

For Producer Use

Soil Sampling Procedures for Nutrient Management

1. **Define the management units.** A management area is an area that **can** and **will** be managed separately from any other. If different field areas have different soil types, past cropping histories, or different production potentials, these areas should be sampled separately and managed separately (See *Figure 1*). If it is impossible for a farmer to manage different areas separately, they should be treated as one management unit.

2. **Sample the management units.** Each unit should be sampled separately. Follow these steps for each management unit.
 - Collect 15 to 20 samples in a clean plastic bucket.
 - Take samples from throughout the entire area of the unit.
 - Follow a sampling pattern similar to that in *Figure 2*.
 - Avoid sampling unusual areas such as windbreaks, old fence lines, wet areas or areas near lime rock roads.
 - Scrape away any surface residues.
 - Sample to the correct depth (See *Figure 3*).
 - 2 inches for monitoring pH on no till cropland and pasture
 - 8 inches for fertility samples on cropland and pasture
 - 12 inches for PSNT

3. **Mix the sample.**
 - Thorough mixing is essential.
 - If the sample is hard or strongly aggregated, break up the soil aggregates.
 - Transfer the soil to a bucket. Mix the soil in the bucket at least 50 times. Spread the sample out.

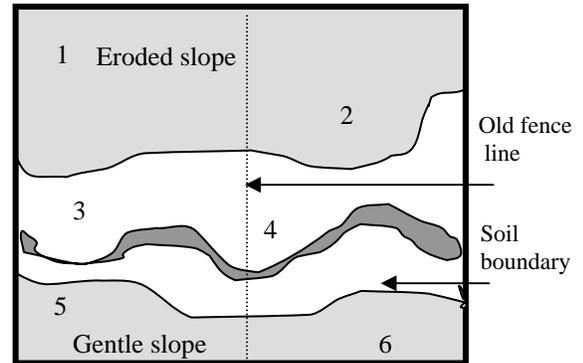


Figure 1: There are ideally 6 different management units in this field because of differences in landscape position and past management.

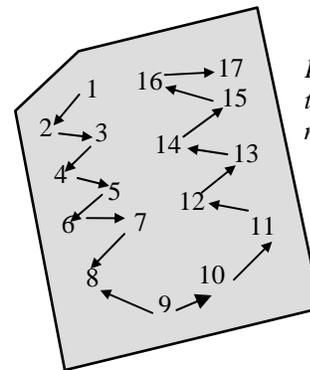


Figure 2: Sample from the entire area of the management unit.

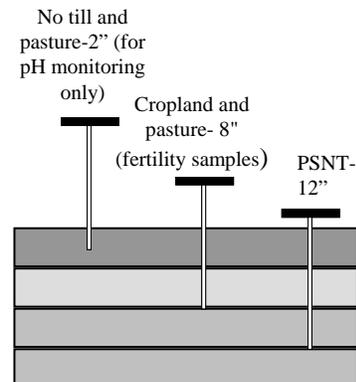


Figure 3: Sample to the correct depth.

Soil Sampling Procedures for Nutrient Management (continued)

- Take 5 scoops of soil from different parts of the sample to provide a total soil volume of approximately 1 pint.
- Place the soil into the soil sample bag.

4. Drying the sample.

- Spread the sample out in a warm place overnight to air dry it.
- **DO NOT HEAT** the soil.

5. Label the soil sample bag and place air-dried soil into it.

6. Fill out the information sheet as completely and accurately as possible.

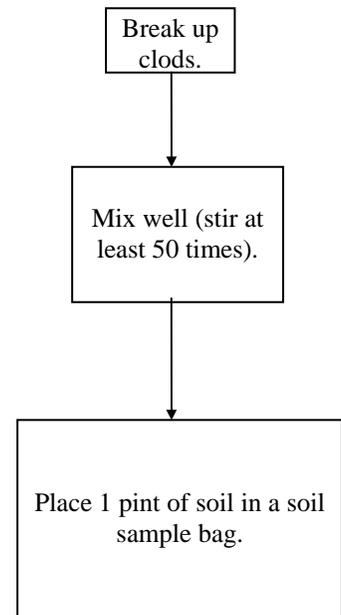


Figure 4: Thorough mixing is essential.

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