

Soil Your Undies

There are more living organisms in a tablespoon of soil than there are humans living on earth.

The more microbial activity in the soil (which is a good thing), the more broken down the undies were.

During this experiment, the Winneshiek SWCD buried 6 pairs of 100% cotton "tighty-whites". They were weighed and then were buried 2 inches deep in a variety of crop fields/management conditions. **After six weeks**, they were unburied, washed, dried, and re-weighed.



#1

- 4 years alfalfa/hay



Beginning weight: 3.2 oz
End weight: 0.9 oz
% Decomposed: **71.9%**

#2

- Anhydrous ammonia in spring
- CRP 10 years before cropping
- Three years of no-till



Beginning weight: 3.2 oz
End weight: 1.6 oz
% Decomposed: **50%**

#3

- 10+ years no-till corn-bean, 1 year cover crops
- Nitrogen fertilizer in spring



Beginning weight: 3.2 oz
End weight: 1.3 oz
% Decomposed: **59.4%**

#4

- 2 years no-till continuous corn silage with cover crops
- Manure (solid broadcast in fall and liquid injection in spring)



Beginning weight: 3.2 oz
End weight: 0.8 oz
% Decomposed: **75%**

#5

- Fall chisel plow and spring field finisher, continuous corn silage.
- Fall manure



Beginning weight: 3.2 oz
End weight: 1.8 oz
% Decomposed: 43.8%

#6

- Urban lawn
- No fertilizer



Beginning weight: 3.2 oz
End weight: 2.2 oz
% Decomposed: 31.5%