

Tips On Aflatoxin In Corn



DR. MELVIN NEWMAN

JACKSON, TENN.

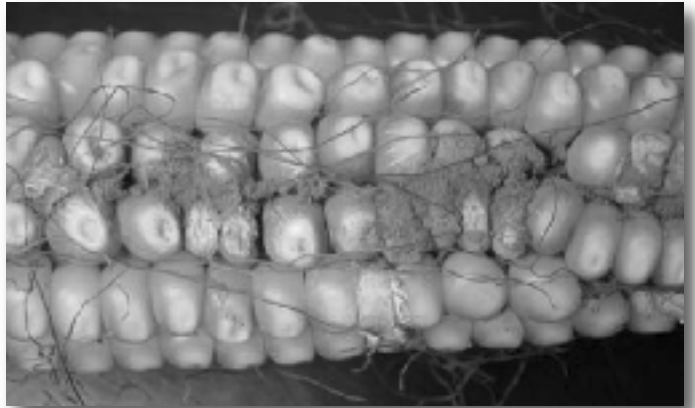
There have been many reports of Aflatoxin in corn this season already in TN and KY due to the hot, dry weather. Some producers are being turned down at the selling points because there was aflatoxin detected in the grain. Right is a picture of the fungus *Aspergillus flavis* that causes Aflatoxin. It is an olive-greenish color when growing on the ear. A darker green fungus that may be present is *Penicillium* spp. Sometimes, infected kernels may not show any symptoms but only appear dull and discolored. Earworms and corn borers are not required for this fungus to cause aflatoxin.

Here are a few things that you might need to know now. I am posting a PowerPoint presentation on ut-crops.com that tells more about this problem ([link to presentation](#)).

- A limit of 20 ppb of aflatoxin content or lower to legally sell the corn or ship over state lines.
- Black light can be used to detect affected corn, but is not very reliable. Grains must be cracked to see blue/green shine.
- Corn should be stored below 13 percent moisture to prevent more fungus growth and aflatoxin production.
- The distillation process does not eliminate aflatoxin from the brewers mesh and therefore cannot be used as feed.
- Aflatoxin is very, very carcinogen and very very poisonous, but must be ingested to cause

problems. Ten to 20 ppb of aflatoxin can result in fatal liver cancer.

- Finishing Swine can be feed up to 200 ppb in their final ration. Finishing beef cattle can be feed up to 300 ppb in the final ration.
- Dairy cattle only 0.5 ppb.
- One USDA researcher working on aflatoxin says, to have grain moisture below 13 percent before bagging stored grain in plastic bags.
- There is nothing that can legally be used to get rid of the aflatoxin completely.
- Harvest corn promptly because the longer the affected corn remains in the field the more aflatoxin build-up that can occur.
- Reduce cracking when harvesting. Cracked



corn is more susceptible to secondary infection. Reduce trash and green, wet material in the harvested corn.

- Let me know if you have any questions about Aflatoxin in corn. Δ

DR. MELVIN NEWMAN: Professor, Extension Plant Pathologist, University of Tennessee