

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.

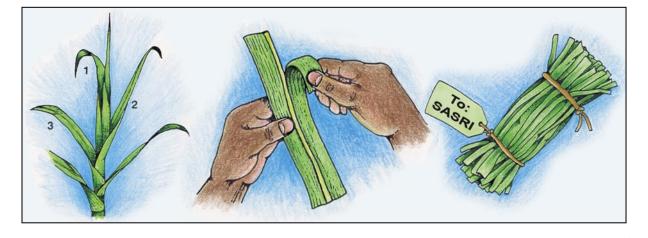
The table below provides the information you require.

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.

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- 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!

EXTENSION AREA	BIN LOCATION	TRANSPORTATION
North Coast and Durban North Coast	 Extension Office (Umhlali) Coastal Farmers Co-op (Stanger) Nutri-Flo (Tinley Manor) Gledhow Mill Office New Guelderland Sugar Estate Melville Mill 	Collected weekly by UTI Courier
South Coast	 Extension Office (Sezela) Illovo MCC (Umbumbulu) 	Collected weekly by UTI Courier
Lower South Coast	Extension Office (Port Shepstone)	UTI Courier
Midlands North	 UCL Company Ltd (Dalton) Extension Office (Wartburg) LCM Table Mountain (Workshop) 	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	 LK Co-op (Louws Creek) LK Co-op (Malelane) Malelane Cane Growers 	Samples delivered to Komati Research Farm and transported by Sun Courier to SASRI
Komatipoort	 LK Co-op (Komatipoort) Komati Research Farm	Samples delivered to Komati Research Farm and transported by Sun Courier to SASRI

Sample Collection Points

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