

## **DON Vomitoxin in the 2006 Corn Crop**

### **Background**

Adverse weather from July through November has resulted in the potential for high levels of DON vomitoxin in this year's corn crop. The presence of DON vomitoxin in corn has different implications for different end-users, including feed manufacturers, millers, ethanol manufacturers, and others. Some corn producers are experiencing difficulty in harvesting, drying, handling, and marketing their crop. As a result, customers may be reporting damage and filing claims for "unmarketable corn".

### **What is Agricorp doing about the corn mould situation?**

Production Insurance protects customers from crop losses due to insured perils, including plant disease, based on the producer's probable yield. Agricorp is working closely with OMAFRA, the Ontario Corn Producers' Association (OCPA), and the Ontario Agri Business Association (OABA) to determine what portion of the crop, if any, is unmarketable due to DON vomitoxin. We ask for your patience and understanding while the industry determines what level of mould it can accept.

### **Is DON vomitoxin an insured peril?**

Corn ear mould, the plant disease that produces vomitoxin, is an insured peril. To the extent that mould damage reduces yield, insured customers are eligible for a claim up to the maximum of their guaranteed production. Insured customers must make efforts similar to those of uninsured producers to market their crop.

### **How can I tell if my corn is infected?**

Corn ear mould is usually visibly identifiable. However, it is possible for corn to have a relatively high level of DON mycotoxin without visible mould. Producers who are concerned about DON vomitoxin in their corn crop should collect representative samples and submit them to a laboratory for testing to properly assess the impact on their crop.

### **What should I do if I have mouldy corn?**

If you have mouldy corn, call Agricorp immediately (and not later than December 15) at 1-888-247-4999 and report damage. Agricorp will assign an adjuster to investigate after recording answers to the following questions:

- How many acres are damaged?
- How many acres are harvested to date?
- How many acres left to harvest?
- What is the total yield from acres harvested to date? Grade? Fed? Sold? Stored at elevator or on-farm?

- Do you expect that your total yield will be less than your insurance production guarantee?
- Have you tried to deliver and had any corn rejected? Where? When? Why?
- Have you had any DON level tests done? What results? Were samples from the combine or hand-shelled?
- Are you storing corn for on-farm feed? For what kind of livestock?
- Do you have contracts for this corn crop? How many bushels?

### **How can I market my mouldy corn?**

Different end-users of corn have varying tolerances for mould and DON levels. For example, corn with relatively low levels of DON can be used for blending, and some ruminant livestock and poultry can tolerate higher levels of DON in their diets. As the industry gains experience, we expect that new markets will develop for corn infected with DON. Producers must explore all options and keep Agricorp informed of their efforts to market the crop.

### **If my corn is unmarketable, why should I harvest it?**

At this time, the industry has not yet established whether any of the 2006 corn crop is unmarketable. Meanwhile, producers should arrange for samples of their crop to be tested by a lab and investigate harvesting and marketing options.

### **The elevator rejected my corn and I don't have a dryer. What should I do?**

Consider delaying harvest until the marketability of the crop becomes clearer. Meanwhile, try to have your corn custom dried, and seek out alternative markets for high moisture corn (e.g., livestock feeders).

### **Can I leave my corn unharvested past December 15?**

Production Insurance coverage ends at harvest or on December 15, unless an insured peril prevents harvest or makes the crop unmarketable.

### **How does Agricorp record unmarketable crop?**

If Agricorp releases unharvested acres for destruction, the yield for that portion of the harvest is recorded as zero. Insured customers are eligible for a claim if their total yield is below their guaranteed production. The yield loss from a rejected or destroyed field may be offset by above average yields from other fields, thus eliminating a claim.

### **What must I do if Agricorp releases my crop for destruction?**

Before considering a claim, Agricorp will work directly with each affected customer to ensure that the crop is completely destroyed. At this time Agricorp has no plans to authorize the destruction of any crop due to high DON vomitoxin levels.

### **Should I test my corn stored on-farm to determine its quality and marketability?**

Production Insurance coverage ends at harvest, and damage that occurs after harvest is not covered. Reliable tests done at harvest will establish the quality and marketability of the crop at that time. If the stored crop is later deemed unmarketable due to an insured peril, Agricorp will work closely with individual producers to determine whether the crop is eligible for a claim. As mould may continue to grow in storage, producers should make sure that they understand the full impact of storing the crop. Customers who are concerned about mould levels in their corn should report damage to Agricorp before or during harvest, and no later than December 15.

### **Does the corn salvage benefit cover corn with high levels of mould?**

The Corn Salvage Benefit pays 49 cents per eligible bushel for corn that is reduced to sample grade by an insured peril. The number of eligible bushels is based on a customer's guaranteed production and the number of harvested bushels of sample grade corn. Customers must report the grade when they report their yield. Please note that a high DON level does not necessarily result in sample grade.

### **What if the price of corn drops due to high DON levels?**

Production Insurance guarantees yield only, not price. Producers should explore all market/pricing options and market their crop in the most advantageous manner possible.

### **Where can I get more information about testing for DON and handling mouldy corn?**

Contact OMAFRA at 1-877-424-1300 or visit [www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/weather/adverseweather.html#molds](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/weather/adverseweather.html#molds).

### **More questions?**

If you have additional questions, please call Agricorp at 1-888-247-4999, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.