

Soil Sampling

If you have not already tested the soil in your garden, pasture or crop fields it is not too late. Soil testing gives you an understanding of what is in your soil, and possibly what is not in the soil. When planting and growing crops and grasses they need nutrients to reach their potential. K-State Research and Extension can help you determine what nutrients are present and which nutrients are needed. Simple tests provide you with the amounts of Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium in your soils, and will also tell you the pH. Knowing these numbers can help you to add the appropriate fertilizers and save you time and money.

If you plan to do your own soil sampling and use the K-State Soil Testing Laboratory, the following provides specific information on soil sample collection methods and mailing instructions.

- To take a sample, you will need a sampling tube, auger or spade, and a clean pail. (If you're also having the soil analyzed for zinc, be sure to use a plastic container to avoid contamination from galvanized buckets or material made of rubber.) You will also need soil sample containers and information form from your local Extension office.
- Draw a map of the sample area on the information sheet and divide your fields into uniform areas. Each area should have the same soil texture, color, slope, and fertilization and cropping history.
- From each area, take a sample of 20-30 cores or slices for best results. At the very minimum, 10-15 cores should be taken per sample. Mix the cores thoroughly in a clean container and fill your soil sample container from this mixture. For available nitrogen, chloride, or sulfur tests, a subsoil sample to 24 inches is necessary.
- Avoid sampling in old fencerows, dead furrows, low spots, feeding areas, or other areas that might give unusual results. If information is desired on these unusual areas, obtain a separate sample from the area.
- Air dry the samples as soon as possible for the available nitrogen test. (Air drying before shipment is recommended, but not essential, for all other tests.) Do not use heat for drying.
- Be sure to label the soil container clearly and record the numbers on the soil container and the information sheet.
- Air dry the samples as soon as possible for the available nitrogen test. (Air drying before shipment is recommended, but not essential, for all other tests.) Do not use heat for drying.
- Take the samples to your local Research and Extension office for shipping.

Please contact the Marais des Cygnes Extension District for more information on soil sampling and pricing. The cost of a basic sample is \$10 and prices vary depending on the test selected. There are also cost share programs that are available through the local Conservation District programs that individuals can request when submitting samples. Paola Office – 913-294-4306 and Mound City Office – 913-795-2829.