



Equi-Analytical Laboratories

Fall 2016 Newsletter

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Soil Sampling and Feed Quality

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Soil nutrient concentrations are related to the performance of your field and the nutrient concentrations of the feed harvested. Soil sampling should occur after a cutting of hay is taken, or a pasture has been grazed down to give the soil an opportunity to dry down. Soil samples can be taken any time of the year, but if you are going to monitor test results over time, you should sample at the same time of year each time you sample. If you are concerned about pH levels in your soil, a late summer or fall sample is best. This is because lime application that is not going to be incorporated is best done in the fall so that the natural freeze and thaw cycles can mix the lime and the soil.

Selecting the right fields

There are a few things to consider when selecting fields for soil sampling. *When was the last sample taken?* A schedule of every 2 to 3 years is generally recommended.

What are the crop plans for the field? If the field is going to be re-seeded in the next growing season a new soil sample is good to have for fall applications of lime, manure or fertilizer to prepare for the upcoming crop.

Are there different management areas in the field that should be sampled separately? A large or small field can have distinct areas where it could be managed differently from the rest of the field due to moisture, soil type or slope. If you can sample these areas separately it can improve the overall management of the field.

Having maps of the fields you are sampling or of all fields on your farm is also helpful for record keeping and sample naming. Aerial images can be as simple as using an online tool like Google, slightly more in depth by using the **Web Soil Survey** and identifying soil types, or as complex as a set of maps developed by a farm planning service.

After you have identified the fields or areas to soil sample you need to determine how deep of a sample to take. If the field is going to have tillage like a moldboard plow to get ready for a new crop, the soil should be sampled down to 7 to 8 inches, but if the sample is for managing an established grass field or pasture, 4 to 6 inches will better represent the zone of soil being managed. We recommend 15 to 20 sub-sample cores, to the plow depth, should be taken in a zig-zag pattern for each management area of 20 acres or less. Be sure to avoid unusual areas like fence lines, ditches, manure stacking areas, or lime piling areas.

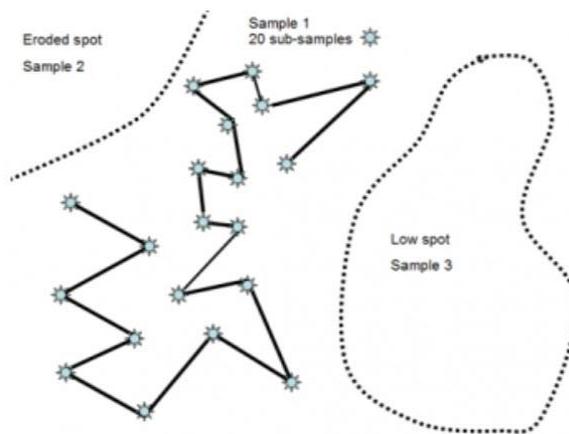
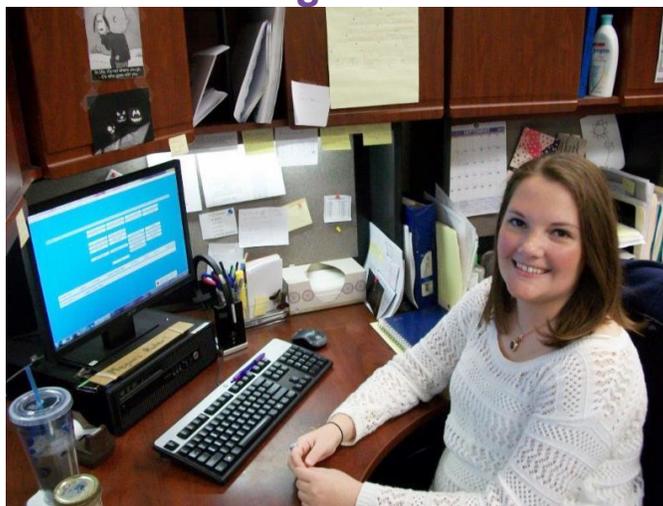


Figure 1. Suggested sampling pattern in a field

After collecting all the sub-samples, mix them together and place the soil in a sample box to send to the lab with the appropriate submittal forms. Results will be returned in 5 to 7 days and if desired will include lime and fertilizer recommendations. If lime and fertilizer recommendations are desired be sure to include soil and crop rotation information on the sample submittal form.

For more information on Agro-One soil testing, to print forms or order sample boxes visit www.dairyone.com/analytical-services/agronomy-services/soil-testing/ or call 1-800-344-2697 ext. 9962.

Meet Megan Wheeler!



Hello, my name is Megan Wheeler and I work as a Customer Support Representative in the Equi-analytical/Dairy One Laboratories. I began my career at Dairy One working in the lab as a mineral technician. In this capacity I prepped forage, water and manure samples for the standard minerals of Ca, P, Mg, K, Na, Fe, Zn, Cu, Mn and Mo as well as chlorides. For water samples, I did the total dissolved solids (TDS) and sulfate analyses. I also washed a lot of glassware! Part of being a technician is not only performing the analyses, but the clean-up afterwards. My biggest challenge was managing multiple priorities as I would often be working on four things at once! Through this, it's important to keep your eye on the ball to insure that everything is done correctly and that we produce accurate results.

I began training to run the Inductively Coupled Argon Plasma Spectrometer (ICAP). The ICAP is a sophisticated piece of equipment that performs the actual mineral analyses. However, I decided to shift gears and pursue a Customer Support position when it opened up. I majored in Agricultural Business in college and I thought this would enable me to use my education to a greater degree. I'm a "people person" and I like the opportunity to interact with our customers on a daily basis. There was a lot to learn, as I now participate in the administrative functions within the lab including entering customer information, raw data from the lab, report generation, emailing, accounting, etc. as well as doing my best on the phone to answer questions and help our customers meet their analytical needs. This involved becoming familiar with all of our lab enterprises including the Dairy One Forage Lab, Equi-analytical Laboratories and Agro-One Soil Lab. I greatly appreciated all of the patience exhibited by our customers as I was learning the ropes.

In September of this year, Chris Hallam, our long time Equi-analytical representative resigned due to personal reasons. Chris worked in both the lab and customer support and we'll sorely miss her experience and friendship. With Chris' sudden departure, this created an opportunity for me and I am the new face of Equi-analytical. I'm excited about this new opportunity and getting to know all of our Equi-analytical customers. In college, I took equine courses in riding, training, nutrition and general management. I'm happy that I can combine my equine and business experience into a single career and I'm looking forward to working with you all!

Outside of work, I enjoy reading and spending time with my family, especially my adorable nephews.

In closing, the best part of my job is helping customers when they have questions or need assistance. It's always a good feeling when I've made someone's day a little bit easier.

Saddle Up with Feed XL!



Get the most out of your forage analysis with Feed XL. Feed XL is user friendly ration software that will help you evaluate your horse's diet. Your Equi-analytical results can be uploaded directly into Feed XL to begin the process. During October, all Equi-analytical reports delivered by email will be accompanied by a Feed XL coupon with an introductory offer. Learn more about this valuable resource by visiting their website today!

www.feedxl.com



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