



Dairy Management Tip for the Month

Donna M. Amaral-Phillips
UK Extension Dairy Nutritionist



Correctly Collect Silage/Forage Samples for Nutrient Analysis

With this year's crop season quickly coming to a close, properly sampling this year's corn silage and other forages and using these results to balance rations should be completed. Remember that forage samples should be taken and analyzed throughout the feeding year, not just in the fall.

If a TMR mixer is used to feed cows, silage should be loaded into the mixer without other ingredients, mixed, and unloaded onto a solid surface. With the palm of your hand facing up, collect multiple samples (at least 10) from various locations of the pile in a clean 5-gallon bucket. (If a TMR is not used and silage is not unloaded from the silo into a pile, silage samples should be collected evenly spaced over the time silage is unloaded from the upright silo with at least 10 to 20 samples collected with your palm facing upwards.) Mix the forage in the bucket with your hand and dump it out on a clean piece of plastic. Spread the silage out into a circle, divide the circle into quarters, and place one quarter in a plastic quart-sized bag. If the sample is too large, repeat the quartering process after mixing the previously quartered sample by bringing one side of the plastic toward the opposite side. Freeze the forage sample if it will not be shipped for a couple of days. Make sure the sample will not be in transit over the weekend to the forage lab. Samples should be kept cool before shipping, i.e. not placed on the dashboard or hot truck cab.