How healthy are your soils?

SIGNS OF GOOD SOIL HEALTH

Look for Earthworms
Best time to survey is late spring (April-May) or mid fall (October-November)
25 worms per cubic foot is a good goal
(3 or 4 per shovel scoop)

Organic Matter - Test for % organic matter every time you soil sample. The higher the number the better.

Crumbly soil

Nightcrawler middens

Soil Aggregates
Dig up some plants and look for small clods of soil hanging off the roots. Aggregates are formed by good soil biology, especially mycorrhizal fungi

Cover crops feed soil microbes and build organic matter

Check your fields after a big rain. Are there areas of standing water? Do you see soil moving or gully erosion?
Healthy soils should easily be able to infiltrate a 2-3” rainfall

Developed by Lisa Blazure
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**SIGNS OF POOR SOIL HEALTH**

Blocky soil, roots hitting hard layer and growing sideways, shallow roots with no aggregates, old residue not breaking down

After a hard rain—Crusting on the soil surface, standing water and poor infiltration, movement of crop residue and soil

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