

FAS: YOUR ONE-STOP-SHOP FOR EVERY AGRICULTURAL CROP!

Kerisha Raghunandan

The Fertiliser Advisory Service analyses soil, leaf, water, fertiliser, compost and related samples for both sugarcane and the range of other agricultural crops. The service enables growers to establish the nutrient status and requirements of their crops from a single service provider, thereby averting the logistical nightmare of having to submit samples to several laboratories. In addition, a grower receives all results in a uniform easy-to-understand format as well as in a spreadsheet, thereby facilitating record-keeping.

The FAS analytical packages are amongst the most comprehensive on the African continent.

Standard soil test results include organic matter, clay, resin-extractable phosphorus, silicon, sulphur, acid saturation, exchangeable sodium percentage, 'reserve' potassium and micronutrients.

For the **assessment of salt problems** in soils, results include electrical conductivity of the saturation extract, sodium adsorption ratio, exchangeable sodium percentage and soluble and exchangeable cations.

For **sugarcane**, fertiliser, lime and gypsum recommendations are provided.

Leaf analyses include macro- and micronutrients, sulphur, silicon and boron (if required as an additional determination).

In the **analysis of water for irrigation**, results include electrical conductivity and major cations.

Submitting samples to the lab

When sending leaf, water or soil samples to FAS, always remember to include the appropriate submission form and information for the crop concerned. Label all samples (soil boxes, leaf labels, fertilisers and/or water vials) according to what is written on the submission form. This ensures that the correct analyses are done on the appropriately labelled sample in the quickest time possible.



Here are some guidelines:

- Ensure samples are collected in the recommended manner, where correct sampling depth for soils and timing of leaf sampling are important factors.
- Select the appropriate submission form according to the analysis requested (i.e. leaf, soil fertility, soil salinity, fertilisers).
- All samples must have an identification (e.g. field number) and this must correspond to the information supplied on the submission form.
- For soil and leaf samples, the information supplied on the submission form has a major influence on the recommendations appearing in the analytical reports. For example, in the case of soil fertility samples, the 'Attainable Yield' is crucial for the calculation of the N and K requirements of the crop.
- To submit samples, courier them to our physical address or drop them off at the designated drop-off points at the SASRI Extension Offices.

For more information on sampling procedures, drop-off points, analyses costs and submission forms, please consult the Fertiliser Advice page on the SASRI website (www.sasri.org.za).

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Joanne Yawitch

CEO of the National Business Initiative (NBI)

What partnership with Tongaat Hulett means to me

"Initiated by the NBI, WWF-South Africa, Mondi, Tongaat Hulett and the GIZ-International Water Stewardship Programme, the uMhlathuze Water Stewardship Partnership has brought together key role players from business, government, agriculture and communities within Richards Bay and the wider uMhlathuze catchment. Together we are beginning to catalyse initiatives that will improve water security, develop skills, create jobs and secure investment for the restoration of important ecological infrastructure in the region. Tongaat Hulett has been instrumental in the partnership's formation, and we look forward to strengthening this important collaboration in the years ahead." said Joanne Yawitch, CEO of the NBI.

The uMhlathuze Water Stewardship Partnership looks to identify and implement measures to support a systematic and long-term approach towards mitigating water risk in the catchment, based on the principles of water stewardship. This forms part of Tongaat Hulett's broader commitment to sound environmental stewardship.

In 2017 Tongaat Hulett was recognised as a global leader in sustainable water management, being awarded a position on the CDP Water A List, in acknowledgement of its actions to manage water more sustainably.

