Report of the Committee on Soil Acidity

Plans for a Cooperative Study of Soil Acidity

There exists considerable data in the literature showing that storage of collected samples, time of year at which samples are collected, and presence of more or less soluble salts may have a considerable influence on the figure obtained for the pH of the soil. In some recent tests it was found that the degree of dispersion of a soil as brought about by a dispersing machine may affect the pH of the suspension produced when determined electrometrically as much as ±0.5 to 1.0. These facts raise important questions as to just how much reliance may be placed in the various pH determinations of soils.

It certainly appears as though the conditions of collection of samples, storage and treatment in preparation of the suspensions should be more exactly standardized. There is a question whether or not it may be advisable to remove the soluble salts before the pH determination is made. A standardized amount of soluble salts might then be added.

This Committee suggests that next year's Committee attempt to get the cooperation of as many members as possible in a study of factors influencing the results obtained in pH determinations of soils and that an effort be made to standardize the conditions under which a determination be made.

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