



Media release
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Soil tests a step in the right direction

Farmers who haven't yet booked their annual soil test should do so as soon as possible, advises Ballance Agri-Nutrients Head of Agro-Sciences, Warwick Catto.

Soil testing is an essential part of modern farm management. Soil tests show farmers the levels of plant nutrients that are available in the soil, and provide the basis for fertiliser recommendations.

With every crop grown or every grazing rotation, nutrients are removed from the soil. In some instances a portion of the nutrients is recycled. In other cases, they can be removed from the land for good.

'A soil test gives farmers a snapshot of their soil's nutrient status,' says Mr Catto.

'Carrying out annual tests builds up a better picture of how farming practices impact on the land.

'An understanding of this impact allows farmers and their advisors to develop strategies to maximise productivity while still ensuring long-term sustainability.'

Farmers generally appreciate the importance of protecting their land so that it remains productive in the future, notes Mr Catto, and Ballance is also committed to this ideal.

'Soil tests are a step in the right direction, and most people now have these done regularly. The next move is to have a nutrient budget carried out, which is a service Ballance offers.

'A nutrient budget takes into account all the nutrient inputs and outputs of a farm, plus the effects of rainfall, irrigation, soil type, and management practices such as feed pads and grazing off farm in winter.

'It helps farmers keep a much tighter check on nutrient flows in their farming operation, and helps protect the wider environment.'

A nutrient budget can be done as a follow-up to a soil test, notes Warwick. Soil testing is usually carried out in the winter months to determine plant nutrient requirements for spring fertiliser applications.

Farmers who require a soil test or who would like further information on nutrient budgeting can phone their local technical sales representative on 0800 222 090.

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