

Forage Sampling Instructions

Supplies Needed:

Forage Probe (drill attachment or manual probe, both are available at Extension office)
Cordless Drill (if using the drill attachment)
Charged Battery pack for the drill
5 gallon bucket to mix hay core samples
Gallon Ziplock Baggies
Sharpie (To label the sample bags)

When is the Best Time to Sample?

The best time to sample is as close to when you plan to feed the hay it as possible. This will give you the most accurate nutritional results. You will sample baled hay with a probe. Such an instrument is essential for collecting a representative sample and most commercial labs will not accept a “grab sample” of hay.

You can also sample hay after it cures, which is usually 17 to 21 days after baling if you need quick results.

What Can I Test For?

Nitrates- Commonly found in: sorghum sudan, oats, millet, pigweed, milo or corn stalks

Prussic Acid: Tested for after a freeze on actively growing, or recently harvested plants

RFQ or RFV: Alfalfa Hay quality

Nutritional Analysis: Protein (CP), Energy (TDN), moisture content, NEM, NEG, and mineral concentrations.

These tests are useful when developing rations and feeding plans. Livestock Agent Clint Laflin can help you develop rations and feeding strategies using his ration building computer program, known as BRANDs.

Sampling Procedures

For large round or square bales, the probe should penetrate at least 18 inches into the bale and have an internal diameter of at least 3/8-inch.

I recommend sampling at random approximately 10% of the bales in a given “lot” that you wish to sample. A “lot” of forage consists of forage harvested from one field at the same cutting and maturity.



Collect samples from random bales within the sample by coring straight in from the center of the end of square bales, and from the wrapped circumference of round bales.

Place all samples from that “lot” of hay into a plastic bucket and mix around, filling a gallon sized plastic zip-lock bag with a portion of the sample. This will be shipped to the lab.

For chopped or ground hay, collect about 10 small samples during the grinding process and place them in a plastic bucket for mixing then place the sample into a zip-lock bag for transport. If you are sampling a pile, take about one-fourth of the samples from the top half of the pile and the rest from the lower half.

You can use a gallon sized ziplock bag to bag your sample. Before putting the sample in the bag, please write the date the sample was taken, a sample ID differentiating it from other samples, and your last name so that it isn't lost upon arriving at the lab.

How long does it take to get sample results?

It takes about 5 business days to get sample results. **Please** allow plenty of time before feeding when you bring samples to our office.

Samples are sent to Kansas State University in Manhattan or SDK labs in Hutchinson for analysis. Which lab they are sent to depends on tests requested for each sample.

Questions?

Please contact Clint Laflin by phone at 785-483-3157, or by e-mail at cllaflin@ksu.edu