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**Kakovost tal - Določevanje celotnega dušika s suhim sežigom (elementna analiza)**

Soil quality - Determination of total nitrogen content by dry combustion ("elemental analysis")

**iTeh STANDARD**

Qualité du sol - Détermination de la teneur totale en azote par combustion sèche ("analyse élémentaire")

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**Ta slovenski standard je istoveten z: ISO 13878:1998**

**SIST ISO 13878:1999**

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**ICS:**

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| 13.080.10 | Kemijske značilnosti tal | Chemical characteristics of soils |
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# INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

**ISO**  
**13878**

First edition  
1998-03-15

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## Soil quality — Determination of total nitrogen content by dry combustion ("elemental analysis")

*Qualité du sol — Détermination de la teneur totale en azote par combustion  
sèche («analyse élémentaire»)*

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Reference number  
ISO 13878:1998(E)

## ISO 13878:1998(E)

## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

International Standard ISO 13878 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 190, *Soil quality*, Subcommittee SC 3, *Chemical methods and soil characteristics*.

Annexes A and B of this International Standard are for information only.

SIST ISO 13878:1999

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Printed in Switzerland

# Soil quality — Determination of total nitrogen content by dry combustion (“elemental analysis”)

## 1 Scope

This International Standard describes a method for the determination of the total nitrogen of soil after dry combustion.

It is applicable to all types of soil.

NOTE — The method was developed originally as a manual method by Dumas [3]. Its applicability is improved greatly due to the use of modern automated equipment.

## 2 Normative references

The following standards contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this International Standard. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. All standards are subject to revision, and parties to agreements based on this International Standard are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the standards indicated below. Members of IEC and ISO maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ISO 11464:1994, *Soil quality — Pretreatment of samples for physico-chemical analyses*.

ISO 11465:1993, *Soil quality — Determination of dry matter and water content on a mass basis — Gravimetric method*.

## 3 Principle

The nitrogen content of a soil pretreated in accordance with ISO 11464 is determined by heating to a temperature of at least 900 °C in the presence of oxygen gas. Mineral and organic nitrogen compounds are oxidized and/or volatilized. The combustion products are oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>) and molecular nitrogen (N<sub>2</sub>). After transforming all nitrogen forms into N<sub>2</sub>, the content of total nitrogen is measured using thermal conductivity.

## 4 Reagents

All reagents shall be of recognized analytical grade.

### 4.1 Combustion gas (oxygen)

For special requirements, see the instruction manual of the apparatus used.

## 4.2 Chemicals and/or catalysts

For reduction, oxidation, removal and/or fixing of combustion gases which interfere with the analysis.

## 4.3 Calibration substances

For example, acetanilide ( $C_8H_9NO$ ), L-aspartic acid ( $C_4H_7NO_4$ ), amino acids of known composition or soil samples with certified nitrogen content.

NOTE — The nitrogen content of the calibration substance should be as similar to the soil nitrogen content as possible.

## 5 Apparatus

**5.1 Analytical balance**, capable of weighing accurately to 0,1 mg, or **microbalance**, capable of weighing accurately to 0,01 mg.

**5.2 Combustion apparatus** used to determine total nitrogen content at a temperature of at least 900 °C, including a detector for measuring the nitrogen gas formed. Consult the manufacturer's manual for the apparatus.

**5.3 Crucibles** of various sizes, e.g. 10 ml or 20 ml nominal volume. Special requirements are given in the manual of the apparatus used.

## 6 Laboratory sample

Pretreat the soil in accordance with ISO 11464. Use the fraction of particles of diameter < 2 mm to determine the content of total nitrogen. The same fraction is used to determine the water content in accordance with ISO 11465.

If a soil mass of less than 2 g is required for nitrogen analysis, mill a representative subsample further, to pass a sieve of an aperture specified in the manufacturer's manual to ensure sufficient test reproducibility. Ensure sufficient milling of the soil concerned by comparing the results of multiple analyses (see clause 9).

NOTE — The appropriate size of particles of the test sample depends primarily on the more or less homogeneous distribution and composition of soil organic matter.

## 7 Procedure

### 7.1 Calibration of the apparatus

Calibrate the apparatus as described in the relevant manual, using one of the calibration substances mentioned in 4.3. The substance should have a nitrogen content similar to that of the sample.

### 7.2 Determination of total nitrogen content

The amount of test sample for analysis depends on the expected total nitrogen content and on the apparatus used. Weigh out  $m_1$  g of the air-dried sample or subsample into a crucible (5.3). Carry out the analyses in accordance with the manufacturer's manual for the apparatus.

Normally the primary results are given as milligrams nitrogen ( $X_1$ ) or a mass fraction of nitrogen ( $X_2$ ), expressed as a percentage, referred to the mass of air-dry soil used ( $m_1$ ).

NOTE — Soil pores are filled with air and, therefore, with nitrogen gas. Nitrogen gas can also enter the combustion cell when it is opened for sample exchange. Both facts can lead to an overestimation of the total nitrogen content of soil. Therefore, sufficient purging should be carried out by oxygen gas flow before the combustion step.

## 8 Calculation and expression of results

Calculate the total content of nitrogen ( $w_N$ ), in milligrams per gram, on the basis of the dried soil according to the following equations:

- a) For primary results given in milligrams of nitrogen:

$$w_N = X_1/m_1 \cdot (100 + w)/100$$

- b) For primary results, given as percent mass fraction of nitrogen:

$$w_N = X_2 \cdot 10 \cdot (100 + w)/100$$

where

$w_N$  is the content of N in milligrams per gram of oven-dry soil;

$X_1$  is the primary result in milligrams N;

$X_2$  is the primary result in percentage N (mass fraction);

$m_1$  is the mass of air-dried soil for analysis, in grams;

$w$  is the percentage water content (mass fraction) on the basis of oven-dried soil, determined in accordance with ISO 11465.

Round the results to two significant figures.

## 9 Repeatability

The repeatability of the determination of the total nitrogen content, obtained from two separate consecutively executed measurements, shall satisfy the conditions given in table 1.

**Table 1 — Repeatability**

| Total nitrogen content<br>mg/g | Acceptable variation |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| $\leq 2,0$                     | 10 % relative        |
| $> 2,0$                        | 5 % relative         |

## 10 Test report

The test report shall contain the following information:

- a reference to this International Standard;
- all information necessary for the complete identification of the sample;
- the results of the determination, in milligrams nitrogen per gram sample;
- details of any operation not specified in this International Standard or which are optional, as well as any factor which may have affected the results.