



# Information Sheet

## 7. NUTRITION

### 7.9 Leaf sampling

- Are you aware of leaf sampling requirements?
- Are you extracting leaf samples correctly?
- Are you ensuring that meaningful comment can be provided from your leaf analysis results?

Please read this sheet carefully to ensure that the samples you collect will allow for effective leaf analysis and meaningful interpretation of results.

#### What are the requirements for leaf sampling?

1. Vigorous crop growth must have occurred during the three weeks prior to taking the leaf samples.
2. The age of the cane and month of sampling must fall within the prescribed limits for your area (see table).
3. The crop must have received enough well-distributed rainfall/irrigation to preclude any moisture stress prior to sampling.
4. Four weeks must have elapsed since the last fertiliser top-dressing.

#### What are the prescribed sampling periods and cane ages?

These depend on the area in which the cane is grown.

The table below provides the information you require.

| Area               | Age        | Season      |
|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| Northern irrigated | 3-5 months | Oct - April |
| Coast lowlands     | 4-7 months | Nov - March |
| Midlands           | 4-9 months | Dec - March |

#### How should the samples be collected?

1. Select leaves from stalks of average height, but not from young shoots.
2. The leaf taken for sampling should be the third down (top visible dewlap leaf), the first is the leaf which is at least half unrolled.
3. Collect about 40 such leaves randomly from various spots throughout the field.
4. If the field consists of areas of good and poor growth, a separate sample should be taken from each portion, even if the field has been fertilised as one unit.
5. Holding the leaves in a bundle, chop off the tops and bottoms, leaving a central portion roughly 300 mm long.
6. Strip out and discard the midrib from this central portion, using a knife or simply by tearing.



7. Spread the leaf sample on a clean sheet and leave to dry in a well-ventilated area.
8. Bundle the dried-out leaf portions and attach a green leaf sample label. Please provide all the crop details requested on the green label.

### What other information is useful?

- The midrib must be stripped from the leaf blade as soon as possible after sampling.
- Do not contaminate samples by contact with fertiliser or used fertiliser bags.

**Remember: It costs YOU less with FAS!**

### Sample Collection Points

| EXTENSION AREA                        | BIN LOCATION  | TRANSPORTATION  |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| North Coast and Durban<br>North Coast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension Office (Umhlali)</li> <li>• Coastal Farmers Co-op (Stanger)</li> <li>• Nutri-Flo (Tinley Manor)</li> <li>• Gledhow Mill Office</li> <li>• New Guelderland Sugar Estate</li> <li>• Melville Mill</li> </ul> | Collected weekly by UTI Courier   |
| South Coast                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension Office (Sezela)</li> <li>• Illovo MCC ( Umbumbulu)</li> </ul>  | Collected weekly by UTI Courier   |
| Lower South Coast                     | Extension Office (Port Shepstone)   | UTI Courier   |
| Midlands North                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UCL Company Ltd (Dalton)</li> <li>• Extension Office (Wartburg)</li> <li>• LCM Table Mountain (Workshop)</li> </ul>  | UTI Courier   |
| Midlands South                        | Extension Office (Eston)  | UTI Courier   |
| Zululand North                        | Coastal Farmers   | Oceans Agriculture  |
| Zululand Central                      | Coastal Farmers   | Oceans Agriculture  |
| Zululand South                        | Coastal Farmers   | Oceans Agriculture  |
| Umfolozi                              | Coastal Farmers   | Oceans Agriculture  |
| Malelane                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LK Co-op (Louws Creek)</li> <li>• LK Co-op (Malelane)</li> <li>• Malelane Cane Growers</li> </ul>  | Samples delivered to Komati Research Farm and transported by Sun Courier to SASRI |
| Komatipoort                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LK Co-op (Komatipoort)</li> <li>• Komati Research Farm</li> </ul>  | Samples delivered to Komati Research Farm and transported by Sun Courier to SASRI |

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