# **PlotWise** Soil Sampling Guide

AgSource

## Plan for Success

Developing a refuge where wildlife will thrive begins with creating a healthy wildlife food plot that serves as a source of nutrients throughout the year.

A soil analysis is the first step towards establishing a successful food plot and understanding which soil nutrients will encourage optimal plant health. Proper fertilization and pH levels not only improve the quality of your planting, but they also increase its hardiness and persistence.

AgSource Laboratories' PlotWise soil analysis determines soil nutrient levels and provides specific recommendations for lime and fertilizer nutrients necessary to achieve a healthy, productive wildlife food plot.

While nutrient deficient soils result in weak and stunted plants, applying too much fertilizer can also be detrimental. A professional soil analysis is the only way to measure and adjust nutrient levels.

The pH level of the soil affects the availability of those nutrients as well. A slightly acidic soil (pH 6.2 - 7.0) is favorable for most forage and food plot species. The amount of lime needed to raise the soil pH will be recommended from the soil test and can be incorporated with tillage when the plot is prepared for planting or spread on the surface of an established plot where rain and foot traffic will help it move into the soil.

## Where and When to Sample

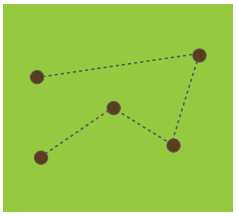
Food Plots from less than one, and up to five acres, can be sampled as one field.

- For larger plots, divide into smaller areas for sampling
- Take separate samples from areas with varying soil types or different plant/crop species

Samples can be collected anytime the soil is moist enough to dig or probe easily, preferably in the spring or fall.

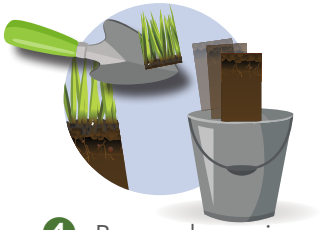
# Collecting a Soil Sample

1. Use a soil probe, or a small shovel



2. **For each sample** walk in a random, zig-zag pattern through the plot


3. Take 15 to 20 cores, or slices, of soil from the pasture to the depth of five to seven inches



4. Remove large pieces of grass thatch, roots, stones, or debris from the soil sample

5. Place all these subsamples in a clean plastic bucket and mix thoroughly to form a composite sample


6. Remove enough soil from the composite sample to fill the soil sample bag

## Shipping Instructions

1. Label the soil sample bag with your name and identify the sample the same as on the form.
2. Complete the entire PlotWise Soil Test Submission form.
3. Place the soil sample bag(s) and the form into the mailer container.
4. Send to your nearest AgSource Laboratories location:

### Lincoln, Nebraska

**A:** 300 Speedway Circle, Suite 2
Lincoln, NE 68502
**P:** 402.476.0300
**E:** lincoln@agsource.com

### Ellsworth, Iowa

**A:** 1701 Detroit St., PO Box 247
Ellsworth, IA 50075
**P:** 515.836.4444
**E:** ellsworth@agsource.com

### Bonduel, Wisconsin

**A:** 106 North Cecil Street
Bonduel, WI 54107
**P:** 715.758.2178
**E:** bonduel@agsource.com

### Stratford, Wisconsin

**A:** 117609 Forward Street
Stratford, WI 54484
**P:** 715.687.9997
**E:** stratford@agsource.com