



NEWS RELEASE

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Maryland Farmers Urged to Test Small Wheat and Barley for Mycotoxins
Be in contact with crop insurance agent; test grain before feeding to livestock;
MDA is providing testing services

ANNAPOLIS, MD (July 15, 2009) – Many farmers are now seeing a negative result of persistent spring rain in their wheat and barley harvest in the form of vomitoxin. Deoxynivalenol (DON), better known as vomitoxin, may be produced in wheat and barley grain infected by the fungus, Fusarium head blight (FHB) or scab. The presence of vomitoxin can make the crop unmarketable or unusable as feed, depending upon the level of contamination. The Maryland Department of Agriculture’s (MDA) State Chemist is sampling grain at grain elevators and feed mills to determine if vomitoxin is present and if so, at what level. MDA is providing free testing and guidance to farmers who may be considering feeding this year's small grains to livestock. Testing for crop insurance purposes must be done through a crop insurance adjuster.

“Any Maryland farmer with crop insurance who has not yet harvested a wheat crop should contact a crop insurance agent before harvest and definitely before mixing in storage. It appears that wheat already in storage will not be eligible for crop insurance claims, but testing may help marketability and price,” said Agriculture Secretary Buddy Hance. “Anyone considering feeding this year’s crop to livestock definitely needs to know if vomitoxin is present and at what levels as some animals are very sensitive to the toxin and can become sick from eating it.”

For Farmers with Crop Insurance

If vomitoxin is suspected, contact a crop insurance agent. A sample must be collected before the grain is placed in storage. Farmers should contact their crop insurance provider for instructions on how to have the grain sampled and tested. Crop Insurance adjustors or agents should contact the Maryland Department of Agriculture’s Food Quality Assurance Office at 410-841-5769.

Grain Dealers and Mills:

The Maryland Department of Agriculture’s (MDA) State Chemist is sampling grain at grain elevators and feed mills to determine if vomitoxin or other mycotoxins are present and if so, at what level. Contact the MDA State Chemist Section at 410-841-2721 for testing or other information.

Farmers considering feeding this year’s crop of wheat and barley to livestock:

Proceed with caution. Know if the feed has any vomitoxin and if so, how much. Call your veterinarian if you detect illness. There is considerable variation in species tolerance of the vomitoxin, with poultry generally tolerating much high amounts and swine being much less tolerant. Ruminant tolerance is intermediate between the two. The primary clinical sign is refusal to eat contaminated grain or feed. Most animals will refuse to eat sufficient quantity of toxin to become seriously ill. Animals eating vomitoxin may initially experience excessive salivation, irritated oral and gastrointestinal tissue. Contact the MDA State Chemist Section at 410-841-2721 to arrange for sampling and testing.

Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA), advisory levels for vomitoxin in livestock feed:

Class of Animal	Feed Ingredients & Portion of Diet	DON Levels in Grains & Grain By-products and (Finished Feed)
Ruminating beef and feedlot cattle older than 4 months	Grain and grain by-products not to exceed 50% of the diet	10 ppm (5 ppm)
Chickens	Grain and grain by-products not to exceed 50% of the diet	10 ppm (5 ppm)
Swine	Grain and grain by-products not to exceed 20% of the diet	5 ppm(1 ppm)
All other animals	Grain and grain by-products not to exceed 40% of the diet	5 ppm (2 ppm)

In 2007, the value of the harvest was \$61 million for wheat and \$6 million for barley. This year, Maryland farmers planted 230,000 acres of wheat and 55,000 acres of barley. More than 133,000 acres of wheat are insured in Maryland this year and more than 25,000 acres of barley. As of July 12, farmers had harvested 93 percent of winter wheat.

Additional Resources:

June 20 University of Maryland Extension “Pest Net” by Arvydas (Arv) Grybauskas, PhD.
Associate Professor and Extension Field Crops Pathologist

<http://www.agnr.umd.edu/Extension/agriculture/IPM/mdIPM/reports/Maryland%20Wheat%20Disease%20Notes%20June%202019.pdf>

July 1 University of Maryland Extension “Pest Net” by Arvydas (Arv) Grybauskas, PhD.
Associate Professor and Extension Field Crops Pathologist

<http://extension.umd.edu/agriculture/IPM/mdIPM/network/pestNet/reports/pestNetReport.cfm?id=3b397f8b0a5a5a8f002120faafd44a46>

North Dakota State University Extension Service Dealing with scabby wheat, vomitoxin.

<http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu/plantpath/scabbygrain.htm>