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Manure testing: what to request?

Charles Shapiro, Charles Wortmann and Richard Deloughery

Manure testing is necessary to make optimum use of manure while protecting water resources. The **Manure Sample Submission Form** requests information required for reliable interpretation of the results.

Tests desired

The tests most frequently needed to optimize nutrient management are total and ammonium nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P_2O_5), potassium (K_2O), pH, soluble salts, sodium, and dry matter content.

Nitrogen. Manure contains both organic and inorganic forms of nitrogen. Ammonium-N is the primary inorganic form in manure and is readily available to crops. Nitrate-N is usually too small to affect management decisions, unless the manure is composted.

Organic N is determined as the difference between total N and inorganic N. Organic N becomes plant available as manure decomposes, with 20 to 50% of organic N available to the first crop after application. Much of the remaining organic N becomes available in subsequent years.

Phosphorus. Most, about 75%, manure P (about 75%) is in inorganic forms. P

analysis allows calculation of the most economical manure rates while avoiding over-application of P with severe consequences to surface waters.

Other tests. Tests for potassium, sulfur, zinc, and other nutrients may be useful. When manure is applied to meet N or P needs, other nutrients are generally adequate for soils in Nebraska. If liquid manure is applied to a crop through sprinkler irrigation, test for soluble salts or electrical conductivity to avoid leaf burning. Electrical conductivity is useful in managing anaerobic lagoons.

Report information

Units. Specify if the results should be reported in pounds of nutrient per ton (spreader), per 1000 gallons (tanks or umbilical cord), or per acre-inch (irrigation). This depends on your method of application. Phosphorus and potassium K should be reported in the oxide form (P_2O_5 and K_2O) so its fertilizer value is easy to calculate.

Moisture. Reporting the results on an "as is" or "wet" basis allows a producer to determine the nutrient application rate use the results without adjusting for water

UNL's Livestock Environmental Issues Committee Includes representation from UNL, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Natural Resources Districts, Center for Rural Affairs, Nebraska Cattlemen, USDA Ag Research Services, and Nebraska Pork Producers Association.

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content additional moisture calculation.

Nutrient availability. Laboratories can estimate the amount of nutrients available in the first year, and the amount of manure N available during following years. This is especially important for solid manures.

Application basis. Manure is often applied on a “nitrogen basis”, to supply enough N to meet crop needs. When soil test P is excessive, manure may be applied a producer may want to apply manure on a “P basis”, that is at a rate sufficient to match P removal by the crop.

Estimation of crop available N

The information requested is used to estimate **crop available N** from manure. Select the appropriate **ammonium-N loss factor** for the time of manure application, and days until incorporation to enable an estimate of ammonium-N loss to the atmosphere. Indicate the **type of manure** and **species** as these affect are major determinants of organic-N availability. If manure applied in the past is similar to the current sample, give information on **Past Year Applications** and the **Rate applied** to estimate the amount of organic N available to this year's crop from the previously applied manure.

Suggestions on how to interpret a manure analysis are given in the NebGuide G97 -1335-A Determining Crop Available Nutrients from Manure (<http://www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/wastemgt/g1335.htm>).

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Olsen's Agricultural Laboratory

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Manure Sample Submission Form

UNL's Livestock Environmental Issues Committee includes representation from UNL, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Natural Resources Districts, Center for Rural Affairs, Nebraska Cattlemen, USDA Ag Research Services, and Nebraska Pork Producers Association.

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Client information: Name: _____ Address: _____ _____ _____ Phone: _____ Account: _____ E-mail: _____ Fax: _____	Analysis results to be communicated to: <input type="checkbox"/> Mail address <input type="checkbox"/> Fax number <input type="checkbox"/> e-mail address If sent to e-mail address, would you like a: <input type="checkbox"/> pdf file <input type="checkbox"/> txt file <input type="checkbox"/> wks file	Sample names: _____ _____ Sample collection date: _____ Send copy to: _____ _____ _____
Tests Desired <input type="checkbox"/> Nebraska Minimum (Total N, NH ₄ -N, Organic-N, P, K, moisture) <input type="checkbox"/> Standard lab analysis <input type="checkbox"/> pH, salts, sodium <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Contact your lab for their 'options'.	Report Information	
	Units: <input type="checkbox"/> lbs/ton <input type="checkbox"/> lbs/1000 gallons <input type="checkbox"/> lbs/acre inch <input type="checkbox"/> ppm or % Moisture: <input type="checkbox"/> As received or wet basis <input type="checkbox"/> Dry matter basis	Nutrient availability: <input type="checkbox"/> 1 st year availability only <input type="checkbox"/> Additional years Estimate application rate on a: <input type="checkbox"/> Nitrogen basis <input type="checkbox"/> Phosphorus basis Application rate units: <input type="checkbox"/> Tons/acre <input type="checkbox"/> 1,000 gallons/acre <input type="checkbox"/> Inches/acre
For the Estimate of Crop Available Nitrogen		
Ammonium-N factors <u>Time of Application</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Fall <input type="checkbox"/> Winter <input type="checkbox"/> Spring <input type="checkbox"/> Summer <u>Manure incorporation</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Immediately <input type="checkbox"/> One day later <input type="checkbox"/> Two days later <input type="checkbox"/> Three days later <input type="checkbox"/> Four to seven days later <input type="checkbox"/> Not incorporated <u>Sidedress application</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Incorporated as applied <input type="checkbox"/> Sprinkler irrigated	Organic-N factors <u>Type of manure</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Solid <input type="checkbox"/> Solids with litter or bedding <input type="checkbox"/> Composted solids <input type="checkbox"/> Stored liquid <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh, daily scrape <u>Species</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Dairy <input type="checkbox"/> Beef <input type="checkbox"/> Swine <input type="checkbox"/> Poultry – layer <input type="checkbox"/> Poultry – broiler <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	Past Year Applications <input type="checkbox"/> Every year <input type="checkbox"/> Every other year <input type="checkbox"/> Every third year <input type="checkbox"/> Every fourth year <input type="checkbox"/> First time application Rate applied (if known): _____ Notes: _____ _____ _____ _____

This generic manure sample form is provided by UNL Cooperative Extension.