

SOIL SAMPLING PROCESS – FACT SHEET

The TFS Board is pleased to again offer TFS members free soil testing as part of our Soil Club activities. As per previous years, there are two testing options with the differences between the 2 test options explained further on. **Members have an allocation of up to \$225 (incl GST) per membership to undertake soil tests.**

Members should consider which paddocks they test; many may choose to re-test the same paddocks so they can start to develop a trend line of data showing fertility changes in those paddocks over time. However, depending on where properties are at from a management/fertility point of view, members might like to rethink what they need to monitor.

Members are encouraged to take advantage of the reduced testing rates negotiated for TFS members and undertake more than their allocated tests. The cost of additional tests will be invoiced to members on submission of the samples, noting that those additional tests must also be provided at the same time.

In addition to you receiving the complete soil data results, all results will be fed into the TFS Soil Database and the results graphed against the critical values and individual paddock reports provided to members.

As with previous years, a follow up TFS-specific analysis session will be held later in the summer to discuss the results (results will be discussed on a confidential basis). This workshop has been extremely important in helping producers interpret the results and work through future management plans.

Several agronomists will be working with us on our Soil Club activities this year. They will provide additional expert interpretation and analysis and we will also leverage the work being done on the Phosphorus Efficient Pastures Project for Soil Club participants.

CORE SAMPLER PROBES

TFS has purchased 4 new soil samplers for members use this season. They are Arborline Standard Soil Samplers and provide fast and accurate sampling. Please get in touch with us to request a soil sampler and we will work out the best way to get one to you.

COLLECTION POINTS

When your samples are ready please call Tracy on 0414 811 185, Pip on 0429 921 932 or email tablelandsfarming@gmail.com to arrange collection. They will be collected from you or we will arrange for you to drop them off at:

- ☐ McGeechan's CRT, Crookwell
- ☐ Local Land Services, Goulburn

SOIL TEST TYPES

In order to maximise the value for TFS members from the soil testing, two different soil test options are available.

Test Name	Analytes	Cost (GST Incl)
Comprehensive Code 2017-236	pH (CaCl ₂), pH (Water), Electrical Conductivity, Exchangeable cations (Ca, Mg, Na, K, Al), PBI, Phosphorus Colwell), Sulphate Sulphur (KCl)	\$75
Basic – PKS Code 2017-235	Phosphorus (Colwell), Potassium (Colwell), Sulphate Sulphur (KCl)	\$50

WHY WOULD YOU USE THE BASIC – PKS TEST?

In a paddock where a comprehensive test has been carried out in the past 3 years, you will know the pH, Al%, and PBI, so there is no point testing them again. In that case you may only be interested in the levels of P, K and S.

The soil test data for the above tests still feeds back into the same TFS soil test database. Taking these options just allows more soil tests to be conducted at a lower cost.

EXTRA SOIL TESTS

Unlimited extra samples can be collected but these will be tested at your expense.

THE PROCESS

1. Contact Tracy or Pip to request soil sample bags and submission form.
2. Get core sampler probe from TFS or LLS Goulburn.
3. Collect samples carefully (30 cores min to depth of 10cm). If there is too much soil for the bag, break up cores and thoroughly mix the soil in clean bag or bucket. Pour it out on a sheet of newspaper, divide it into quarters and use only 75% or 50%. Samples should weigh a maximum of 900g and a minimum of 500g.
4. Mark bags clearly with your name and the paddock name (mark bags and record samples immediately to avoid mix-ups).
5. Remove the Barcodes from the sample bags provided, place 1 on the Sample Submission Form, keep 1 for your own records and leave one intact on the bag (as indicated).
6. Complete the Submission Form supplied. You can photocopy the form if additional copies are required. You only need to complete the Grower Name and Grower Address in Section 1 – Account Details. You will need to complete all details in Section 2 – Sample Details. **The Test Code for the Basic Test is 2017-235 and the Comprehensive Test is 2017-236.**
7. Return clearly marked samples, submission form and probe to Tracy, Pip or a drop off location.

SOIL SAMPLING PROTOCOL

Must do:

- ☐ Take at least 30 to 40 soil cores from each transect. Doing 20 cores is a waste of time.
- ☐ Each core must be 10cm deep, not 5 and not 15. It is easiest to sample after a rain event.
- ☐ Use a transect that is permanently marked so you can go back to it in future years—i.e. between two district trees or other natural features or use latitude and longitude coordinates. **RECORD THIS INFORMATION.**
- ☐ Mix the cores in a bucket and break them down so there are no clumps, (use a mallet) and then fill the sample container by taking several handfuls from different areas. Get a good sample. Label with the paddock name or number.
- ☐ If the paddocks are not named or numbered, then decide on a system and stick to it. Producers often change paddock names between years and the linkage is lost as the database needs *exact information in future years* or it doesn't recognise it.

How to select the paddocks or area:

- ☐ The purpose of soil testing is to give you information to use to make or modify decisions. So, what are your major questions – can I change fertiliser rates on certain country, increase or reduce or to find out what my critical targets are across different parts the farm?
- ☐ The questions above tell you what areas or paddocks you need to sample from. You won't be able to do it all in one year so decide which are the most important areas.
- ☐ You can combine similar paddocks in a sample, but you need to have marked the transects in each paddock. There is no point going back in later years and just getting a random sample from the paddock because you cannot decide if the changes are due to your fertiliser decision or just variation in the paddock. You have spent time and money but are no wiser.