

Soil Testing

Agriculture Fields (Cropland and Pastures)



For proper management, a soil test for available nutrients should be made every 3-5 years. This will help prevent over application of nutrients from fertilizers, manures and other sources. Preventing agricultural pollution.

Proper collection of a soil sample is important. Test results will be no better than the sample collected. Accuracy of analysis depends on the collection of a representative soil sample.

Try to take samples when the soil is not wet. If your samples are wet, spread the soil out to **AIR DRY, do not use heat**, before sending in. Sampling probes and bags may usually be obtained at your local Extension office.

Follow these steps to obtain a good sample:

1. From each field or area of a field, take enough samples to properly represent the plot, 20-30 cores or slices per field would be typical. If it is one large field, you should keep separate samples from the bottom land and upland portions.
 - Collect soil 6-8 inches deep for the standard test (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and soil pH (Lime requirements). A second sample down to the 24 inch level is needed for a **nitrogen profile test**. These **samples MUST be kept separate from the upper layer**.
 - Avoid sampling in old fence rows, along limestone rock roads, low spots and other areas that might give misleading results. If information is desired on these unusual areas, obtain a sample from them.
2. For each desired area, collect samples into a clean **PLASTIC container** and mix thoroughly.
3. Put one cup of the soil mixture into a paper bag.
4. Clearly label your bag so you know what field it represents.
5. Take representative samples to your local Extension office or farm dealer.

Note: The Shawnee County Conservation District Non-Point Source Pollution Program promotes soil testing by paying a portion of the fees for analysis. Funding provided by the Division of Conservation, Kansas Dept. of Agriculture through appropriation from the Kansas Water Plan Fund. For payment, areas being tested must be within the boundaries of Shawnee County, Kansas. Samples must be taken to: Shawnee County Extension Office, 1740 SW Western Avenue, Topeka, Kansas 66604-3095, phone: 785-232-0062.