



An Agrico Crop Talk newsletter regarding

Soil Sampling.

Correct soil sampling methods and a complete soil analysis of all nutrients will allow you to make the most informed fertility decisions and express the greatest validity and confidence in your recommendations.

Soil samples are the best marketing tool we have for selling fertilizer

To successfully establish a sound crop fertilization program, a current soil analysis is required. Soil analysis indicates the relative availability of nutrients in the soil for crop use. Regular sampling on all fields every 2 to 4 years can be utilized as a soil nutrient balance indicator.

Right after harvest is the best time to sample

For consistent results, samples should be taken at the same time every year. Variation in nutrient availability occurs throughout the season, primarily due to extremes in plant utilization as well as environmental conditions, such as soil temperature and soil moisture fluctuations. The ideal time to soil sample is right after harvest, regardless of the crop.

Improve grower confidence and understanding of the benefits of soil sampling

Sample Area: The area to be sampled should not be more than 40 acres. If soils differ in soil type, appearance or past treatment within the field and can be managed distinctively, then these areas should be sampled separately.

Areas to Avoid: Avoid sampling small areas with obvious sources of unusual variability such as eroded knolls, muck pockets, field borders or shelterbelts. Avoid areas such as old fence rows or barn yard runoff areas and stay away from lanes and roads.

Patterns: Although current technology allows for intensive sampling methods for high value cropping regions, composite samples are perhaps the most common. It is important to select a pattern that covers the whole field well. Consistent sampling patterns, across all fields, will help growers gain confidence in your services. A good idea is for the sampler is to quickly sketch the field boundary and pattern sampled as a common communication tool for making fertilizer decisions.

Fertility Facts: Recent survey results indicate that 47% of soil samples taken in the United States and Canada have “barely adequate to inadequate” phosphorous levels

While many people are aware of the environmental concerns surrounding too much Phosphorous, few may realize that many areas in key agricultural regions have too little Phosphorous. Agronomists across the nation are advising farmers to take corrective action before the next growing season. One suggestion is to test their soils and add Phosphorous responsibly, based on soil test results and yield goals. Without adequate Phosphorus, other nutrients are absorbed less efficiently and are more likely to be lost to the environment. Due to “the Law of Minimums” theory, deficient nutrient levels will not prevent pollution but rather a proper balance of nutrients and maximum plant growth potential.

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