



Soil Food Web

Photos: Soil Biology Primer

**Active Soil Carbon: an easily oxidizable soil carbon fraction**

BMPs such as: Crop Rotations, Cover Crops, No-till/Minimum-till, Compost & Manure applications, have a major effect on the total Active Carbon found in the soil. These pools of labile soil carbon are thought to be closely associated with biological processes (i.e., soil health: soil food webs, nutrient cycling & microbial biomass).

**SOIL STRUCTURE**



e.g. of Water-Stable Soil Aggregates (in NM, AC measurements > 400 mg/kg have water-stable aggregates for most soils tested; testing continues)



SOIL STRUCTURE



SOIL SAMPLE

Granular soil structure

**USDA-NRCS Active Soil Carbon Field Test Kit**



Sampling depth: 0 - 4"



Soil Humus (Soil Organic matter)

**SOIL TEXTURE (% SAND, SILT & CLAY)**



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Agronomy Tech Note 76 (<http://www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/handbooks/iwm/nmiwm.html>)

Soil Organic Carbon is described as being the single most important indicator of soil quality and productivity. (Ref.: Validation Testing of a Portable Kit for Measuring an Active Soil Carbon Fraction). Active Carbon measured in NM: 100 mg/kg - 750 mg/kg.