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Woods End Introduces the Solvita® VAST Lab Test for Measuring Soil Aggregates *Measurements help indicate improvement or degradation of soil due to farming practices*

(Mt. Vernon, ME) [Woods End Laboratories](#), manufacturer of [Solvita® soil biology tests](#), has announced the release of [Solvita VAST \(Volumetric Aggregate Stability Test\)](#), a rapid laboratory method for measuring water-stable soil aggregates. The new product was created to help soil labs complete the [soil health test triangle](#), which evaluates the physical, biological and chemical components of the soil and typifies soil health testing.

“The innovative Solvita VAST method (physical) complements the Solvita CO₂-Burst (biological) and SLAN (chemical) tests that can be used to evaluate soil health,” explained William Brinton, PhD, founder of Woods End Labs and creator of Solvita testing. “Each method adds a component to the final evaluation. So far, nutrient analysis (chemistry) has been the most common method, but soil health testing emphasizes the soil’s *biology* – the life in the soil. Together, the [Solvita CO₂-Burst \(respiration\)](#), [SLAN \(Solvita Labile Amino-Nitrogen\)](#) and Solvita VAST tests provide a more complete and accurate analysis of the soil’s health.”

Why Testing Water-Stable Soil Aggregates Is Important

Soil aggregates that resist water dispersion help defend soils against erosion while providing essential porosity and structure for good air and water infiltration. Aggregate stability results from favorable soil factors such as humus, plant roots, fungal hyphae and microbial secretions which build a sponge-like network with clay, silt and sand particles.

“Monitoring soil aggregate stability can show whether soils are improving or degrading due to the influence of crop and tillage practices,” Brinton explained. “Yet farmers don’t typically test for this because methods for evaluating aggregates have not been cost-effective for commercial soil labs in the past.”

In a [video](#), Brinton further explains how VAST exploits the “volumizing” character of aggregates to measure differential surface areas more rapidly and efficiently. He indicates the elimination of time-consuming drying and weighing steps that are common in older lab [slaking](#) methods saves time and money.

“To perform the method properly, VAST requires technician training like other lab tests,” Brinton said. “Therefore, we are providing VAST as part of a licensing arrangement with soil labs already performing other Solvita tests. This helps these labs attain a new commitment to their clients in presenting cost-effective soil reports that contain information about nutrients, along with biological and physical properties important for distinguishing soil health.”

Woods End will include the VAST method for laboratories participating in its new [Solvita Soil Reference Program](#). “During introductory proficiency testing of Solvita last year, 20 percent of our nation’s 150 labs participated,” Brinton added. “This demonstrates our commitment to the quality and accurate implementation of our tests.”

Where to Find Solvita VAST Testing

Growers and landowners who want a complete, professionally integrated view of soil health may ask their local lab whether it provides Solvita testing or find the nearest lab via the [Soil Solvita map](#). Check [Solvita.com](#) for more details.

*For more information or to set up an interview,
email [Amanda Plummer](#) or call (800) 451-0337.*

Download graphics and additional information at: <https://solvita.com/media-downloads>.