

## **Winter sets in; Corn Harvest Still Not Dry**

Nearly an inch of snow fell over parts over South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa this week as farmers continue to struggle with getting the 2009 harvest dry. According to the USDA's National Ag Statistics Service, Iowa corn is now averaging a 22 percent moisture level coming out of the field. With more snow forecasted for next week in the Midwest, farmers are finding it hard to get the harvest completed and the crop's moisture level down to the required 15 percent.

Getting the crop dried has also been challenging and costly. As some farmers report paying nearly 30 cents per bushel to dry their corn; others wait on propane to arrive at their local elevators. Corn quality is also still an area of apprehension for livestock producers across the United States as grain often ships from this fertile region to both coasts. According to a recent report by Dairyland Laboratories in Arcadia, WI; out of 451 recent corn samples from the Midwest, 344 came back with some level of vomitoxin in them.

"Many area ethanol plants and grain elevators have had to reconsider their testing procedures for mycotoxins," says Randy Cragoe, of Cragoe Consulting, a dairy consulting firm in Brookings, SD.

As elevators struggle to keep up with drying corn, many producers are considering their own protection plans for their livestock. Mycotoxins, harmful toxins produced by molds, can create a variety of health problems for animals depending on species and type of toxins identified. Regulation limits are in place; however mycotoxins are synergistic, meaning that combinations of mycotoxins can have a greater impact than single toxins. Dairy and beef cattle can suffer from poor feed conversion, reduced milk production, organ damage and fertility problems. Mycotoxicoses in poultry and swine can create problems from reduced feed intake, growth performance and immune function to lasting organ damage and infertility.

Besides efforts to get the corn dried and stored properly, producers can either choose not to handle contaminated feed or use an effective mycotoxin adsorbent. For more information, visit [www.knowmycotoxins.com](http://www.knowmycotoxins.com) or call the Mycotoxin Hotline toll-free at 866-322-3484.