



BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO BUILD HEALTHY SOILS

1. Reduce tillage to minimize soil disturbance and improve soil structure.
2. Leave crop residue on the soil surface to protect it from the impact of rainfall.
3. Grow cover crops to protect the soil and feed soil microorganisms between cropping seasons.
4. Apply adequate fertilizer and manure using the 4R principles of right source, right rate, right time and right place.
5. Use manure to enhance soil biology and soil health.
6. Control field traffic to reduce compaction.
7. Add a small grain or alfalfa to a corn-soybean rotation.
8. Utilize contour buffer strips, field buffers and stream buffers.
9. Enroll highly erodible areas into the Conservation Reserve Program.
10. Use prescribed or rotational grazing.

Sources:

Iowa State University Extension: **Iowa Soil Health Management Manual, Building Soil Health**

Natural Resources Conservation Services: **Soil Health Webpage, Soil Health Practices**