

Soil Samples

Introduction

The results of any soil analysis are only as good as the samples taken. If the sample is not truly representative of the area, the result will be of little value. Correct soil sampling takes time, but following the guidelines detailed here will ensure that this time is not wasted.

How to take soil samples

Equipment

To take a sample you will need:-

- A sampling tool
- A bucket
- Sampling bags and a waterproof marker pen

The best sampling tool is either a soil auger or corer. If these are unavailable, then provided due care is taken a spade or trowel can be used.

When

Samples should not be taken within two years of applying lime or within two months of applying a compound fertilizer, organic manure or more than 50 kg/ha nitrogen.

Where

Large fields, even if they appear uniform, should ideally be sub-divided into 4 ha (10 acre) units and sampled separately. Separate samples should also be taken from areas which were manured differently, or which have different soil types or topography, even if there is only one crop.

Avoid

- headlands
- near gates
- areas where lime or manure has been previously been dumped
- areas where livestock congregate

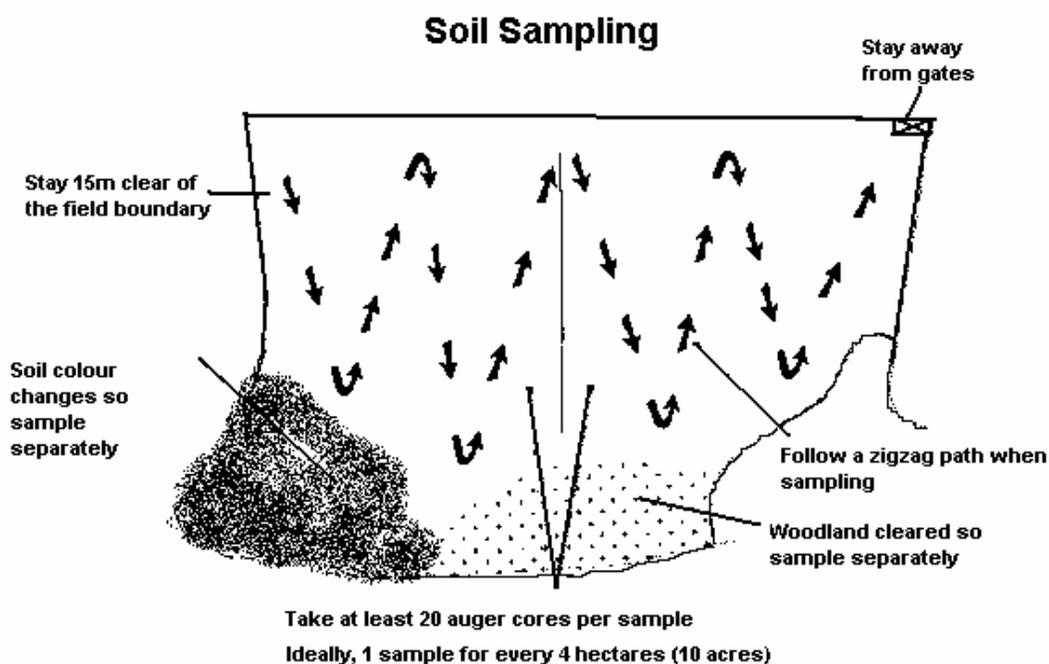
How?

Permanent grassland should be sampled to 10 cm (4 in) and arable land (including short-term rotation grass) to plough depth 20 cm (8 in).

When using a spade, remove a slice of soil about 2.5 cm (1 in) thick to sample depth and collect in clean bucket. Further slices should be taken in the same way from different parts of the field, as shown in the diagram below, until about 20 have been collected. Place all samples in the bucket.

When an auger is used, it should be twisted into the soil to sampling depth and pulled out. All the soil adhering to it should be carefully transferred to the bucket. Further cores should be taken from different parts of the field, as shown, until about 20 have been collected.

Write the field name, farm name and address in the space provided on the sampling bag before it is filled. The sample should be thoroughly mixed in the bucket before taking a representative sample to fill the SAC sampling bag. Large stones, roots and plant material should not be placed in the bag.





Registration Details

Please remember to send a copy of your registration details and analysis requirements when you submit samples to the laboratory. Registration forms can be obtained from the laboratory if required.

Where to send your samples?

Please send your sample(s) and form(s) to:

Analytical Services Department
SAC Consulting
Bush Estate
Penicuik
Midlothian
EH26 0QE