

How to Sample Hay Bales

Step 1: Collecting a composite sample

1. Collect 10 to 15 core samples, one core per bale, for each lot of hay.
2. Insert the hay probe at 90-degree angle to the bale.
 - Round bales are cored on the curved side of the bale
 - Small and large square bales are cored from the end of the bale between the strings.
3. Remove probe and empty core into a clean container.
4. Repeat steps 2 & 3 until all samples are pulled from the lot.



Step 2: Preparing sample

5. With a permanent marker label a 1 quart sample bag with your ID system (1st cutting alfalfa, 2nd cutting grass, big pivot, North 40, etc.)
6. Mix the sample thoroughly in the container and place a representative sample in the bag.
7. Package forage samples and completed analysis form (downloaded from lab website or otherwise obtained) in a sturdy box or envelope, and mail to the laboratory.



When in doubt on how to sample – check the lab's directions for sampling and submission, they usually provide them online.

General Information

- Since hay quality changes over time, hay should be tested as near to the time of feeding or sale as possible.
- A separate forage sample should be tested per Lot of hay. A “Lot” is hay that was harvested at the same time, from the same field, under the same conditions, and stored identically.
- As results are only as good as the sample taken you should do your best to obtain a representative sample of the hay Lot.

Forage Analysis Laboratories

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