



What hay probe do you recommend and where can I get one?

*Dennis W. Hancock,
Extension Forage Agronomist,
Crop and Soil Sciences Department*

Sampling hay has become more and more important, especially as the cost of supplementing poor quality forage has become less cost effective. Of course, the analysis is only as good as the [technique used to obtain the sample](#) and the tool that was used. The most frequent question that I get on this subject is "**What hay probe do you recommend and where can I get one?**"

I personally use the [Penn State Sampler](#) for my day-to-day use, and I purchased it through [NASCO](#) (see [here for a direct link to their page for this hay probe](#)). I recommend this probe to our County Extension Agents and for instances when only a few bales are being sampled.

I have also used the [Colorado Hay Probe](#) and find that is the better choice for taking samples from several bales in a hay lot. If you are a commercial hay producer or a hay broker that is dealing with a large volume of hay bales and hay lots, the Colorado Hay Probe is perhaps your best choice. This probe can be purchased from [Udy Corp.](#) and perhaps at other locations that I am not aware.

My mention of these samplers does not mean that I do not recommend other types. There are a number of good probes out there. [Here is a publication](#) that some of my colleagues throughout the nation have put together in collaboration with the [National Forage Testing Association](#). This publication lists several really good probes. They also have additional information on their [website](#) about how to select a good hay probe.

Here, the differences between the Colorado Hay Probe (L) and the Penn State Probe (R) are discussed.



This shows how the Penn State Probe is used, in combination with an appropriately sized cordless drill (1/2" and 24V minimum), to sample round hay bales that have been stacked flat-side down in a barn.



This photograph shows what the Colorado Hay Probe looks like. It is similar to a very large hypodermic needle. The tip must be kept very sharp for this probe to be effectively used.



The Colorado Hay Probe is pushed into the bale. It collects the sample and after several probings (20-30), the large chamber will contain enough of a sample to submit for analysis.



Learning *for* Life

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating. Cooperative Extension, the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, offers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, gender or disability.

An Equal Opportunity Employer/Affirmative Action Organization Committed to a Diverse Work Force

CSS-F028

June 2009

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, The University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

J. Scott Angle, Dean and Director.