



SOIL TESTING QUALITY CONTROL

FACT SHEET

We are in the business of providing our customers, with *Quality Analyses for Informed Decisions*[®]. We understand that the data produced by our laboratories has an effect on the decisions that you make. That is why we strive to go above and beyond our competitors and provide our customers with the highest quality data possible.

Every soil testing laboratory implements some level of Quality Control; if they do not it is doubtful they will stay in business very long. Quality Control often involves analytical batch QC checks such as control samples/solutions, duplicates and sometimes spike recoveries. To be sure, A&L Great Lakes Laboratories, Inc. does run basic QC with all samples. In addition to basic QC, there are many other quality checks that we perform during our routine soil analysis that add value and validity to our end result.

Aspects of our Agricultural Soil Testing QC procedures include:

Quality Assurance Department

A&L has an independent Quality Assurance Department which operates separately from analytical work and conducts training, facility audits, methodology audits, and data quality checks.

Technicians

Technicians must pass competency tests to verify proper technique prior to being allowed to scoop and analyze samples. And, soil scoops are validated using a water weight basis.

Instrument Maintenance

Instruments are meticulously maintained.

Balance Operation Verification

Prior to weighing a sample on a balance, the balance operation is verified and documented with certified weights bracketing the range of use.

Sample Preparation

A&L does not split or discard any sample prior to drying and grinding. We process the entire sample.

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pH Electrode Checks

A&L performs pH electrode checks by reading samples with different electrodes which ensure each pH electrode is reading consistently and accurately.

Organic Matter (OM)

Any organic matter (OM) test result greater than 5.0 % (considered to be “high” by agronomic standards) is automatically flagged by the computer system and double-checked by our analysts. OM controls are run at both high OM content and low OM content.

Quality Personnel Review / Turnaround Time (TAT) / Delivery

A&L’s Quality Personnel review all data and if there is any question about the validity of the data, the sample is re-run for verification prior to reporting. It is rare for a report to be delayed due to re-runs; however, most delays are related to QC, not capacity. Our practice is to report accurate data the first time. A&L can deliver data to you in virtually any format.

Report Approval

Reports must be approved by an agronomist before release to the customer.

Proficiency Testing Programs

A&L spends thousands of dollars every year to participate in several external proficiency testing programs:

- *North American Proficiency Testing (NAPT) Program*
- *Agricultural Laboratory Proficiency (ALP) Program*
- *Several specific state’s Soil Testing Proficiency Programs (through NAPT and ALP)*
- *Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP) laboratory certification program*

At A&L Great Lakes Laboratories, we are continually improving our facility, our processes and our staff to provide you with the highest quality results at a competitive price.