GENERAL SOIL MAPS AND INTERPRETATIVE DATA 
AVAILABLE FOR INDIANA COUNTIES 

Joe Yahner

A new set of general soil association maps for Indiana is now being published. While these maps are similar to the series of maps (AY-50 series) first available in 1971, the new maps are improved by the addition of interpretative data for the soil association. The maps have a uniform legend and scale (1 inch = 3 mi). Maps of several counties can be pasted together to form a map of an area or region.

A book containing maps and data for all 92 counties is now available (AY-50); single sheet maps (AY-50 series, e.g. AY-50-1 is Adams County; AY-50-92 is Whitley) will soon be available. The single sheet map (Fig. 1) will be free of charge but there is a $5.00 charge for the map book to defray extra printing and binding expenses.

The general soil maps show “soil associations” or natural soil landscapes. Each association has a repeating pattern of soils and generally has a characteristic topography which makes these maps extremely helpful in understanding the broad usefulness of land. These maps give a more comprehensive, broad view of land. They do not show the soil pattern clearly for small areas such as farms, or other specific locations. Here the use of the detail soil survey map is more appropriate.

The general soil association maps have proven valuable for comparing the productivity of different areas, evaluating land for differing land uses, comprehensive planning and similar tasks.

While the maps alone are useful, additional information was needed to allow users, unfamiliar with soils, to quickly see the relative characteristics of the soil associations. To provide this, interpretations based upon accurate estimations of the soils in each association have been provided (Fig. 2). The data include estimates of corn, soybean, wheat and hay yields, indices of erodibility and irrigation potential, and percentage of association suitable for septic tanks. A number of other interpretations are also included as can be seen from the example map and interpretation sheet (Fig. 1, 2).

These maps have already been used by people interested in purchasing land, rural appraisers, farm managers, agri-business, planning commissions and highway departments. They will play a role in future planning in Indiana both in agriculture and community development.

1Extension Specialist, Land Use and Soil Management, Purdue University.