

MAFES Analytical Laboratory Privacy and Delineation of Responsibility Policy

The Analytical Lab/Maine Soil Testing Service Lab is the general service laboratory of the Maine Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station. Analytical services are provided for researchers in the Experiment Station, in Cooperative Extension, and for all campuses in the University of Maine System.

These same analytical services are also provided for commercial customers. A large proportion of the samples run in the Analytical Lab are for the general public, including farmers, gardeners, consultants, and commercial businesses within Maine and across the US. These commercial customers are charged a fee for analytical services. Since the customer pays for the analysis, that customer has the exclusive right to access the test results and any associated recommendations. Analytical data is considered confidential unless the customer agrees to make it generally available. Without permission, analytical data may only be made available as generic information in sample summaries or on anonymous example report forms, with all customer information and identification removed.

The Analytical Lab provides objective, unbiased sample analysis for all customers, including government agencies, who request our services. We use standardized methodology and have formal quality control and quality assurance programs in place to assure our results provide accurate estimates of analyte concentrations in the samples as delivered to us. In most cases our laboratory personnel have no role in sampling or handling of samples before they are received. In some cases sample handling prior to delivery to the laboratory may influence the results obtained. Formal delineation of responsibility for sample collection, handling, delivery, and analysis is specified in the Laboratory's Quality Assurance Plan available on the laboratory website: <http://anlab.umesci.maine.edu>.