

TOTAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS PTY LTD

How to Collect Samples for Lab Testing

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Samples

1. Pre-harvest samples should be representative of items to be sold for consumption.
2. Packing shed & central market samples should be collected across the line/consignment.
3. Use only clean sealable plastic bags.
4. Label bags clearly with name of grower and item variety details plus batch number as applicable.
5. Hand hygiene is essential (e.g. use clean protective gloves)
6. Provide 1kg sample (or equivalent bagged volume) for MRL testing.
7. Provide an additional 1kg sample (or equivalent bagged volume) if Microbial testing is also required.
8. Pre-cool samples to below 8° Celsius following collection and hold in chiller storage.
9. Complete TQAS Sample Submission Form in full and fax to 08 9256 8155.
10. Pack in insulated container with ice brick and send to us for collection.

Note: Do not freeze samples

Environmental Swabs

1. Obtain sufficient new sealed swabs for use (2 x swabs required for each site).
2. Check expiry date shown on swab wrappers. Discard if out of date.
3. Tear open the 2 swab wrappers (as shown on outside).
4. Choose the site to be swabbed. Ideally the site should be not less than 10cm² (i.e. 3.2cm x 3.2cm)
5. Remove the entire hard outer plastic tubes from the wrappers and write the site details and date swabbed on each using a waterproof pen.
6. Remove the hard plastic stopper from the end of the tube and discard.
7. Remove the swab stick from the plastic tube taking care not to contaminate the cotton bud end.
8. Place the swab stick into the sachet so that the cotton end is moistened by the transport medium.
9. Carefully remove the swab stick from the sachet. Apply the cotton bud end to the surface to be tested and swab the designated area by rolling the swab between the thumb and forefinger across the surface in one direction using parallel strokes followed by parallel strokes in the opposite direction (i.e. right angles to the first strokes)
10. Immediately return the swab stick into the hard plastic tube taking care not to touch any other surface.
11. Place the plastic tube with the completed swab back into the plastic wrapper.
12. Repeat steps 6 to 10 for the second swab of the same site. (Remember to collect 2 swabs from each site – one will be tested for E.coli & the other for Listeria)
13. Place completed swabs into a sealed bag or insulated container and pre-cool to below 8° Celsius following collection. Always ensure that swabs are kept dry.
14. Complete TQAS Sample Submission Form in full and fax to **(08) 9256 8155**.
15. Pack swabs for safe transit together with an ice brick and send to us within 24 hours of collection.

Note: Do not freeze swabs.

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Water Samples

Every care must be taken during water sampling to avoid contamination of the sample so that results obtained are truly representative of the water sampled. Where samples for several purposes are to be taken from the same source, the sample for bacteriological examination should be taken first.

1. Always use a clean sterile sample bottle to collect water samples.
2. Keep the sample bottle closed until the moment it is to be refilled.
3. Remove the screw cap; ensuring fingers do not come into contact with the neck of the bottle or with the inner surface of the screw cap.

Sampling From a Body of Water:

1. After removing the screw cap from the bottle, and holding near the base, plunge the bottleneck downward below the surface.
2. Turn the bottle until the neck points slightly upward and the mouth is directed toward any current. If there is no current, create an artificial current by pushing the bottle forward horizontally in a direction away from the hand.
3. When the bottle has almost filled, draw the bottle out of the water and immediately replace the screw cap.

Note: Avoid the sides and bases of water basins, or the banks and beds of raw water supplies, to prevent sludge and other debris being collected in the sample.

Sampling From a Hosepipe:

1. Allow the water to run until the hosepipe is clear of any sludge or stagnant water.
2. Fill the bottle without rinsing, leaving ample air space to facilitate mixing in the laboratory. (Fill to the level of the bottle's "shoulder".)
3. Replace the screw cap immediately, observing the same precautions as for opening the bottle.

After Collection:

1. Note date and time of sample collection on the bottle. Use waterproof pen.
2. When all water samples have been collected, place them in an insulated container (e.g. foam esky) together with an ice brick.
3. Fully complete the appropriate TQAS Testing Request form (downloadable from www.tgas.com.au).
4. Send the completed Testing Request form and fax to **(08) 9256 8155** or email to admin@tgas.com.au a.s.a.p.
5. Arrange for water samples to be forwarded to TQAS as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours. Advise TQAS by telephone on **(08) 9456 2455** if samples are being sent by courier.
6. If there is to be any delay in transporting the water samples to TQAS, then store them in a refrigerator prior to despatch.
Note: Do not freeze water samples.

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Soil Samples

Proper selection and handling of samples is very important in order that we can properly evaluate the nutritional status of your soils. It is important to collect samples that give representative data for the soil condition within a soil type.

We suggest you take several soil samples within a soil type area. When bulked together these become a composite sample representative of that area. It is not a good idea to mix entirely different soil types even though they are within one area. In the case of major soil variation within an area, it is best to collect separate composite samples representing the different soil types.

When selecting the area in which to collect the soil samples try to pick out average conditions for the soil type. Avoid steep slopes, tops of hills, drainage areas and other non-typical features of the paddock. Thus an average slope or level area which represents conditions similar to most of the soil type is most likely to give the information you require.

Once you have selected the representative area the collect six subsamples, which when bulked together will make up the composite sample to be sent to the laboratory.

1. Dig the soil to 4" to 6" depth with a steel auger or shovel (not painted or galvanized).
2. Mix this soil thoroughly and take one or two cupfuls and put into the plastic bag.
3. After repeating this procedure five times the soil bag will contain about 2 to 3 kilograms of soil.
4. Close the bag with a twist tie.
5. Label the bag clearly as to area number or name and sample number.
6. Other composite samples from different soil types should be treated similarly.
7. Complete TQAS Sample Submission Form in full and fax to **(08) 9256 8155** or email to admin@tqas.com.au.
8. Pack samples for secure transit and forward to TQAS.

Further Assistance

If you have any queries in relation to collecting samples for lab testing then please do not hesitate to contact us via –

Telephone – (08) 9456 2455

Facsimile – (08) 9256 8155

Email – admin@tqas.com.au

Mobile Numbers –

Chris Hall – 0419 958 836

Frank Holmes - 0433 389 910

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