

Evaluation of the biological life of the soil: concrete tests can be carried out by farmers

Francis Bucaille, farmer and consultant in agronomy, recommends several tools to farmers to concretely assess the biological life of soils.

"As farmers, when faced with laboratory test results, you don't always know what to do with it, where to conclude. The **underpants test**, which is one of the best known with regard to the evaluation of soil life, should instead be performed with a square of cotton/jute to measure the activity of fungi.

The **spade test** is also a good tool. It should be borne in mind that the objective is not the quantity but the balance of the biological activity of the soil. The **bacteria/fungi ratio** deserves to be known because it provides indications on the maintenance of humus levels and crop productivity. And to measure it, a rapid field test, within reach of farmers, has been developed: **Microbiometer**.

To achieve it, it is necessary to pay 15 euros per test, which can be ordered online. Soil samples should be taken using a small spoon provided in the kit. The test is done in a **test tube**, in which the soil is mixed with water and then a reagent is added. After shaking well to dilute, we take a few drops to deposit them on a paper target that we photograph with our **smartphone** via a free application previously downloaded. We then discover the results in a few seconds, such as the proportion of mushrooms, in the form of major trends. »

Francis Bucaille, farmer in the Nièvre on 600 ha, co-founder of the Gaiago company, engaged in soil revitalization, speaker, author of "Revitaliser les sols" (Dunod) and trainer.