

Protocol for sampling pasture for facial eczema spore counting

To ensure maximum reliability of pasture spore counts, a consistent approach to collecting pasture samples is required. Samples must be cut at the same height above the ground from the same paddocks each time.

1. Paddock selection

- a. Select two paddocks that represent different types of land on your farm (e.g. a flat paddock and a slightly more undulating one, or from paddocks of different soil types).
- b. Pick and mark a sample line between two points diagonally across the whole paddock. This line should be used each time a sample is collected.

To get a reasonable indication of the spore count trends on a farm, the paddocks should be sampled for the remainder of the program.

2. Label bags

- a. Label paper bags with farm name, date and paddock ID
- b. Please use a black waterproof Texta to write on the paper bags to ensure that they can easily be read when they are submitted

3. Collect samples

- a. Using scissors or shears cut a handful of pasture every 10-15 paces along your sample line
- b. Cut 1 cm above ground level. Make sure you collect the samples on a random basis but avoid parts of paddocks sheltered by trees and hedges, urine & dung spots and avoid including dirt in the sample.
- c. Fill the bag to at least 2/3 with pasture.

4. Submit samples

- a. Please deliver the pasture samples into your nominated spore counting veterinary clinic on the day they are collected.
- b. If it is more convenient, we can provide you with labelled post bags which you can drop in the mail and they will be delivered to the Maffra Veterinary Centre.