

Here Are Some Steps To Produce, Market Quality Corn Grain

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The first step to becoming a reliable quality corn supplier is to become proficient at assessing grain quality. Have a good idea of what constitutes quality grain and how to measure it. Monitor grain quality during harvest, if necessary, segregate low and high quality grain before storage.

Estimate your grain quality before you market it and know the requirements of your markets. The requirements of grain buyers vary, however, so it is important to understand the specific needs of your market.

For some markets, requirements may be rather lax, for others standards may be rigid.

Common grain quality factors that are monitored for corn are moisture, bushel

weight, damaged kernels, broke corn, and foreign material (BCFM), odor, visual appearance, stones, weed seeds, and insects. Understand market requirements will help you to target markets that will give you the best price for your grain and will help to avoid load rejections.

Consider purchasing a test weight cup, moisture tester, sieve, and six foot grain probe to monitor grain quality. learn to sample trucks effectively to obtain a representative grain sample. Grain samples are typically obtained by probing containers or sampling flowing grain. never use a dipped sample for assessing quality of a load of grain.

The next step to improving corn quality is to adjust management to improve grain quality. Below are listed a few factors that can influence corn quality:

- Crop maturity. This is often most influenced by hybrid maturity and planting dates. Work hard to get full-season hybrids planted early and avoid depending too much on full-season hybrids for your area. Monitor hybrid maturity level in the field and avoid those that regularly are frosted before 3/4 milk line.

- Hybrids. Hybrids vary in test weight. Consult with your seed supplier regarding grain quality characteristics if your markets dictate high levels of quality. Monitor the test weight of your hybrids during harvest. Hybrids may also vary in susceptibility to ear molds, which can cause mycotoxin and other quality problems. Hybrid variation also occurs in oil, protein and other nutritional traits that may bring a premium in the market.

- Weed control. Poor weed control can introduce poten-

tially toxic weed seeds into the grain. It also contribute to the spread of noxious weed seeds across farms in feeds. This is a major avenue for weed dispersal in our state.

- Harvest. Harvest at grain moistures below 30 percent with a combine adjusted to clean grain properly. Avoiding cracked kernels is essential. The quality of grain should also be monitored during harvest. Fields or loads which are lower quality (moldy, damaged, or low test weight) should be segregated and marketed separately.

- Monitoring moisture content. Storing grain that is too wet is a common cause of

spoilage. Measuring grain moisture before storing grain is essential to prevent spoilage.

- Grain drying practice. Excessive heat during grain drying can reduce grain quality by increasing the amount of heat-damaged kernels and by causing additional stress cracks in the grain, which will increase the breakage susceptibility.

- Storage management. Developing a sound grain storage management program is essential for marketing quality grain. This starts with making sure clean dry grain goes into a clean storage facility. Then follow up with monitoring and control of insects and rodents, and regular monitoring of grain temperature and moisture.

By learning to assess grain quality and how to manage to improve it, it may be possible to gain access to new markets and better prices.



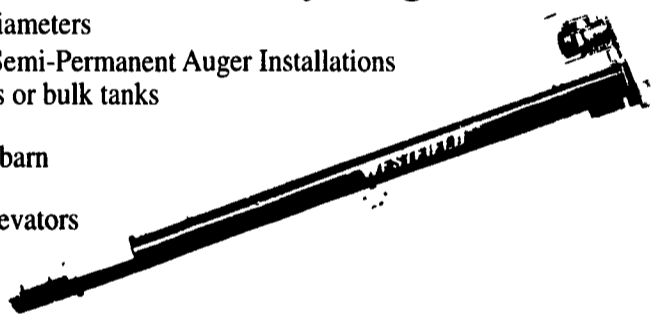
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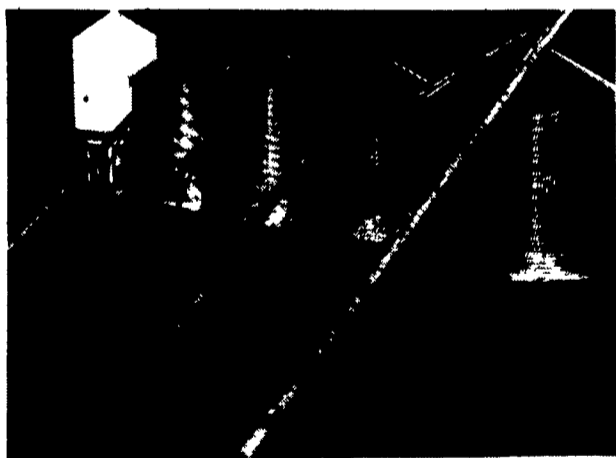
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