

SOIL SAMPLING FOR INDIANA PRODUCERS

Program Background

Soil sampling is an integral part of soil fertility management. Soil sampling provides information on the fertility status of soils within a field that can be used for making nutrient application recommendations, and monitoring soil fertility over time. Effective soil sampling can improve on-farm nutrient use efficiency, leading to increased return on investment for nutrient application and reducing the risk of nutrient runoff.

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) and partners throughout the state have worked with the Gulf Hypoxia Program to develop a soil sampling program. This program focuses on increasing the knowledge and use of soil sampling as a nutrient management practice to benefit on-farm operations.

Benefits of Soil Sampling

A few of the many benefits to soil sampling are:

- Determines nutrient levels in a field
- Helps determine the amount and type of fertilizer needed for optimized use resulting in reduced nutrient loss
- May promote higher yielding and better quality crops
- Measures changes in soil fertility over time
- May help decrease input costs, increasing profits
- Improves soil health

Program Eligibility

This program includes pasture, hay, and specialty crop production systems located within the Mississippi River Basin (Figure 1). This program excludes personal or hobby gardens and private lawns.

Participating growers must be willing to sign-up 50 acres or less. Please reach out to the Nutrient Stewardship Program Manager listed on reverse if there is interest in having acreage sampled on more than 50 acres of pasture, hay, specialty or even row crop acreage. Acreage will be prioritized by:

- Fields that have never been sampled, or
- Fields that have not been sampled within last 3 years, and
- New program enrollments

Soil Sampling

Producers will work with ISDA staff to coordinate soil sampling and provide information.



Figure 1. Eligible program area (green).



ISDA staff will implement a management zone sampling methodology based on soil survey maps and a field's dominant soil types. Number of samples to be collected is dependent on dominant soil types and field conditions encountered. Samples should be collected prior to fertilizer application.

Sample Analysis

Soil samples will be collected prior to fertilizer application. Samples will be submitted to a contracted lab for analysis. Soil samples will be analyzed for organic matter, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, calcium, soil pH, buffer pH, cation exchange capacity, and % base saturation of cation elements.

Producers may inquire about other tests. However, ISDA cannot guarantee funds to cover these additional tests and participants may need to cover those additional costs.

Getting Results

A results packet will be mailed and/or sent via email including lab results, educational materials, and other soil health information.

ISDA, our partners, or trusted crop advisors may be able to help you determine next steps after receiving your results.

How to enroll?

Interested individuals can reach out to soilsampling@isda.in.gov, the contact information below, by scanning the QR Code, or reach out to your local ISDA Resource Specialist for program participation.

Check our website (www.in.gov/isda) for program updates.

For more information contact:

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