

2013 State Report Card

Is soil fertility improving in our agricultural areas?

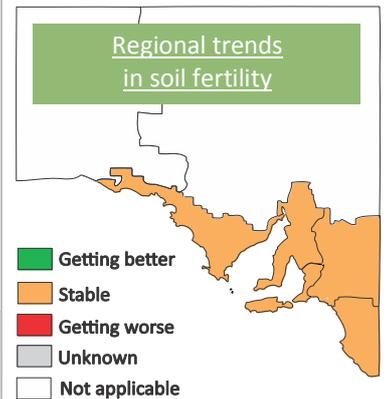
Healthy soil provides us with food and fibre through our crops and livestock. Healthy soil provides nutrients for crops and pastures, stores and cycles water and carbon, and resists erosion.

Essential nutrients, such as phosphorus and some trace elements, are naturally low in South Australian soils. In agricultural areas, land managers apply fertiliser to replenish the nutrients in their soils and optimise soil fertility.

To inform their fertiliser strategies, about two-thirds of South Australian land managers test the nutrient levels in their soils. This report card presents results from some of these tests.



Regional trends in soil fertility



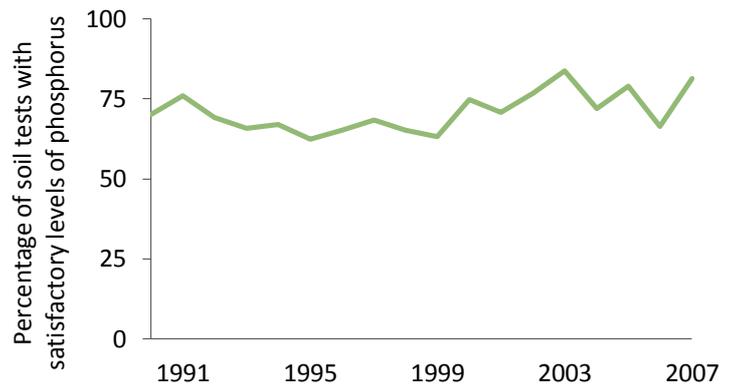
State target
Improve soil and land condition

Trend (2003-07)

Stable

Ongoing efforts will be needed to increase the fertility of our soils

Phosphorus levels were variable over the 5 years to 2007, but both recent and long term trends indicate that phosphorus levels have been stable between 1990 and 2007 (map above and graph on right).



Where we are at (2007)

Good

Satisfactory phosphorus levels were found in 81 per cent of soil tests

Soil tests show that 81 per cent of our agricultural soils had satisfactory levels of phosphorus.

Because fertiliser costs are increasing, land managers are using technology to improve fertiliser application. For example, many land managers now use GPS-guided, variable-rate fertiliser applicators to accurately distribute fertiliser in their paddocks. Using fertiliser efficiently is important to optimise the productivity of agricultural soils.

These management strategies may also improve the health of our waterways and coastal resources by reducing the level of nutrients reaching these systems.

Reliability of information



Fair

Further information:

[Technical information for this report card](#)

[Soil and land condition monitoring in South Australia](#)