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NCAT Unveils Alternative Soil Testing Laboratories Databank

The National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) has begun a new databank that lists state-by-state a range of soil testing labs and supplies that support the special analytical needs of farmers using organic or sustainable production methods.

The “Alternative Soil Testing Laboratories Databank” is now available on the website of ATTRA-National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service: www.attra.ncat.org. NCAT developed and manages ATTRA through a cooperative agreement with the USDA Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

Organic and small-scale sustainable farmers are looking for more than just N-P-K-Lime fertilizer recommendations. ATTRA's “Alternative Soil Testing Laboratories” database can help producers search for laboratories in their state or search based on the information they are specifically looking for from their soil test (for example, organic nutrient recommendations, high tunnel soils, and compost).

The databank lists laboratories according to two broad categories: The first focuses on tests for biological parameters and associated indicators such as soil organic matter and microbial activity. The second emphasizes mineral availability and mineral balances in the soil.

The databank also has tips and resources on how to take soil samples that generate accurate tests and discusses criteria for producers to consider when they're looking for a laboratory.

Qualified organizations that are not presently included should either use [Submit/Update Listings](#) on the databank site or contact Andy Pressman at ATTRA for inclusion in future updates.

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Since 1976, the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) has been helping people by championing small-scale, local and sustainable solutions to reduce poverty, promote healthy communities and protect natural resources. In partnership with businesses, organizations, individuals and agricultural producers, NCAT is working to advance solutions that will ensure the next generation inherits a world that has clean air and water, energy production that is efficient and renewable, and healthy foods grown with sustainable practices. More information about its programs and services is available at www.ncat.org or by calling 1-800-ASK-NCAT.