

## MANTECH pH measurement system helps streamline soil analysis

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A MANTech AssayPlus™ system with an Automax™ 122 sampler is helping scientists at NRM Laboratories in Swaffham, Norfolk, carry out specialist soil analyses.

As Section Head Rob Thurley explained: “Our analyses involve measurement of pH and elements such as phosphorus, potassium and magnesium, providing an indication of the type and amount of fertiliser required to optimise the condition of agricultural land. Previously, pH was measured using a hand-held pH meter, recording the data manually. This required a dedicated member of staff and was very time consuming. Automation streamlines the process, allowing more samples to be processed in less time.”

“During our busiest periods, we can be running up to 10 batches of 30 samples a day, and automation is essential. The MANTech system is really straightforward to use. It is calibrated before the first run of the day, and takes just 5 to 10 minutes to set up a batch of samples afterwards; we can process two batches at a time, preparing the second batch while the first one is running, which helps to speed up the analysis. Each sample has a unique identification number, and so we just enter the sample ID, start the run and walk away. It takes about 1¾ hours to measure sixty samples, and the results are recorded automatically, ready for reporting, once the run has finished. Compared to manual pH measurement, the automated process is far easier and much more productive.”

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