HOW TO TAKE A HAY SAMPLE

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Why should you test your hay? You can gain valuable information from a simple hay test that can help you balance the nutrition on your livestock. Hay is not just filler without value. By taking a hay sample and having it tested you can learn the crude protein, TDN, nitrate level as well as ADF and NDF depending on the lab you use. Knowing these values you can balance your animal's diet appropriately without over or under providing its nutritional needs. Follow the steps below to collect a random hay sample for analysis.

1. When collecting samples, only take hay from bales that were cut at the sample time. If you have multiple cuttings in your barn, collect separate samples for each cutting.

2. When testing hay that is rolled in round bails, remove the outer crust to avoid collecting material that would be discarded by the animal.

3. Using a hay probe, drill into the bale at a perpendicular angle. For each cutting collect 10 to 15 samples and mix it into a 1 gallon bag.

4. Decide which lab to use; follow their submission procedure and include payment.

If you don't have your soil and your hay tested, chances are you are spending more money than you should, not making as much as you could and are probably shorting your livestock and/or your customers.

Contact the Bradford County Extension Office (904 – 966 – 6224) if you would like assistance interpreting test results or for help balancing your animals ration.

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