

# Collecting & Posting Silage Samples

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The sampling technique of silage can have large effects feed test values. If a representative sample is not taken, the results will not reflect the average composition of the product. Therefore, samples should be collected across various areas of the pit or silo. Fermentation should be complete prior to sampling silage. If a sample was taken before ensiling, this needs to be stated on the reference.

## Silage Pit

If the pit is unopened, cut the plastic sheeting in 10 to 20 random locations along the length of the pit to obtain a representative sample using a corer. Fodder Link recommend avoiding areas where rainwater accumulation tends to occur. Place each sample taken into a clean, uncontaminated bucket and mix thoroughly to make a bulk sample. Try to avoid the top 50cm of the pile when sampling as this material may have been affected by air exposure. Once you have collected your sample, remember to repair any holes with suitable tape or patches that will not be affected by UV light.

If taking samples from the face of an opened pit, ensure that you sample at feed out time and avoid silage that has had prolonged exposure to the air. Take 10 to 15 samples from across the face, place into a clean container and mix thoroughly to make a bulk sample. Please note that the face of the pit constitutes a small percentage of the entire product stored, and results will be a reflection of this.

## Baled Silage

Using a corer, randomly sample 20% of the product line. It is recommended that round bales should be sampled from the middle of the curved surface and square bales from the end. The corer should be taken through to the middle of the bale, where samples collected are then placed in a clean, uncontaminated bucket. Mix the sample thoroughly to make a bulk sample. Remember to repair any holes that were made in the wrap with suitable tape or patches.



[feedtests@fodderlink.com.au](mailto:feedtests@fodderlink.com.au)

[www.fodderlink.com.au](http://www.fodderlink.com.au)

1800 363 337



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## Sample Handling And Postage

Split your bulk sample if required and place into a Fodder Link zip lock bag. Once the bag is full, press and squeeze to remove as much air as possible and seal. Label the bag concisely with the date of collection, full name, commodity, species, and a reference that allows you to recognise where the sample was collected. If a batch number has been generated through the MyFodderLink App as a self-inspection, or the product has been assessed by Fodder Link staff, write the number on the Zip Lock bag so laboratory staff can match the results to visual data accordingly.

To slow spoilage occurring due to oxygen exposure, that degrade the product quality and alter NIR results from the true sample, Fodder Link strongly recommend freezing your sample immediately after collection for approximately 12 hours before preparing for postage. This only applies to NIR tests and Wet Chemistry tests. Please note that if you require a Mould And Yeast test, do not freeze your sample. It is also suggested to send the sample at the beginning of the working week to avoid weekend postage delays.

When you are ready to send the sample to the Fodder Link laboratory, wrap the sample bag in an insulator, such as bubble wrap or newspaper, and place it into a Fodder Link reply paid postage bag, along with a completed sample submission form. Email or text your completed submission for to the feed testing team so we know when to expect your samples and flag possible delays.



[feedtests@fodderlink.com.au](mailto:feedtests@fodderlink.com.au)  
[www.fodderlink.com.au](http://www.fodderlink.com.au)  
**1800 363 337**