

# Watch for moldy corn

ITHACA, N.Y. — Much of the corn still left unharvested in fields across New York State is developing molds. Most of these molds are harmless, but a few may produce "mycotoxins" that occasionally may be harmful to farm animals if the affected corn is used as a feed.

Fortunately, dairy cattle are

insensitive to the predominant mycotoxins in New York State. Swine, on the other hand, tend to be more sensitive to these same mycotoxins, according to Cornell University scientists.

Gary C. Bergstrom, a plant pathologist in the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell, reports that many growers are having

problems with moldy corn this fall.

Molds, he says, may continue to develop as long as the corn remains in the field and is not dried to low moisture levels. The problem has been intensified this fall because of excessively wet weather.

"The fact that much of the corn was planted late in the season due to wet weather in spring and that the crop did not mature before frosts came this fall has contributed to the problem," Bergstrom points out.

Mold growth, he explains, can be stopped by storing moldy corn in a silo or silage bag without oxygen or drying the grain down to 14 percent moisture. Application of chemical grain preservatives will also help prevent molding during storage of high moisture corn.

Many of the molds which develop are harmless and do not produce mycotoxins. But, at least three types of fungi may produce mycotoxins in corn in the field and in storage.

"Based on history, plus what we

have found so far this year, the predominant fungal genus that causes this problem is *Fusarium*," Bergstrom says.

The *Fusarium* fungi produce red, pink, or white molds that can be toxic under certain conditions.

"The predominant problem we see is caused by a species known as *Fusarium graminearum*," Bergstrom says.

Swine are especially sensitive to toxins produced by this fungus. As a result, some of the toxins produced by this fungus cause swine to refuse a feed containing moldy corn; other symptoms include vomiting. No symptoms, however, are apparent in ruminant animals or poultry.

Zearalenone (F-2 toxin), one of the mycotoxins produced by *Fusarium*, is an estrogenic compound that can cause serious reproductive problems in swine. Concentrations of this toxin greater than those normally encountered in New York State may also affect cattle and poultry.

"As a general rule, corn con-

taining greater than 0.5 parts per million (ppm) of this toxin should not be fed to breeding stock, young animals, or swine," Bergstrom says.

A group of mycotoxins known as "aflatoxins" are highly potent, but this particular toxin, fortunately, has not been confirmed in a single sample of New York corn tested this year, the Cornell plant pathologist says. Affected corn develops greenish-yellow to golden molds.

Depending on the intended use of the corn, a precise chemical analysis of mycotoxin contamination may be necessary. Such a service is available commercially in New York State.

If an animal health or feed refusal problem is encountered, a veterinarian should be consulted immediately. Grain or silage sampling for mycotoxin analysis can be done, upon recommendations of veterinarians, at the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory in the New York State College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell.

## Cornell Dairy Days Scheduled for Jan. 15-16

ITHACA, N.Y. — Discussions of the dairy situation, policy affecting the nation's dairy industry, and new research developments in studies of embryo transfer and growth hormone used to improve cows' milk production will highlight the 1985 Cornell Dairy Days scheduled for Jan. 15-16.

Designed to bring dairy farmers in New York State up to date on the "pulse" of the dairy industry, the two-day conference is sponsored by the Cornell Cooperative Extension Dairy Committee and the department of animal science in the New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell.

The session on dairy situation and policy, scheduled to begin at 1 p.m., Tuesday Jan. 15, in Morrison Hall on the campus, features several presentations on where the dairy industry is going, the current economic situation and the status

of the 1985 Farm Bill, and the current dairy situation and outlook for 1985. Other topics in this session include politics of dairy policy, production quotas as a tool for dairy policy, and possible alternatives to the current dairy policy.

The program also features sessions on dairy research and dairy herd health. Topics include the latest research developments in growth hormone studies and embryo transfer, feed additives, biotechnology and its potential for crop improvement, reproductive disorders, use of drugs in animal health management, and disease problems such as Johne's disease, bluetongue, leukosis, and mastitis.

For more information about registration, contact local offices of Cornell Cooperative Extension or Dee Brotheers, Morrison Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853, or at (607) 256-4478.

## Hunterdon 4-H'ers elect officers

FLEMINGTON, N.J. — Newly elected officers of the Hunterdon Hayshakers 4-H Club are: president, Karen Bakers; 1st vice-president, Becky Alpaugh; 2nd vice-president, Cheryl Bond; treasurer, Tara Udu; assistant treasurer, Denise Dulee; recording secretary, Chris Hardenber;

corresponding secretary, Amy Atkinson and reporters, Kenny Rogers and David Palmer.

Billie Jo Harrison and Jeff Nass are the club photographers. The group's scrapbook keepers are Sandy Sieger, Amy Sandorff, Caren Tokatsch and Cheryl Chittendon.

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