



## CHECKING SOIL HEALTH – ACROSS SPACE AND TIME



Monitoring soils across the rotation, or comparing areas with different management strategies, should be part of the overall farm management process as problems can rapidly develop.

### Soil sampling at NIAB Morley in Norfolk



Good soil structure

VESS Score 2



Same location following a challenging sugar beet harvest 500 days later

VESS score 4



Same time but in long-term grass, 120 m away

VESS score 1

### Soil Health Scorecard in action

When switching to a controlled traffic system a Norfolk farm wanted to monitor changes in soil structure in untrafficked areas. Soil Health Scorecard measurements (Figure 1) were taken two years after the adoption of CTF on heavy and light land parts of the farm. Most measures indicated good levels of soil function and this has provided justification to the farm in their change of system. These locations will be resampled regularly to monitor how long-term CTF impacts soil health on farm.

Figure 1. Soil Health Scorecard with traffic light colours allocated using the framework under evaluation in the AHDB-BBRO Soil Biology and Soil Health Project (red = requires investigation, yellow = monitor, green = no action required)

	Heavy	Light
pH	7.1	7.8
P (mg/l)	35.8	29.6
K (mg/l)	162	145
Mg (mg/l)	39	53
VESS score	2.0	1.8
SOM (%)	3.4	3.2
Earthworms (no in 25 cm block)	12	6

#### Acknowledgement

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