



# COLLECTING FEED SAMPLES

The laboratory can only determine the quality of the sample according to the condition in which it is received. It is therefore very important how you collect, sub-sample and dispatch your sample to the laboratory.

- 1. Collect your bulk samples.** Collect your bulk sample early in the week so that it can be received and processed by the laboratory before the weekend. Ensure that the bulk sample represents the feed that you are testing (see below), and is free from contamination from soil and leaves and so on. For baled hay and silage we recommend that a sample corer be used to collect your sample. If a corer is not available take a 'grab' from deep within the bale or pit.
- 2. Thoroughly mix the bulk sample and sub-sample.** Use the mixing, coning and dividing technique shown on the back of this page to obtain the quantity of sample indicated on the sampling bag.
- 3. Complete the enclosed sample submission form.** This information tells the laboratory who owns the sample and what tests are required.
- 4. Package and dispatch.** Put the sample and the submission form into the Reply Paid post bag and send to the laboratory.

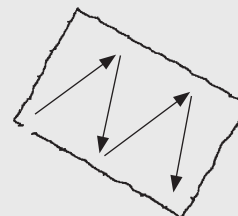
Samples with high moisture content (fresh pasture, fresh mown pasture and silage) must be frozen, in the plastic inner sample bag, before sending to the laboratory. Once frozen, the sample will remain stable during delivery. The sample inner bag should be well wrapped in dry newspaper, just prior to sending, to minimise defrosting. Send the sample to the laboratory in the green Reply Paid post outer bag provided.

Samples must not be allowed to heat during storage and transport prior to testing, as they will deteriorate. Never leave samples in vehicles, particularly on a hot day.

## HOW TO COLLECT YOUR SAMPLE

### PASTURE – FRESH AND FRESH MOWN

- Sample at random by taking between 15 and 20 'grab' samples across a paddock.
- Grab to grazing height or to the full depth of the swath or windrow.
- Combine all 'grabs' in a bucket and mix well.



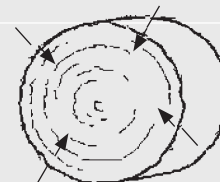
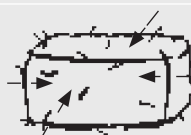
### SMALL SQUARE BALES

- Select 10–20 bales at random. Take one core from each bale, through the 'butt' and at right angles to the surface.
- Combine cores in a bucket and mix well.



### LARGE ROUND OR SQUARE BALES

- Select 5–10 bales at random. Take one core from each side of the bale, probing at right angles to the surface and at different heights.
- Combine cores in a bucket and mix well.



### CUBES, PELLETS, MEALS AND GRAIN

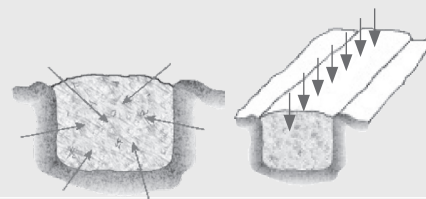
- Take 10–15 'grab' samples from the bulk supply or from individual bags.
- Combine all 'grabs' in a bucket and mix well.



# COLLECTING FEED SAMPLES

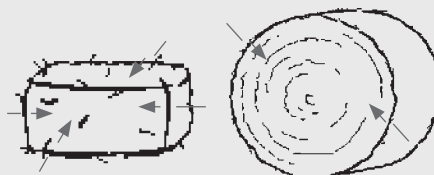
## BUNKER OR PIT SILAGE

- Sample 10–15 sites across a freshly cut silage face or 7–10 random sites along the length of the pit. Avoid sampling from only the top 50 cm of the pit.
- Combine cores in a bucket and mix well.



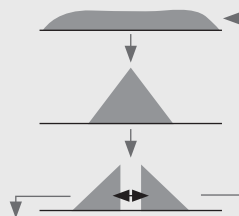
## BALED SILAGE

- Select 10–15 bales at random. Take one core from each side of the bale, probing at right angles to the surface and at different heights.
- Combine cores in a bucket and mix well.



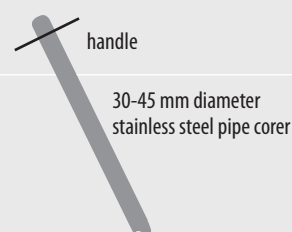
## SUB-SAMPLING – CONING AND DIVIDING

- Mix the sample.
- Bulk the sample in the centre (coning).
- Divide it in half.
- Discard half and repeat until desired sample size is achieved.



## SAMPLE CORERS

- Core sampling devices are commercially available or can be made on-farm. A common construction material is stainless steel dairy airline. More sophisticated corers have a removable cutting head, but home-made corers simply rely on scalloping one end of the tube and sharpening it with an angle grinder. It is important to keep the cutting surfaces sharp for efficient sampling.
- Corers can be manually operated or fitted with an attachment to allow operation with a power drill. In the former case a hole is drilled through one end of the pipe so that a lever/handle can be inserted. **When operating a corer either by hand or by a drill, ensure the corer does not get hot by rotating the corer slowly.** The core can be pushed out of the corer using a length of wooden dowel.



For more information on sample collection, please contact our free call number on 1800 675 623.

## References

1. *Fodder Analyst's Laboratory Manual*. Australian Fodder Industry Association
2. *Successful Silage*. Top Fodder. Chapter 12. Authors: Alan Kaiser & John Piltz