

Soil and Forage Sampling Kit Instructions

Soil Analysis: How to collect your sample

1. Choose your sampling area. Fields up to 10 acres (4ha) is the largest area that can be sampled as in 1 sample, if the soil type, cropping history and past inputs are the same. Fields larger than this should be broken down and sampled separately.

2. Plan a W-pattern route across the field. Start away from the gate and avoid headlands, hedges, ditches, gateways, tracks, old bonfire sites, old muck heap and feeding areas.

3. Take many samples at regular intervals along the route using a clean auger, trowel or spade. Collect these in a bucket as you go.

4. Sample depth:

- Arable / cultivated land: 15 cm (6")
- Grassland: 7.5 cm (3")

IF YOU MUST SAMPLE IN DROUGHT CONDITIONS: This can affect the K and pH result slightly (we expect by 0.2). To reduce the effect, sample the full topsoil profile, aiming for 15cm (6").

5. Mix all samples together for that field thoroughly in a clean plastic bucket, breaking large clumps to form loose soil that mixes together well. This allows you to send a representative sample of the whole field to the labs.

6. Fill the polythene bag from the bucket — at least half a bag (250g). Seal securely and label clearly with the field reference.

7. Complete the order form. Send the top (white) copy with the sample. Keep the other copies for your records.

8. Post promptly using the pre-paid envelope. If possible, avoid posting on a Friday as the labs don't process soils over the weekend. If you encounter delays in posting, ideally keep your soil sample in the fridge.

Completing the Lab Order Form

Most of this will be completed ready for you, but you will need to add:

Lab Order Form:

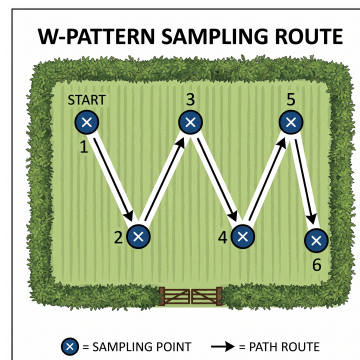
1. Add in crop (see overleaf for codes)
2. Add field ref (field name or number)
3. Field size (circle acres or hectares)

Sample Bag:

1. You just need to add in the **same field reference as you've written on the order form** for that sample. This links the sample order form to each sample bag for the labs.

Questions? Get in touch:

Ben James 07805 929 691 ben.brynmair@gmail.com • Sam Alexander James 07770 669 418 sam.brynmair@gmail.com • www.brynmairfarming.co.uk



DO	DON'T
✓ Sample after harvesting the previous crop — this is the ideal time	✗ Sample within 6 weeks of applying a PK fertiliser, 6 months of slurry, muck or lime. This can affect PK results.
✓ Clean your auger or trowel before sampling a new area	✗ Include unrepresentative areas: headlands, gateways, poached ground or areas that may be nutrient rich: old muck heap sites, where bales or concentrates have been fed
✓ Label the bag clearly with your name and field reference	✗ Post on a Friday (if possible). If you encounter delays in posting, ideally keep your soil sample in the fridge
✓ Take 15-20 samples — even in small fields. Break and mix these well before filling the sample bag	✗ Mix samples from areas with different soil types or management
✓ Send the white (top) copy of the order form with the sample	✗ Allow the sample bag to overheat or become contaminated

When to Sample

It is recommended to soil sample each field, every 3-5 years. **Under SFS, you are required to sample 20% of the improved land each year.** Improved land is land that has received lime, muck or other inputs.

The best time to sample is when **soils are moist, after harvest (arable crops) and before any applications of lime or slurry/manure. Sampling within 6 weeks of any PK fertiliser and 6 months of any organic manures should be avoided.** Manures and PK fertiliser will skew the PK results on the analysis, just as Lime applications will skew the pH results.

If sampling multiple fields, keep each field separate — order an additional kit for each field or sub-field you want analysed.

Receiving Results

Expected turnaround: Results will be emailed to you within 7 days of the lab receiving your sample (may vary during busy lab periods).



Soil & Forage Crop Codes

Codes for Grass		Codes for Arable	
Cattle Grazing	GCG	Spring Barley	SB
Sheep Grazing	GSG	Winter Barley	WB
Horse Grazing	GHG	Oats	WO
Reseed	GR	Winter Wheat	WW
Hay	GH	Oilseed Rape	OSR
Amenity/Turf	GAT	Potatoes	POTS
Silage	SIL	Sugar Beet	S BEET
Wholecrop	WC	Vegetables	VEG

Forage Analysis: How to collect your sample

Forage can vary considerably within the bale and/or clamp, therefore please follow these procedures:

Bales

Select 4-6 bales at random from the same cut/crop e.g first cut silage. Ideally, you want to take a sample from as deep or close to the centre of the bale as practically possible. Grab a handful of forage, break up each sample and mix thoroughly together the 4-6 samples. Fill the plastic sample bag full with the mixed forage. Seal securely and squeeze out all the air from the sample bag.

Clamps

Please take care when sampling a silage clamp. Silage clamps are best sampled with a suitably designed corer, along a diagonal sampling path from front to back of the clamp. If no corer is available, remove the top layer, and dig as deep as possible at each sampling point. Break up each sample and mix thoroughly together the 4-6 samples. Fill the plastic sample bag full with the mixed forage. Seal securely and squeeze out all the air from the sample bag.

When to Sample Forage

Silage and Haylage: Take core samples **4 to 6 weeks after sealing**, ensuring fermentation is fully complete, stable and representative of the feedout quality.

Hay: Sample hay **3 to 4 weeks after baling**.

Straw: Anytime after harvest.

Completing the Lab Order Form

Most of this will be completed ready for you, but you will need to add:

Lab Order Form:

1. Add in the forage reference e.g first cut silage

Sample Bag:

1. You just need to add in the **same forage reference as you've written on the order form** for that sample. This links the sample order form to each sample bag for the labs.

Receiving Results

Expected turnaround: Results will be emailed to you within 7 days of the lab receiving your sample (may vary during busy lab periods).



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