

## MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR COLLECTING SOIL SAMPLES

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1. Collect soil samples before applying fertilizer or manure in the fall or spring.
2. Take soil samples every two to four years, but do so in the same season each time.
3. Use whole field sampling only if the field is extremely uniform.
4. Use grid sampling when fields are subdivided into small, square grids, ranging from 1-10 acres, with each sample representing a grid.
5. Use management zone sampling when fields are divided into management zones based on field history, soil types, yield maps, topography, etc.
6. The smaller the area sampled, the more uniform the sample will be.
7. Take core samples at a 6-inch depth with a soil probe.
8. Collect samples from a combination of locations within each area - in the row, between the rows and midway between the rows.
9. Each sample should consist of 10-20 soil cores that are thoroughly mixed before filling the plastic-lined soil sample bag.
10. Send properly labeled soil samples to a soil testing lab that has been certified by the state department of agriculture or other valid certifying entity.

Sources: *Iowa State University Extension, NRCS*