

Nitrate Sampling Tips



Standing forage

- Variability of Nitrate levels within a field can be very high
- Cut at least 15 whole plants taken at random
- Cut plants at the same height as the chopper
- Chop plant to at least 1 inch lengths and mix well
- Remove about 0.5lbs for testing

Silage

- Collect several samples from the silo face or during unloading
- Mix well and remove about 0.5 lbs. for testing

Pasture

- Pasture is extremely difficult to sample because animals will selectively consume plants
- If high nitrates are expected cautious management is recommended
- Corn stubble can effectively be sampled by collecting 15-20 random samples from the field, chop to at least 1 inch lengths, mix thoroughly, and remove about 0.5 lbs. for testing

* For fresh forages it is recommended to deliver samples directly to the lab or freeze samples for 24 hours prior to shipping and ship in an insulated container. Fresh forage in a sealed bag will begin to ferment which reduces the Nitrate level of the sample.

Sources

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