Soil sample early this year

Source: Frank Sikora, UK director of laboratories and soils program

Soil tests are the only way to ensure your ground has the nutrients it needs for the upcoming growing season, and with the current high input costs, it could help you save money. We are encouraging producers to submit these samples to us as early as possible this year to ensure your results are back before you need to make your first spring application. The University of Kentucky is down a soil testing lab due to the Dec.10 tornado that destroyed the Research and Education Center in Princeton. UK’s Lexington Soil Testing Laboratory will be analyzing all samples until further notice. As March is expected to be extremely busy, earlier submission of samples to the lab is highly encouraged.

Depending on what you plan to produce, you will need to take different kinds of soil samples. Production agriculture fields, lawns, gardens, fruit trees and ornamentals all have unique fertility and soil pH requirements. Collect at least 10 soil cores in small areas. Larger fields may need at least 20 soil cores. Soil samples will also have different depths depending on the tillage system you use. Samples from tilled areas, gardens, ornamentals and fruit trees, should be taken at least 6 to 8 inches deep. Collect soil samples about 4 inches deep in no-till fields and home lawns.

Extension agents can help you collect the proper samples and may even have sample bags and soil probes that you can use. Submit soil samples to UK through your local extension office. Agents will send the samples to UK for testing and can help you interpret the results. More information on soil samples is available at the (COUNTY NAME) office of the UK Cooperative Extension Service.

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