

Soil Sampling Guide

Soil conditions vary from paddock to paddock and region to region. Each paddock should be considered on a case by case basis. Many factors govern the content and balanced availability of nutrients and elements in the soil. Only from a soil analysis can we measure the degree of efficiency at which our soils are producing crops and pastures, and only when all elements of soil content, air, water, nutrients and microbiological life, are taken into account can an effective soil program be developed.

Soil Test Results Report

A printed report accompanies the analysis figures, which includes a chart graphically showing the condition of your soil and recommendations for a soil improvement program in order of priority.

Soil Sampling Method

For a soil test to provide a reliable guide to the condition of your soil, the sample tested must truly reflect the soil in the area sampled. If the soil type varies within the area to be tested, sample the predominant soil type only.

A minimum of 5-10 cores per sample is recommended, the more sites sampled the more representative the sample will be and more accurate results are achieved.

Core depths of 150mm (6") for pasture and crops, 250mm (10") for orchards and vineyards (2.5cm or 1" diameter of core).

Subsurface soil sampling is beneficial when establishing deep rooted plants, such as vineyards and orchards or where salinity and acidity are suspected. Take at least 5- 10 subsample cores from the 150mm (6") to the 300mm (12") levels of the soil profile.

Avoid contaminated and deceptive areas such as in the vicinity of gateways, animal tracks, animal camps, fences, troughs, trees, fertiliser and lime dumps, planter or seeder loading areas. The bottom of gullies and water holding depressions, areas where timber windrows and have been burnt and extremely wet soils should not be sampled.

Remove surface material such as pasture or weed growth and surface litter, to bare soil at sampling site.

Cropped paddock soil sample cores should be taken from between plants within rows.

Areas with major soil type variations, or that differ in appearance, crop growth or past treatment should be sampled separately, provided the area can be treated separately. A soil or crop map can be helpful in distinguishing areas and in recording the location of samples.

General Instructions

Several different tools – such as an auger, sampling tube or spade - may be used in taking samples. Important: Use a clean plastic bucket to collect and mix samples, a metal bucket may contaminate the sample for trace element analysis.

Never use your hands to mix soil samples

If a sampling tool is not available, use a spade to dig a small hole with a vertical side and take a uniform slice of soil about 20mm thick to the required depth. Break up clods, mix thoroughly and spread the total sample evenly on a clean surface. Divide into quarters, discard the two diagonal quarters and remix the remains, continue this reduction process to achieve the volume required to fill to the sample bag line.

Select area to be sampled and take cores at regular intervals as per the relative pattern diagram on the reverse side of this sheet.

Cores should be taken from sites of average growth. For plant sampling, sample half way between the stem and dripline. Do not sample bare ground unless it is predominant in the area or patches of very good growth, such as urine and dung clumps or within 10m (30') of sheds, tracks and fence lines. Thoroughly mix sample cores in a plastic bucket.

Never use your hands to mix soil samples

Label each sample bag with the relevant sample details and Information Form index letter (A), (B) or (C), immediately after sample core collection, mixing and preparation, then fill sample bag to fill line, approximately 400 to 500g

Please include a duplicate sample of approx 200 grams

This bag is a representative sample that will be on hand for any cross checking that may be required.

Fill out the ***Soil Audit form***, one for each two samples, with as much of the requested details as possible. Ensure that the index letter ***(A), (B), (C)*** and sample identification, corresponds with that of the sample bag. If more than 3 samples are to be sent from the same farm or property, mark each sample and information form with next letter in alphabetical order eg. ***(D), (E), (F)*** etc. Keep a record of these details for yourself.

Send sample bags and information sheets by courier or express post to:

Lawry Agribusiness,
Att: Ian Lawry,
PO Box 2837,
Toowoomba Qld., 4350.
Tel: 07 46329346
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E: ian@ lawry.com.au

