

Instructions for testing fresh grass

These instructions will minimize loss of carbohydrates on forage samples that have any green, living tissue. Completely dead, dry samples do not require special handling.

Levels will vary greatly throughout the day. If you want lowest, sample at dawn. If you want highest, sample late afternoon on a sunny day. Moisture on the grass will not matter, as the % dry matter is most important. Watch horses graze, and make sure the sample is representative of what the horse is eating; both the portion of the plant, and the type of plants. Weeds can be high in sugar, too. Mix well in a clean plastic bucket and place about a pound of fresh material in a zip lock bag. Loosely packed in a gallon size ziplock is better than cramming it into a quart size, so it will freeze quickly. Freeze sample within 15 minutes of cutting, or place on wet or dry ice in a cooler. Freeze at least overnight before shipping. **Ship Next Day Delivery on dry ice or cold pack,** on Monday- Wed. If the sample gets warm, it will not be accurate. (Yes, shipping will cost more than the testing.) You can get really good combo Styrofoam/cardboard vaccine shipping boxes from your vet, and they usually have extra cold packs, too. Or line a small box with construction Styrofoam, or send in a cheap cooler inside a box. The sample must stay frozen or very cold until it gets to the lab. Give the sample a meaningful name, and include time and date of sampling; like: West Pasture 6AM 6-20-08, or dandelion 4PM 6-20-08

Send to: Dairy One, 730 Warren Road, Ithaca, NY 14850-9877

Ask for Water Soluble Carbs, Ethanol Soluble Carbs and Starch. Cost of these tests will be about \$21.

If this sample has been pulled within 3 days of your horse getting laminitis, colic or a PSSM attack, and you can follow this protocol to insure more accurate results, please forward test results (dry matter basis) to Safergrass.org and I will include it in a database to help establish what levels cause problems. Please let me know the time and date if not included in the sample name, and tell me any unusual weather conditions the week preceding sampling, such as drought, freeze, or mostly cloudy and rainy.