

HOW TO SAMPLE HAY & SILAGE

The accuracy of fodder analysis depends on the sample you send to the laboratory. It is critical that it is representative of the lot, otherwise the analysis will not be useful.

SAMPLING HAY

Take representative hay samples with a probe or corer. Combine all cores into a single sample and mix thoroughly. The whole sample should be kept intact and not subdivided.

SMALL SQUARE BALES: Sample 10-20 bales, selected at random from the "lot". Take one core from each bale, near the centre of the "butt" end, at right angles to the surface. Ensure that the corer does not get hot.

LARGE ROUND OR SQUARE BALES: Sample 5-10 bales, selected at random. Take one core from each side each bale, at right angles to the surface and at different heights.

CUBES OR PELLETS: Select a handful of cubes or pellets from at least 6 locations or bags. Combine sub-samples and mix thoroughly to obtain a final sample no greater than 500 grams.

EXPORT HAY SAMPLING

Note the sampling protocols including paddock sampling procedures, specific corer diameter and length, the number of corers per bale, and maximum number of bales per lot. See AQIS for further details.

SAMPLING SILAGE

Sample at least 3 weeks after ensiling, and as close to the time of feeding as possible.

PITS OR BUNKERS: Before opening the pit or bunker, core samples can be taken with a long coring device that extends deeply into the pit or bunker. Alternatively, random handfuls can be taken from at least 10 locations across a freshly cut face of the stack, although this will not provide such a good representative sample. Combine all the material into a single sample and mix thoroughly to obtain a final sample of no more than 500 grams, reducing the sample by quartering in necessary.

WRAPPED BALES: Sample 5-10 large bales at random, using a coring device as for large hay bales. Great care must be taken to reseal the holes made in the plastic by the corer immediately. Combine all cores into a single sample and mix thoroughly. The whole sample should be kept intact and not subdivided.

HANDLING SAMPLES

Place sample in a press-seal plastic bag and tightly seal to exclude air, immediately after sampling. Freeze if possible to ensure dry matter is measured accurately and minimise aerobic spoilage.

Send samples to the laboratory as quickly as possible. Avoid mail delays over the weekend by posting samples early in the week. Ensure that you closely follow the laboratory's instructions for labelling samples and filling out all the required details on the sample submission sheet.