

Taking your own Soil Samples

You will need:

- **A sampling tool (best to use soil auger or corer)**
- **A bucket**
- **Clean plastic sealable sample bags and waterproof marker**

Soil samples can be collected at any time of the year, but avoid sampling within two years of applying lime or within two months of applying a compound fertiliser, organic manure or more than 50kg/ha nitrogen.

Divide large fields into 4ha units and sample separately. Take samples from areas which had different applications of manure or have different soil types or topography. Avoid headlands, near gates, areas where lime or manure have previously been dumped and areas where livestock congregate.

How

Permanent grassland should be sampled to 10cm and arable land (including short-term rotation grass) to plough depth 20cm. When using a spade, remove a slice of soil about 2.5cm wide to sample depth and collect in a clean bucket. Take further slices in the same way from different parts of the field until about 20 have been collected. When using an auger, it should be twisted into the soil to sampling depth and pulled out. All soil adhering to it should be carefully transferred to the bucket. Again further cores should be taken from different parts of the field until about 20 have been collected weighing roughly 500g. Write the field name, farm name and address on the sampling bag before it is filled. Thoroughly mix the sample in the bucket before taking a representative sample to fill the bag. Please do not place large stones, roots and plant material in the bag.

