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**DIY SAMPLING** HOW-TO GUIDE

**Introduction**

Know your soil status – taking good quality soil samples means accurate results and helps you to apply the right amount of lime to the right place, to achieve the optimum pH. A low pH e.g. 5.6 or less will cause key nutrients to become less available to the growing plant, even though you have applied fertiliser it cannot do its job, by raising the pH to 6.0 - 6.5 the growing crop can absorb these key nutrients easily.

**Equipment required**

• Small and large bucket

• Sampling tool (eg. Probe/Soil Auger/Soil Corer)

• Sampling bags (can be provided by SoilEssentials)

• Marker pen

• Record sheet

**Sampling bag information**

• Farm Name

• Field Name

• Sample Bag Number

**When & where to sample**

• Same time of year annually, from harvest to spring

• Fallow (no growing crop), ploughed land, grass

• Small field > whole area

• Large fields > split into zones (by eye) based on:

* Old field boundaries
* Change in soil type
* Change in cropping or previous inputs

**When not to sample**

• FYM, slurry, henpen applied within past 3 months

• Straight after mob grazing

• Within at least 1 year of lime being applied

• After recent applications of Nitrogen or other compound fertiliser

**Areas to avoid**

• Gateways - historic dumping ground for lime, this could skew the average result

• Dung heaps and areas of any run-off

• Areas where livestock congregate eg. feed troughs



**CONTACT:** Catriona McLean, Precision Agronomy Manager

Tel: 01356 650459. Email: catriona@soilessentials.com

**How to take good samples**

• 25 cores taken from the whole field, mixed will be a far more representative sample in comparison

to 2 or 3 spades of soil

• **Stay 15 metres clear** of the field boundary and stay away from gateways

• Auger - twisted into the soil to sampling depth and pulled out. Soil should then be transferred to

the bucket

• Permanent grass - sampled to a depth of 10cm/ 4”

• Arable Land/ Short-term rotation grass - sampled to a depth of 20cm/ 8”

• When collecting samples from different areas of the field, **follow a zigzag path**

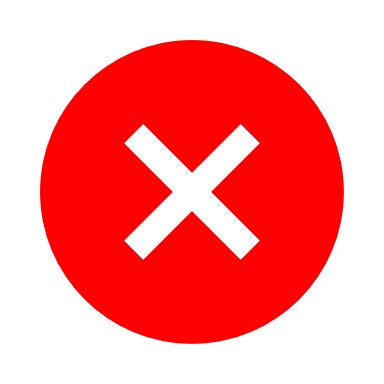
**See diagram:**



**Keep clear of gateways**

**Minimum of 25 cores taken**

**Zig zag path when sampling**



**Missing large areas of the field**

**Uneven representation of the field**

**Taking less than 25 cores**

* Once you have sampled the whole field/zone, mix the soil thoroughly in the bucket before taking a

representative sample from the bucket and putting it in the sampling bag

• Ensure that all details are written on the sampling bag prior to it being filled (see ‘Sampling Bag

Information’ for further details). Remove any large stones, roots, and plant material before placing

soil in the bag

• It is advised to sample separately, areas which have been manured differently, or have different

soil types or topography. Ensure that these samples are done separately and not mixed with all the

soil from the field

• Clean/wipe equipment before next zone



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**What to do after you have finished sampling:**

* Fill in and check that the paperwork matches with the field names and ID numbers on the bags of soil
* Take a copy of what you have sent for your own records
* Telephone to arrange a soil drop-off at SoilEssentials

**Results**

* Soil will be dispatched, and results may take 1-2 weeks
* Results will be emailed to you, please ensure you have left a current email address
* Invoice in the post



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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DIY SAMPLING **ORDER FORM** **Please complete as much information as possible** | | | | | | | |
| **Full Name:** | | | | **Business Name:** | | | |
| **Farm Name:** | | | | **Farm Address:** | | | |
| **Contact Number:** | | | |
| **Email Address:** | | | | **Post Code:** | | | |
|  | | | | | | | |
|  | **Sample Bag 1** | **Sample Bag 2** | **Sample Bag 3** | **Sample Bag 4** | **Sample Bag 5** | **Sample Bag 6** | **Sample Bag 7** |
| **Field Name** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Field Size (Ha)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Crop In** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Notes**  *(eg. different area of field tested separately)* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Please send your samples and completed forms to:**

SoilEssentials Ltd . Hilton of Fern . By Brechin . Angus . DD9 6SB