

HOW TO TAKE A SOIL SAMPLE

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Why is testing your soil so important? Some producers have their soils evaluated every year while other may not do it at all. If you submit a soil sample for testing with the UF/IFAS Soils lab you will receive information such as pH, phosphorus (P_2O_5), potassium (K_2O), magnesium and calcium levels as well as information on lime and fertilizer recommendations. This information can be used to improve overall pasture performance by having the right amount of components added each year. If your pasture doesn't need it why are you applying it?

What do you need to do to take a soil test? The following are a few simple steps you can take to collect a uniformed sample from your pasture and have it sent in for analysis.

1. Obtain sampling bags and mailing boxes from the Extension Office.
2. Determine the area to take a representative sample.
3. Do not collect samples from wet spots, fence rows, feeding areas etc. The sample you collect should be the average of the field.
4. Use a soil test probe or shovel to take the sample.
5. Take a core of soil 6 inches deep from at least 15 spots in each field.
6. Mix together the cores from one field and let them dry for 2 to 4 hours.
7. Once the sample has dried, remove any plant debris and place about 1 pint of the sample in the sampling bag.
8. Identify the sample so you will know which field it was taken.
9. Fill out the paperwork and include it and payment in the box with the sample. Routine soil test costs \$7.00 per sample and takes about two weeks to process.
10. Promptly send samples to the lab for analysis.



If you don't have your soil tested, chances are you are spending more money than you should, not making as much as you could and are probably not maximizing your potential. Contact the Bradford County Extension Office if you would like assistance interpreting test results or fertilization recommendations or visit the soils lab website at <http://soilslab.ifas.ufl.edu/>
(Source Adapted: Kidder and Rhue, UF/IFAS) –