

How to Collect and Submit Samples to TVMDL for Nitrate Tests

Collecting a good sample is critical to getting a meaningful test result.

Forages that tend to be potentially high in nitrate are sorghums (maize, milo, johnsongrass, haygrazer, sudan, sudax), corn, and sometimes coastal that has been heavily fertilized. Pigweed or careless weed (*Amaranthus* sp.) and lamb's quarters or goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp.) are plants that specifically concentrate nitrate from the soil under drought conditions.

For nitrate testing, the pasture in question should be evaluated as a whole unit, and the sample you take should try to represent all the variations in forage growth throughout the pasture. For example, there should be a few stalks from low spots, a few from high spots, a few of the tallest, and a few of the shortest plants. If your pasture is level, think of it as a grid of 12 boxes, and take one stalk from each box. A good sample for nitrate testing consists of 12 to 15 plant stalks with leaf material. Please cut the plants at about 3 inches above the ground; any that are pulled up by the roots will contaminate your sample with dirt and give a falsely high nitrate measurement.

If you want to have baled hay tested, talk to your county agent about using a hay probe to collect a representative sample from 3 or 4 bales. The probe samples can be shipped in clearly labeled paper bags.

Wrap your samples in paper or tie them and clearly label them, if there are several. Wherever possible, if you will simply number them and keep yourself a list, it will speed up our processing significantly. When we receive your sample, we will chip it, subsample it, and dry it before grinding it for extraction. The test we run takes overnight, and we will have a result for you the day after we receive the sample.

The charge for each sample tested for nitrate is \$6.00. If you would like to have the result faxed or phoned to you, please add an additional \$1.00 to your total.

\$6.00/sample overnight test fresh forage or hay
If you need further information, please call (979) 845-3414, Toxicology.

If you need both prussic acid and nitrate, please collect samples as listed for nitrate, but Make sure we get them quickly. The cost for the 2 test is \$12.00/sample

Toll free phone # (888) 646-5623