

AgriLife Extension - Wharton and Matagorda County - Offering Soil Testing Campaign now through November 2nd

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Texas A&M AgriLife Extension – Wharton and Matagorda County Offices is offering soil testing for forage producers such as hay and improved grazing pastures.

This special multi-county Soil Testing Campaign will take place now through November 2, 2018.

Forage producers can gear up for next year's growing season by soil sampling now to determine the status of soil nutrients in hay fields and pastures.

With soil testing, you can actually see what you're deficient in and how much you need to supplement your hay field or pasture.

The objective in sampling is to obtain composite samples of soil that represent the entire area to be fertilized or limed.

For every 40 acres you will take a number of samples at a depth of 6", probably at least 10-15 samples over that 40-acre area so we can get a random sample from a lot of different spots. They are mixed together, and the analysis will be taken from a combined soil sample.

Soil testing is a critical tool for farmers and ranchers. Applying fertilizer without a current soil test is sure to cost in either over application or under production.

Soil testing offers farmers a proven means of evaluating soil nutrient levels and provides guidelines to help set fertilizer rates and application methods to achieve desired production levels. As a general rule, warm-season grasses require about 50 pounds of nitrogen, 15 pounds of phosphorus, and 42 pounds of potassium per ton of dry matter produced. If we're removing 1 ton of hay per acre in a hay production scenario, and we're not returning the 50 lbs of N, 15 lbs of P, and 42 lbs of K to the soil, then we can quickly see the field become deficient in these nutrients. The lack of an appropriate fertility program may be the number one cause for bermudagrass decline.

Forage producers must first obtain soil sample bags and instructions from the Wharton or Matagorda County AgriLife Extension Office. After collecting composite samples, participants then select the proper test and complete the information sheet, which can be returned to the AgriLife Extension county office for a 33 percent discount on the testing fee and free shipping. Soil samples with the complete sample form must be returned to the Wharton or Matagorda County Extension Office by 5:00 p.m. on November 2nd.

The **Routine** analysis tests for pH, nitrates, conductivity, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sodium and sulfur, while the **Routine + micronutrients** tests for zinc, iron, copper and manganese.

Soil samples will be analyzed by the Texas A&M University Soils Testing Laboratory for a reduced fee of \$8 per sample for the **Routine** analysis and \$15 per sample for the **Routine + micronutrients** test during this special campaign. Checks can be made payable to Leadership Advisory Board.

Once the kits are dropped off at the Wharton or Matagorda County Extension Office, the test samples will then be delivered to Texas A&M University-College Station by AgriLife Extension staff members.

For more information on this soil testing campaign, please contact Stacey at the Wharton County Extension Office at 979-532-3310. Additional information on how to collect a soil sample, go to <http://forages.tamu.edu/PDF/Soiltesting-E-534.pdf>

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