

Controlling mycotoxins to protect the harvest

Dull looking, weathered grains highlight poor harvest conditions which could be due to moulds.

Moulds cause mycotoxins and these have always caused problems for the poultry industry. They are present in most feed raw materials but do not normally cause performance shortfalls in production. However, after a poor harvest we need to take additional precautions fast.

The most common storage mould is aspergillus; which produces aflatoxins, a potent natural carcinogen.

Typical responses to mycotoxins in poultry would be poor FCR and weight gain, reduced feed intake, several immune disorders including vaccine failures, low egg production, liver and kidney problems, beak lesions and necrosis, poor feathering, pale bird syndrome or in severe cases death.

Mould inhibitors are best suited to short term storage, whilst drying crops prevents mould growth; neither system destroys mycotoxins.

Driers have been working flat out in northern Europe and delays between the combine and drier can result in an explosion of mould activity leading to the production of mycotoxins.

Storage systems need to be monitored for evidence of warming and

forced ventilation to drive off moisture is vital. However this moisture comes from respiration of moulds or malting. Moisture therefore means biological activity has already occurred and this could mean mycotoxins.

Insect damage encourages mould growth. It is important to pre-treat the grain stores before use.

MiteX from Kiotechagil can be used in grains below 14.5% moisture and is approved as a feed ingredient for all livestock.

When mycotoxins are a threat, Sorbatox is ideal for adding to feed at 1kg/t to prevent background mycotoxin levels causing an issue.

If grains are dull increase the dose to 2.5kg/t.

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