Test your Soil for Profits
WHAT IS SOIL TESTING?

A scientific method to determine the fertility needs of a particular field. A sample of soil representing the field is analyzed by chemical means to determine soil reaction (pH), organic matter, available phosphorus, available potassium, available calcium and soluble salts. Special tests on salinity problems also can be obtained.

Soil tests will not tell you:
1. What your land will grow or what to plant.
2. How much your crop will yield.
3. If your soil is infested with disease, insects or nematodes.

The results of soil analyses are used with other information as a basis for fertilizer and lime recommendations to insure more net profit from money invested in fertilizer.

WHY TEST?

Soil tests aid in determining:
1. The need for nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.
2. The need for lime, gypsum or other soil amendments.

HOW TO SAMPLE

Soil tests are as accurate as the samples on which they are made. Proper collection of soil samples is important.

Step 1. Take one composite soil sample from each major soil type in the field. In areas where soils are rolling and not uniform, one sample should represent 5 to 20 acres. In areas where soils are relatively level and uniform, one sample can represent up to 40 acres.

Step 2. For each composite sample, take 10 to 15 small samples from the area. Place these in a clean container, mix thoroughly and take about 1 pint of soil for sending to the soil testing laboratory.

SOIL SAMPLING TOOLS

Use a spade, soil auger or soil tube. Take the sample from 0 to 4-inch depth in pastures and from surface to plow depth in cultivated fields.

INFORMATION SHEETS

Fill out an information sheet as completely as possible. Fertilizer rates depend
not only on the soil tests but also on soil type, crop to be grown, past cropping and fertilizer use, normal moisture situation and expected yield.

COST OF TESTING

Present cost of testing to determine fertilizer and limestone needs is $2.00 per sample. Remit the cost of testing by check or money order payable to the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

WHERE TO MAIL

Package soil samples securely and mail to: Soil Testing Laboratory, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, College Station; Soil Testing Laboratory, County Agricultural Agent, Seymour; or Soil Testing Laboratory, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Route
3, Lubbock. Other soil testing laboratories located at other colleges also can be used for testing. Be sure to enclose testing fee and information sheet with samples.

WHERE TO GET SAMPLING MATERIAL

You can get information sheets, sampling procedure, soil sample boxes and mailing cartons from your county agricultural agent.

WHEN TO SAMPLE

Soil samples can be taken anytime during the year. Submit your samples at least 1 month prior to when you plan to fertilize. This allows sufficient time to test the sample and return the results and recommendations to you without any delay in fertilization. For fall seedings and legume pastures, sample in June, July and August. For spring plantings and grass pastures, sample in October, November, December, January and February.

HOW OFTEN TO SAMPLE
With high levels of production and high rates of fertilization, sample every year. If moderate rates of fertilizer are used and yields are slightly above average, sample once every 2 years. For all fertilization programs, sample at least once every 3 years.

**HOW ACCURATE ARE SOIL TESTS?**

Soil tests take the guesswork out of fertilizing. Soil tests are the link between your soil and the research work being conducted on fertilizer. Soil tests made on good samples will insure better profits from fertilizer use. Soil tests will result in specific recommendations supplying adequate plant nutrients for most profit per acre from fertilizer use. A soil test is the best method available to determine fertilizer and lime need.