Manure Sampling Instructions
Soil Science Department, UW-Madison

Solid manure – Dairy, Beef, Swine

Sampling directly from a stack or bedded pack – Take samples from several locations throughout the pile or pack area using a fork, shovel or spade. Thoroughly mix the composite sample and subsample using a one-gallon plastic bag. Sampling directly from a stack or bedded pack is not the preferred option.

While loading – Recommended method for sampling from a stack or bedded pack. Take samples while loading several spreader loads and combine to form one composite sample. Thoroughly mix the composite sample and subsample using a one-gallon plastic bag.

During spreading – Spread tarp in field and catch the manure from one pass. Sample from several locations and create a composite sample. Thoroughly mix composite sample together and subsample using a one-gallon plastic bag.

Daily haul – Place a five-gallon pail under the barn cleaner 4-5 times while loading a spreader. Thoroughly mix the composite sample together and subsample using a one-gallon plastic bag. Repeat sampling 2-3 times over a period of time and test separately to determine variability.

Liquid Manure - Dairy, Beef, Swine

From storage – Agitate storage facility thoroughly before sampling. Collect several samples from storage facility or during loading using a five-gallon pail. Place subsample of the composite sample in a one-quart plastic container. Sampling a liquid manure storage facility without proper agitation (2-4 hours, minimum) is not recommended.

During application – Place buckets around field to catch manure from spreader or irrigation equipment. Combine and mix samples into one composite subsample in a one-quart plastic container.

Poultry

Collect approximately 10 samples from throughout the house in a ratio proportional to the overall volume of manure they represent.

Sample Storage/Handling

Solid/Semi-solid samples – Thoroughly mix composite sample and fill one-gallon plastic heavy-duty ziplock bag approximately one-half full. Squeeze out excess air, close and seal. Store sample in freezer if not delivered to the lab immediately.

Liquid samples – Thoroughly mix composite sample and fill a one-quart plastic bottle not more than three-quarters full. Remember, to always use screw-top plastic containers for safety. Free plastic sample bottles are available from the UW Soil and Forage Laboratory at Marshfield. Glass containers are not acceptable. Store sample in freezer if not hand delivered to the lab immediately.

Keep all manure samples frozen until shipped or delivered to a laboratory. Ship early in the week (Mon.-Wed.) and avoid holidays and weekends. Avoid mailing over holidays or weekends.