



Wool Testing Authority Europe

Fleece Sampling Protocol

A test result is only as good as the methods used to produce it which includes the test method itself but also the sampling method. This fleece sampling protocol has been put together to offer guidance to customers who are taking samples from their animals for fleece testing. It will provide an optimum sample for fleece testing using our OFDA 2000 machine. This guide can be applied to all fleece types.

Research has shown that the most representative area of a fleece micron measurement is the mid-side, defined by the Australian standard as

“Centred on the third last rib, halfway between the mid-line of the back and the mid-line of the belly on the left-hand side of the animal”.

You do not have to follow this definition exactly, but the following guidelines will ensure that you obtain a sample of sufficient quality to generate an accurate and representative test result for your fleece;

- Ensure that your fleeces are dry before sampling. Wet samples can begin to decompose in the sample bag and moisture will also affect the test result.
- Ensure the animal is in full fleece so a full year’s growth is captured in the test result. You can take a sample whenever you wish but diameter can change within a single staple quite significantly throughout the year so early/late sampling may not give a true micron for that fleece.
- Cut as close to the skin as possible, again to incorporate a full year’s growth. The tool used to take the sample does not matter just as long as it is sharp enough to obtain a clean cut.
- It may be worth keeping a note of where you took the sample so that you can locate the same position next year.
- A handful of staples is all that is needed for a test (approx. 10 - 20 staples).

You can be as strict or as relaxed as you like about your sampling protocol, but we do strongly advise that the same protocol is used year on year so that you can make accurate comparisons between seasons.

Once samples have been taken, please package them and send them to our laboratory;

- Samples should then be placed into a sample bag. We recommend paper bags to prevent moisture build up during transit. If this is not possible, plastic bags are fine, but we recommend leaving the bag open to allow moisture to vent. Please ensure the samples are bagged in such a way so that the sample does not fall out of the bag during transit.
- Please clearly label the bags with the identifier that you want to appear on your test report using permanent marker or other form of secure marking.
- Navigate to our payment page on our website to place your order.
- Package the samples. Include a note to state who you are so the samples can be matched to the order when they arrive into the laboratory. A copy of the order receipt or handwritten note are fine.
- Post your samples to our laboratory address:

Wool Testing Authority Europe
Cibyn Industrial Estate
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 2BD

If you require any further assistance, please contact the laboratory.

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