

Sampling Tips Conventional Analyses



Hay

- Use a properly sharpened bale core sampler to reduce sampling error. Sampling without a bale core will result in erroneous representation of stems vs. leaf material.
- **Mix a minimum of 12 cores per lot.** A lot is a group of bales that are expected to have similar nutrient composition. For example all of the bales from a single field harvested on the same day.
- Place cores in a clean plastic bag and label properly.
- Do not divide samples; this increases the separation of leaves and stems.

Silages-Tower silos

- Collect 15-20 handfuls from the silo unloader into a plastic bucket.
- Mix thoroughly.
- Sub divide using the quartering technique* on a clean surface until the sample is reduced to approximately one pint to one quart.
- Place sample into a plastic bag, remove as much air as possible and seal tightly

Silages – Bunkers and Piles

- Load material into TMR mixer, mix well, and unload onto a clean surface.
- Scoop several handfuls into a plastic bucket.
- Sub divide using the quartering technique* until the sample is reduced to approximately one pint to one quart.
- Place sample into a plastic bag, remove as much air as possible and seal tightly

TMR – Total Mixed Rations

- Scoop several handfuls into a plastic bucket from along the entire length of the feed bunk. Alternatively, place several short pails along the feed trough prior to delivering feed and collect the pails immediately after feed delivery.
- Thoroughly mix the samples on a clean surface.
- Sub divide using the quartering technique* until the sample is reduced to approximately one pint to one quart.

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***Quartering Technique**

Quartering allows reduction of the sample size and maintains the representative sample with proper distribution of particles of all shapes and sizes.

1. Mix the sample thoroughly then pour it into a pile on a clean surface.
2. Shape the sample into a cone by scooping material from each side up and towards the middle of the sample.
3. Flatten the cone.
4. Divide the cone shaped sample into four equal parts (quarters), saving any two opposite quarters.
5. If the sample is still too large, repeat the quartering technique until the sample is approximately one pint to one quart.

Hay samples should not be quartered since leaf loss can significantly affect analysis results.



Handling

Proper handling is important. Unstable silages can change during shipping.

- Remove as much air as possible and seal tightly. Vacuum sealing is highly recommended for samples that are unstable, being shipped long distances, or for analysis that are susceptible to changes during fermentation.
- Freezing is ok for most analysis. Do not freeze samples for mold and yeast analysis.