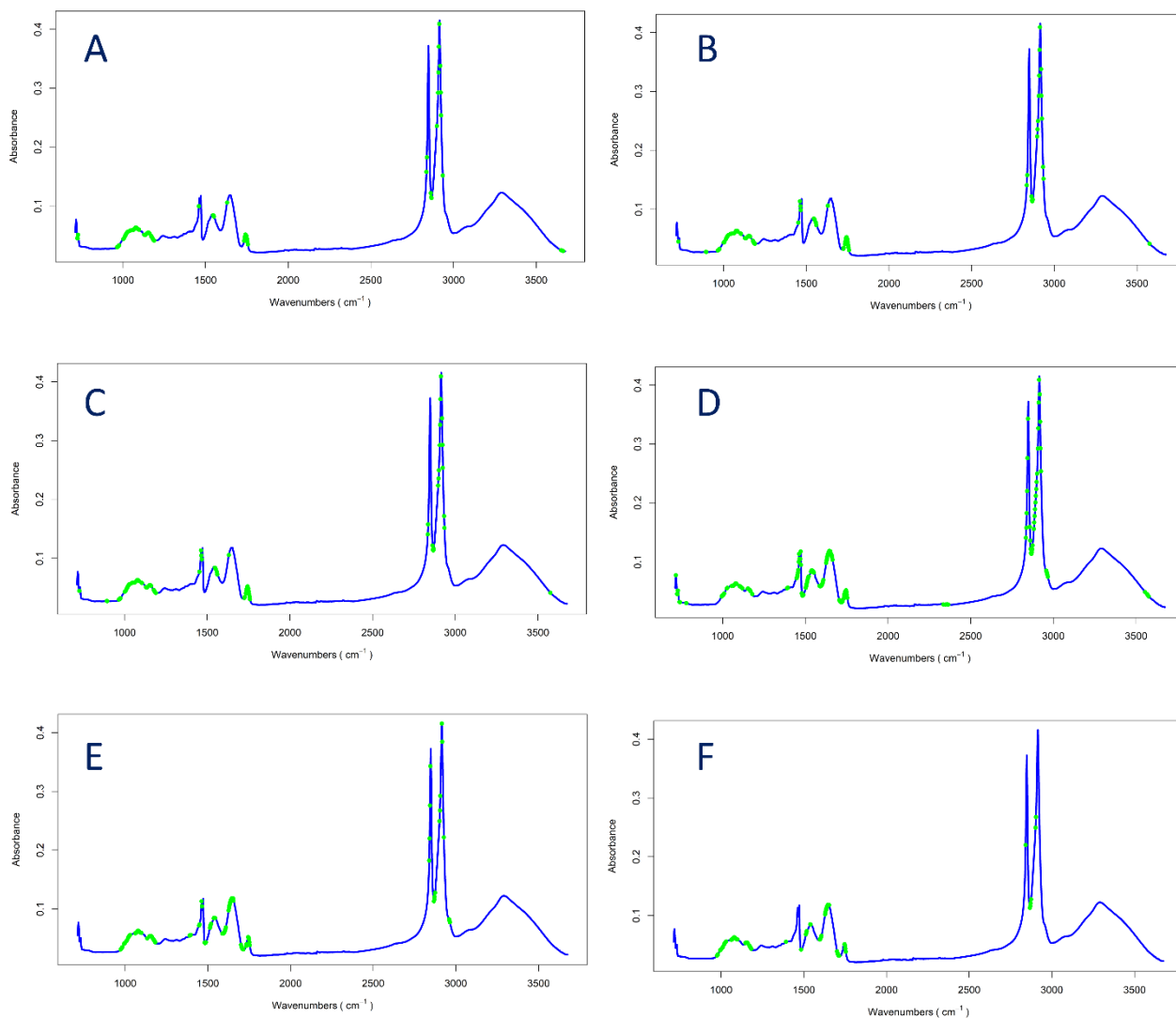
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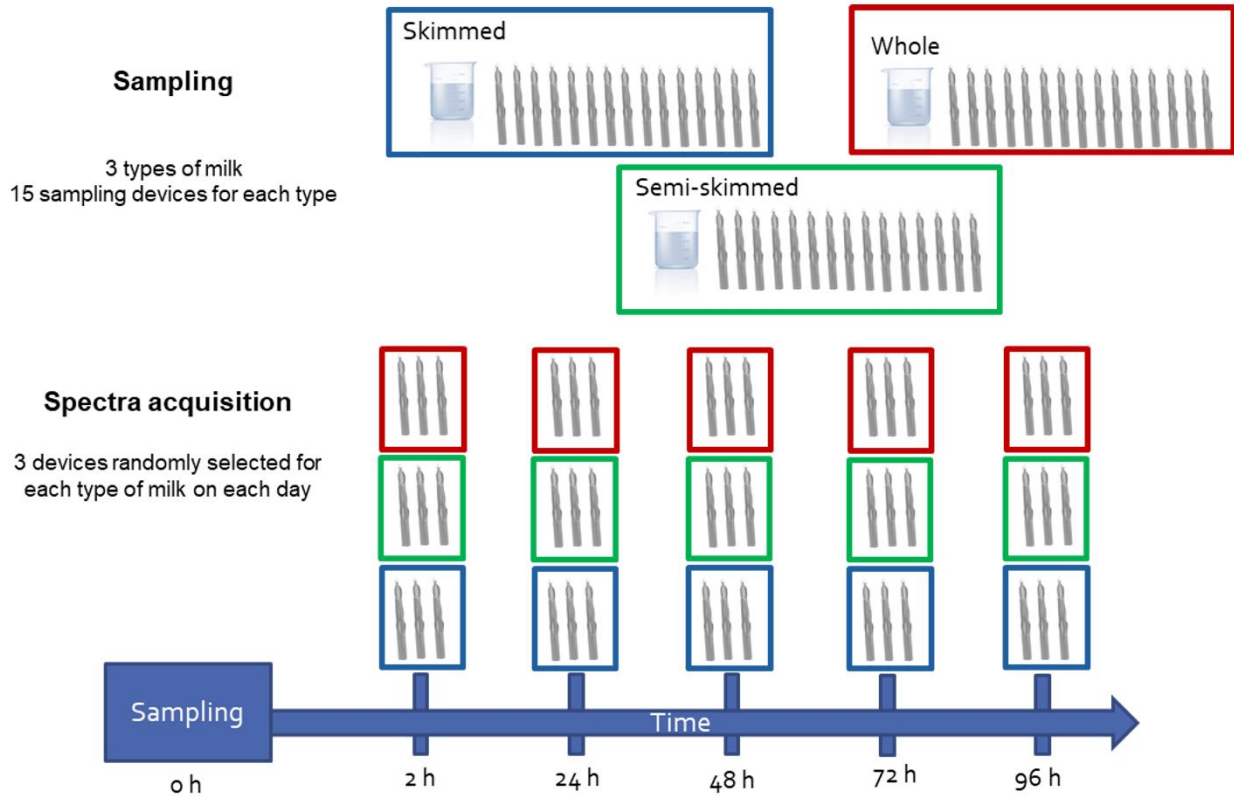
448 S4) Figure representing the selected variables for the best models described in the text and reported  
449 as Table 2. A) Variables selected in the model for fats prediction when using KS algorithm to select  
450 the calibration set. B) Variables selected in the model for fats prediction when using HO algorithm  
451 to select the calibration set. C) Variables selected in the model for proteins prediction when using  
452 KS algorithm to select the calibration set. D) Variables selected in the model for proteins prediction  
453 when using HO algorithm to select the calibration set. E) Variables selected in the model for  
454 carbohydrates prediction when using KS algorithm to select the calibration set. F) Variables selected  
455 in the model for carbohydrates prediction when using HO algorithm to select the calibration set.

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S4) Figure representing the stability experimental sequence



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