

10 FARMING TIPS SOIL HEALTH



- ✦ **Minimize soil disturbance.** Use reduced-till practices, reduce fertilizer use, select plants suited to local soils, and graze responsibly.
- ✦ Maximize soil cover by **planting cover crops between cash crops** to keep soil protected year-round.
- ✦ **Select cover crops based on goals** (improving fertility, suppressing weeds, enhancing soil health, etc). Most provide beneficial surface residue.
- ✦ Use **mixed-seed cover crop blends** for greater effectiveness across diverse soil improvement goals. [Get ideas here](#) or contact Extension.
- ✦ **Maintaining soil cover** reduces erosion, limits compaction, protects against sun/rain, conserves moisture, and stabilizes soil temperature.
- ✦ **Maximize biodiversity above and below ground** through crop rotation, proper grazing, cover crops, and stand improvement.
- ✦ **Maximize living roots** by keeping plants in place. This supports strong root growth, protects soil structure, and builds organic matter.
- ✦ **Add organic amendments.** Incorporating composted amendments into your fields is especially effective in New Mexico's arid soils.
- ✦ Common amendments include composted **manure**, finished **compost**, green manure (**cover crops**), and small **wood chips**.
- ✦ **Test your soil** to better understand its nutrient levels, structure, and overall condition. Your local county Extension agent can help!