Protocol for sampling pasture for facial eczema spore counting

To ensure maximum reliability of pasture spore counts, a consistent approach to collecting pasture samples is required. Samples must be cut at the same height above the ground from the same paddocks each time.

1. **Paddock selection**
   a. Select two paddocks that represent different types of land on your farm (e.g. a flat paddock and a slightly more undulating one, or from paddocks of different soil types).
   b. Pick and mark a sample line between two points diagonally across the whole paddock. This line should be used each time a sample is collected.

   To get a reasonable indication of the spore count trends on a farm, the paddocks should be sampled for the remainder of the program.

2. **Label bags**
   a. Label paper bags with farm name, date and paddock ID
   b. Please use a black waterproof Texta to write on the paper bags to ensure that they can easily be read when they are submitted

3. **Collect samples**
   a. Using scissors or shears cut a handful of pasture every 10-15 paces along your sample line
   b. Cut 1 cm above ground level. Make sure you collect the samples on a random basis but avoid parts of paddocks sheltered by trees and hedges, urine & dung spots and avoid including dirt in the sample.
   c. Fill the bag to at least 2/3 with pasture.

4. **Submit samples**
   a. Please deliver the pasture samples into your nominated spore counting veterinary clinic on the day they are collected.
   b. If it is more convenient, we can provide you with labelled post bags which you can drop in the mail and they will be delivered to the Maffra Veterinary Centre.