



Fumonisin Fact Sheet

Kansas corn producers should be aware of the potential for the mycotoxin fumonisin in their corn. Grain handlers have found fumonisin in corn at locations in southwest Kansas, and we have been told more grain handlers are beginning to test for fumonisin. This fact sheet answers basic questions about fumonisin. If you suspect fumonisin in your corn, we encourage you to discuss this issue with your crop insurance agent, crop consultant and K-State Extension office.

What is fumonisin?

Fumonisin is one of two primary mycotoxins that affect corn. The other is aflatoxin, which is more commonly found in Kansas. Fumonisin is produced by the Fusarium family of molds, similar to Fusarium Ear Rot. Fumonisin is toxic to some species, especially horses.

How does it happen?

Especially this year, weather conditions play a big part in the appearance of fumonisin in corn. Many parts of Western Kansas experienced wet weather leading up to harvest, which may have increased the likelihood for fumonisin contamination in some fields.

What impacts does fumonisin have on the feed and food chain?

Fumonisin has few effects on most animals. Horses are the most sensitive to corn that is affected by fumonisin. Feeder cattle are the least susceptible to fumonisin in corn. Follow this link to the FDA Guidance document for fumonisin: <https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/ucm109231.htm>

How can I tell if I have fumonisin in my fields?

Since fumonisin is produced by Fusarium molds, farmers may want to survey their fields for ears of corn that have the presence of mold to determine if there is an increased potential for fumonisin.

Fumonisin was found earlier this fall in the Texas panhandle and now is being reported in western Kansas. Kansas Corn Growers Association has been working with the Texas Corn Producers Association and National Corn Growers Association and have consulted with RMA on the crop insurance implications of this issue.

In a video interview with Texas Corn Producers Association, Tom Isakeit, Texas Agrilife Extension talked about identifying potential fumonisin contamination in the field.

“Looking around in the fields, we were looking for Fusarium ear rot which causes a whitish coloration, a dull white coloration of the ear. And that is a smoking gun for fumonisin contamination,” Isakeit said. “But the only way to know that for sure is to test the grain chemically to see if fumonisin is there. This sort of appearance is typical for the Fusarium species. And just because you have Fusarium there does not mean you have fumonisin. By looking at it, there’s no way of knowing how much fumonisin is there, it’s just an indication that we need to do some testing.”