

Historical Corn Crop, Now DDGS Must Be Thoroughly Examined

The corn crop in the Midwest is not the only component setting records in the fields. Last week in Hastings, Neb., 10.5 inches of snow took out a 1948 record of 2.5 inches, while in Mason City, IA five inches broke a 1997 4.3 inch record. As residents of these states dig out of snowdrifts, many farmers may be wondering how they will be dig out the harvest not yet complete.

According to the USDA, 94 percent of Iowa's crop (another record of 2.5 billion bushels) had been harvested before the first big winter storm. Other states in the Great Plains were not as fortunate. The USDA estimates 88 percent of Nebraska's corn harvest is in; while only 73 percent of South Dakota's and 53 of North Dakota's.

For those that have gotten their corn crop in, moisture levels and the presence of molds and mycotoxins continue to be a challenge. Dairyland Laboratories in Arcadia, WI reported out of 451 recent corn samples from the Midwest, 344 came back with some level of vomitoxin in them.

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.

With increased efforts by grain elevators to get the corn dried and stored properly, many Midwest ethanol plants have also had to step up their testing procedures as well.

“The complication is that any component that is not used for ethanol will also be concentrated just like the fiber and the protein and that would include the mycotoxins, said Deb LaLonde, a United Suppliers sales representative from Norfolk, Neb.

Livestock producers can try to be proactive with their supply of DDGS. Testing samples and using a blending method are two common approaches. Producers can also either choose not to handle contaminated feed or use an effective mycotoxin adsorbent. For more information, visit www.knowmycotoxins.com or call the Mycotoxin Hotline toll-free at 866-322-3484.