



News & Views

A Monthly Publication Dedicated to the Feed, Seed, Grain and Farm Supply Industries of Wisconsin

It's Back ■

We have heard of confirmed instances in southern Wisconsin and parts of northern Illinois of positive presence of vomitoxin in freshly harvested wheat. So far, we are just aware of the positive samples coming in around the area of the primary flooding in southern Wisconsin. Field surveys done by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer protection (DATCP) earlier in the growing season north of the Madison-Milwaukee line indicated a generally disease free condition. (Vomitoxin is a naturally occurring mycotoxin that may be produced from scab. The occurrence of scab does NOT automatically mean that vomitoxin is present, but in recent years, high levels of scabby kernels in the harvested grain generally meant high levels of vomitoxin also were present.) That's no guarantee, but it points up the belief the problem area for this will primarily be southern Wisconsin.

If you're questioning what the big deal is, there are restrictions on levels of "vomo," as it is referred to, in milled products as well, as fed levels to animals. Some buyers are requesting wheat samples prior to delivery and may reject positive loads or have hefty discount schedules. It will pay you to educate yourself and pay attention if you're buying wheat this year.

To that last point, we are planning, as of this writing, to have a wheat grading and vomitoxin education class put together and available to the membership within the next two weeks. You'll be hearing more about that soon. In the meantime, here are some answers to questions we've already received on the subject.

Is there a quick field test for vomitoxin?

The short answer is no. The longer answer is, it depends on your definition of "quick." The presence and amount of vomitoxin in a sample can only be determined by laboratory analysis. There are various tests, which take between five and 30 minutes to perform. All of these "quick" tests require a reader to analyze the tests results. In addition, most have a limit on the level of vomo that can be detected, usually that's an upper limit of six parts per million (ppm). We've already heard reports of double digit levels being found, so depending on your rejection policy, this may or may not be the best method with which to use.

And before you decide that you will do all your tests yourself, you should be aware the individual performing the tests couldn't be doing anything else while testing. That means no answering the phone, no weighing trucks, no grading samples, no giving market advice while performing the tests; you get the idea. And test kits come in lots of 20 that cost about \$150 for the twenty, plus the cost of the reader. Most folks are finding it simpler and cheaper to get their samples tested by one of the three facilities that do their own tests in or near Wisconsin.

Those facilities once again are:

Dairyland Laboratories

919 Lincoln Ave., Sauk Rapids, MN 56379

Phone: 320-240-1737

Cost: \$30.00 per sample. The submitter pays shipping costs, however current customers can use pre-paid shipping mailers. About a one pound sample is requested.

Turnaround time: Three to five business days.

Notification of results: Phone call, fax or email, with a mailed test result certificate.

DATCP Grain Inspection Office

404 Tower Ave., Superior, Wisconsin 54880

Phone: 715-392-7850

Cost: \$22.70 per sample. The submitter pays shipping costs. About a one pound sample is requested.

Turnaround time: Generally same day response when the sample is received.

Notification of results: Phone call or fax, with a mailed test result certificate.

Eastern Iowa Grain Inspection

1908 S. Stark St, Davenport, IA Phone: 563-322-7149

Cost: \$30.00 per sample. The submitter pays shipping costs. About a one pound sample is requested.

Turnaround time: A couple business days at most.

Notification of results: Phone call or fax, with a mailed test result certificate.

I heard you could use a “black light” to test for vomitoxin?

No. “Black lights,” infrared lights or anything short of the process described above will not work.

Will rain “wash” the toxin off the wheat?

No. In fact, if the wheat is above 22% moisture, you could actually see the scab and vomitoxin levels increase.

What are safe levels of vomitoxin?

The Food and Drug Administration has established vomitoxin advisory levels as follows:

- 1 part per million (ppm) for finished grain products for human consumption.
- No standard or advisory level for raw grain going into milling process.
- Cattle, over 4 months old: 10 ppm (providing grain at that level doesn't exceed 50 percent of diet).
- Poultry: 10 ppm (providing grain at that level doesn't exceed 50 percent of diet).

- Swine: 5 ppm (providing grain at that level doesn't exceed 20 percent of diet).
- All other animals: 5 ppm (providing grain at that level doesn't exceed 40 percent of diet).

Note the point that no advisory level exists for raw grain, however your buyer may have contractual standards; such as, “milling quality” or CBOT delivery grade that will limit vomo levels in the wheat they are willing to accept.

In addition, university research suggests that ruminants are able to tolerate higher levels of vomitoxin than advised by the FDA. Studies on sheep and cattle, both fed and gestating, indicate that these species are not adversely affected by consuming complete rations containing up to 25 ppm vomitoxin.

Importantly, straw from scab-affected fields should be suitable for livestock bedding (except hogs), but affected fields should not be grazed in lieu of harvesting because grazing animals likely would consume mostly grain heads that may be unsuitable for feeding. Contact a veterinarian or nutritionist before feeding grain infected with vomitoxin to livestock.

And both the scab and vomitoxin mold spores can cause allergic reactions and breathing problems if inhaled by grain handlers. Please wear appropriate personal protective gear such as masks designed to keep out spores and grain dust when handling scabby wheat.

What about sending wheat to an ethanol plant? Wouldn't the process kill it?

No. The ethanol production process does not kill the vomitoxin. In fact, the resulting distillers grain feed product would have concentrated levels of vomitoxin. Obviously, they do not want affected wheat nor are they willing to take the risk.

I heard that roasting the wheat would kill or lessen the vomitoxin?

According to the North Dakota Wheat Commission, there is no solid evidence that any type of roasting will do anything to lessen vomitoxin levels.

What about moisture content of infected grain?

Moisture content of scabby grain going into storage should be about 12 percent. Damaged grain is more susceptible to storage problems. Light, thin kernels caused by scab tend to accumulate in one location in a storage bin and higher moisture levels cause hot spots.

Drying won't reduce scab or vomitoxin levels, but drying prevents further fungus development. Drying does not increase vomitoxin levels either.

There is no known evidence of scab or vomitoxin increasing in storage, *if* grain is stored at appropriate moisture levels. Evidence also has shown that survival of the *fusarium* fungus decreases with time in storage under proper storage moisture. The fungus requires 22 to 25 percent moisture levels to grow.

My customers are asking what do they need to do to file a crop insurance claim on their wheat?

According to the USDA Risk Management Agency regional headquarters in Minneapolis, there are several steps to follow for a producer to file a claim. They are, in order:

1. Call the insurance agent.
2. Tell them you wish to file a notice of claim.
3. An adjuster will be sent out. The adjuster will pull a sample of the wheat from either a bin or a field. *Under no circumstances will a sample drawn by the farmer alone be considered valid.*
4. The sample should then be sent to the DATCP Grain Inspection Office at Superior, listed above, for both a grade and vomitoxin test. The results will then be provided to the adjuster and the claims process moves forward.

Again, if you have any further questions on this subject please contact the WASA office.

Somebody Asked■

Q.: Since we've seen the recent doubling or tripling of historic commodity prices, and we've read all of the advice WASA has put out on farmer contract compliance along with our banker's comments on the subject; are you seeing any increase in the number of problems that you're aware of?

A.: Yes and no. Specifically in Wisconsin, (actively knocking on wood) we are not aware of a dramatic increase in the number of contract delivery defaults. (We are speaking only of price-related defaults, not producers who experienced flooding conditions, subsequent destruction of crops, and will not be able to fulfill new-crop delivery contracts.) We hope this is due to increased vigilance and better contract compliance activities by the membership, but then again, we're not into harvest yet either.

On a national basis, sadly, it's a different story. While there is no national reporting of contract defaults, we do have at least a "barometer" of sorts. That "barometer" is cases filed with the National Grain & Feed Association's (NGFA) arbitration process. Over the past five years, there have been between 12 and 40 cases filed annually. There have been about 140 arbitration cases filed with NGFA in the past six months, and they are expecting more. And it gets worse; the average claim amount in the past five years has been between \$60,000 and \$80,000. In those 140 or so cases filed in the past six months, the average claim is \$360,000. And it's our understanding the majority of the current cases are farmer delivery defaults.

Just as a reminder, NGFA arbitration is available if at least one party to the contract is an NGFA member. Disputes between parties in which neither is an NGFA member are not eligible for the association's arbitration process. However, NGFA trade rules can be referenced and govern a contract without either party being an NGFA member.

Looking Down the Road■

Sept. 9 **WASA Golf Fore Scholarships**
Wild Rock Golf Club at the
Wilderness, Wisconsin Dells

Route:

- General Manager
- Feed Department
- Grain Department
- Agronomy
- Safety Director
- Personnel
- _____

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Hurry! Before We're Full!

***WASA Golf "Fore"
Scholarships Outing***

***Wild Rock Golf Course
at the Wilderness***

Wisconsin Dells

Tuesday, September 9