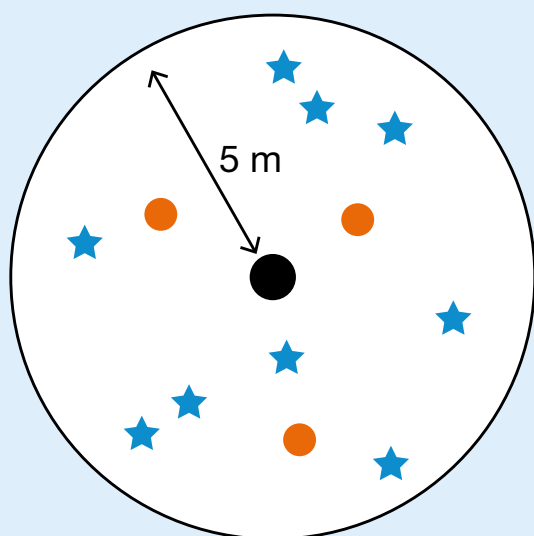


How to record soil health

Use this sheet to record field-site results for the soil health scorecard. The laminated version can be used with dry-wipe markers. You can print paper copies from ahdb.org.uk/scorecard



Top tips

1. Ensure each scorecard represents a relatively uniform site.
2. Assess each site at least once per crop rotation (at the same time point in the rotation).
3. Use GPS or what3words to record the centre point location of the sampling site.
4. Take measurements up to 5 m away from the centre point (at random points).
5. For VESS and earthworms, take three samples (illustrated by the orange circles).
6. For topsoil indicators, take several samples (illustrated by the blue stars).
7. If assessing an indicator in isolation (i.e. not using a scorecard approach), you can use a traditional 'W' sampling pattern.
8. Note anything that may influence soil health.
9. Take photos.

Step one: record site details

Farm name:

Field name:

Sample date:

Sample (centre point) location:

Region:

Land use:

- Cropping (combinable crops)
- Cropping (rotation includes late-harvested crops)
- Cropping (rotation includes leys)
- Cropping (field-scale vegetables)
- Grassland (intensively managed)
- Grassland (permanent pasture)

Topsoil character:

- Light (sandy/light silty)
- Medium (clay loams)
- Heavy (clays)

Site observations:

Note anything relevant for a soil risk assessment, including site management, slope (gradient and length), areas of compaction or capping, general comments on weather and plant growth, areas of run-off and soil erosion risk and location of any sensitive areas.

Overall risk to soil*:

- Very high risk: many high risks
- High risk: some high risks
- Medium risk: mainly medium and lower risks
- Lower risk: mainly lower risks

Step two: perform a visual evaluation of soil structure (VESS)

Rep 1 score:

Rep 2 score:

Rep 3 score:

Average**:

For guidance, see the AHDB 'How to assess soil structure' sheet or visit: ahdb.org.uk/vess

VESS observations:

Step three: count earthworms

Rep 1 count:

Rep 2 count:

Rep 3 count:

Average**:

Spade width:

If possible, count the number of adults and juveniles (use 'A' and 'J' to differentiate each score).

For guidance, see the 'How to count earthworms' sheet or visit: ahdb.org.uk/earthworms

Earthworm observations:

Step four: take topsoil samples

To assess soil pH, nutrient status and soil organic matter, send topsoil samples away for laboratory analyses (follow laboratory sampling guidance). Ensure you can trace samples back to the original site.

Soil organic matter (%):

pH:

Extractable P (mg/L):

Extractable K (mg/L):

Extractable Mg (mg/L):

For guidance, visit: ahdb.org.uk/soil-assessments

Topsoil sample observations:

Step five: identify management opportunities

For guidance, visit: ahdb.org.uk/greatsoils

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Enter all field-site results in the online scorecard to generate a soil health status for each indicator. Search 'AHDB scorecard' or visit: ahdb.org.uk/scorecard

*Although useful to note, overall risk to soil is not part of the scorecard.

**The online scorecard calculates VESS and earthworm averages.