



Method Summary

Determination of Anions in soils using the Discrete Analysers

Scope and Range

This method is used to determine the concentration of the soluble anions sulphate, chloride, phosphate, nitrate, and nitrite in soils and sludges. Because the method utilises spectrophotometry, all samples analysed must be clear and virtually colourless. Nitrate is calculated from total oxidised nitrogen on the analyser.

Anion	Limit of Detection (mg/kg unless specified)	Range (mg/kg unless specified)
Chloride as Cl	5	5 → 200
Sulphate as SO ₄	0.004 g/l	0.004 → 0.500 g/l
Phosphate as PO ₄	1.0	1.0 → 10.0
TON as NO ₃	1.0	1.0 → 80.0
Nitrate as NO ₃	1.0	1.0 → 80.0
Nitrite as NO ₂	0.05	0.05 → 4.00

The upper limit of the range for each anion may be extended using auto-dilution on the analyser, up to a maximum of x120.

References

none

Principle

Preparation and Extraction:

20g of dried and crushed sample is weighed out, and 40ml of deionised water is added. The sample is then shaken before being filtered.

Analysis:

Chloride reacts with mercuric thiocyanate forming a mercuric chloride complex, displacing thiocyanate equivalent to the original chloride concentration. Released thiocyanate then reacts with iron (III) forming a red ferric thiocyanate complex, and measured on the analyser.

Sulphate ions react with barium chloride forming barium sulphate precipitate. Sodium chloride and gelatine are used to stabilise the precipitate, which causes turbidity of the sample, and is then measured on the analyser.

Orthophosphate ions react with a solution containing molybdic acid and ascorbic acid to form 12-molybdophosphoric acid, which is reduced to phosphomolybdenum blue incorporating antimony. The resulting colour is measured on the analyser.

Nitrate is reduced to nitrite by a hydrazine-copper reagent. The nitrite ion (including that already present) is converted into a red azo-dye by sulphanilamide and N-(1-naphthyl)-ethylenediamine



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dihydrochloride. When calibrated against a nitrate standard, the total oxides of nitrogen, TON, is expressed as NO_3 . The colour is measured. Nitrate is calculated from $[(\text{NO}_2^- + \text{NO}_3^-) \text{ expressed as } \text{NO}_3^-] - [\text{previously determined } \text{NO}_2^-] \times 62/46$.

Nitrite ions react with a reagent containing sulphanilamide and N-1(naphthyl)ethylenediamine in dilute phosphoric acid. An azo dye is formed and is measured photometrically.

Interferences

Turbid samples will cause errors in readings, and therefore samples must be filtered prior to analysis. Coloured samples may cause interferences, and it may be necessary to dilute samples to reduce the effect. Where this is not possible, samples should be analysed by ion chromatography as an alternative method.