

NITRATE TEST - FORAGE SAMPLES

Name: _____

What will this forage be fed to:

Business/Ranch Name: _____

Cows/Bulls

Mailing Address: _____

Feeders

City, State, Zip: _____ MT _____

Pregnant Cows

Phone Number: (_____) _____ Date: _____

Cow/Calf Pairs

Email Address: _____

Horses

Forage Type: _____

Sheep

Acres: _____ Standing Cut Baled

Goats

Other: _____

Nitrate Test Options:

- Nitrate Quik Test** – This test is free and done by the Extension Agent. It uses a combination of chemicals that determine the presence of nitrates. It doesn't say specifically how much, but is an indicator if further testing is needed (either a strip test and/or lab). A recent MSU study determined that this test has a 69% accuracy. However, there is an 80% chance of a false negative. The other challenge with this test is that the stems must have moisture in them. **It needs to be done BEFORE you cut and cannot be used on dry hay.** If the test indicates high nitrates we can often recommend some techniques to try to decrease nitrates before cutting.
- Nitrate Strip Test** – This option is NEW. It is done by the Agent and there is currently no cost. It can be done on green or dry forage. It provides a range of possible nitrate levels. At high levels, a lab test is still recommended. The MSU study determined that this test has a 73% accuracy with fewer false negatives.
- Nitrate Lab Test** – Any forage lab can provide this for you. If you want to work with our office, we use Midwest Labs which charges \$25 plus shipping. It provides you with an exact level of nitrates. Regardless of what lab you choose, make sure that you get [recommendations specific for Montana](#). Many labs will provide you recommendations for Nebraska or Pennsylvania. Because we have an arid climate and higher nitrate levels naturally in our environment, our recommendations tend to be more conservative than other states.

Nitrate testing is recommended for any small grains forage, cover crops, and any forage that has been stressed. Oats and barley tend to accumulate the highest levels of nitrates, but it can be seen in turnips, radishes, clover, alfalfa and even weeds.

If you collect **standing forage** for testing, bring 8-10 plants from multiple locations in the field. If it is a pivot, make sure you get plants from both the inside and outside of the field. If testing **baled hay**, collect core samples from at least 10% of the bales from a field. We have a hay probe you can borrow from our office.

Office Use Only

Sample Size: Small Adequate

Results: _____

Recommendations: Feed as-is Get a Lab Test Ration Out $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{2}$ with Other Feeds

Comments: _____

_____ Date Results Reported: _____