

# SOIL SAMPLING

Soil sampling is the process of taking a small quantity of soil from the field to act as a representative sample of the soil in that particular field. Soil is sampled in order to be tested for soil nutrients and soil pH. Analysis of the samples gives the farmer information about fertility status of the soil in order to; optimize crop production, aid in the diagnosis of plant culture problems, improves the nutritional balance of the soil, saves money and conserve energy and protect the environment

## FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN SOIL SAMPLING

1. Size of the land – The larger the size of the land, the higher the number of samples/ cores to be collected.
2. Cropping system;
  - For most soil tests the sampling depth is the tillage depth (six inches).
  - Deep-rooted non-legumes such as wheat, bermuda grass, sorghum, and cotton, a separate sample representative of the subsoil should be taken in addition to the tillage depth sample.
3. Past Management – Fields used for production of cultivated crops may be sampled any time after harvest or before planting.

Non-cultivated fields should be sampled during the dormant season.

Note: In either case, do not sample immediately after lime, fertilizer, or manure applications.

### 4. Sampling tools

- Soil auger, panga or a spade
- Clean plastic bucket for collecting soil samples
- Sampling bags - for packaging of soil samples for submission to the testing labs

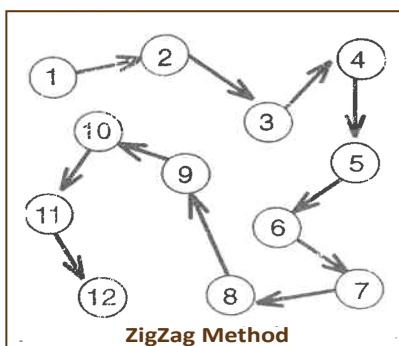
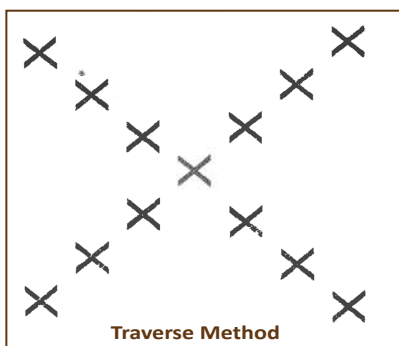
NOTE

Soil samples should not be taken from unusual areas. Such areas include dead furrows, terrace stands, old fence lines, old manure heaps, swampy areas, near trees and boundaries, between slopes and bottom land. They may not be representative of the field as they may give misleading results.

Soil nutrients vary by location, slope, soil depth, soil texture, organic matter content, and past management practices. Getting a good soil sample stands out as a major factor affecting the accuracy and usefulness of soil testing.

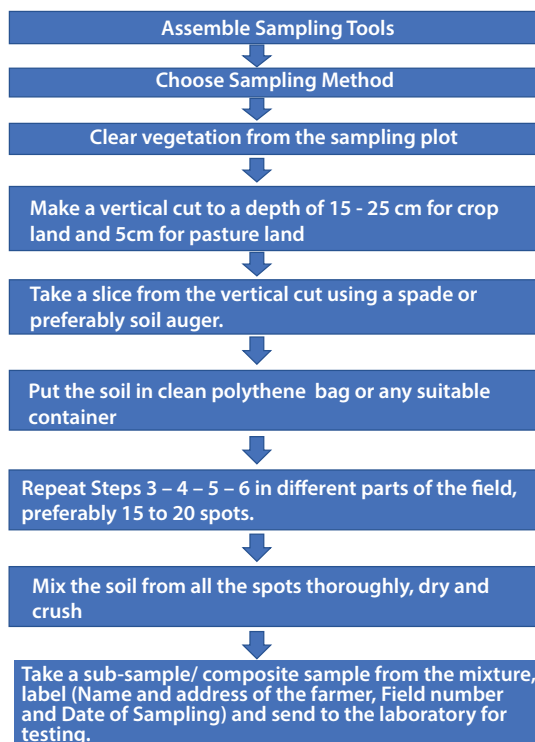
## SAMPLING METHODS

There are two methods of soil sampling, these are traverse and zigzag methods. In traverse method, four corners of the field are determined and sampling is done diagonally. In the zigzag method, locations are arranged in such a way that they are in a zigzag form.



## SOIL SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Soil sampling procedures vary, taking into account the special local situations. Sampling instructions must be followed carefully for one to get reliable results. Generally sampling procedures involve the following steps:



## SOIL TESTING CENTRES

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