

dhia


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Dairyman To Dairyman

GEORGE CUDOC

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Consulting
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Question: Are there things we can do to prevent mycotoxins in this year's feed?

Unfortunately this question came about the time most corn silage was finished. For those of you with long season varieties or the desire to refill we can talk about some sound approaches to silo filling. This is also the same time of year to be ensiling that last bit of alfalfa or grass crop. For Filling:

- Clean out old feed and if possible disinfect surfaces.
- Harvest at proper maturity to obtain highest quality feed.
- Harvest at proper moisture to ensure good packing and

proper fermentation.

- Fill as fast as possible and pack properly in bunk silos.

A judgment call needs to be made to establish a balance between proper moisture and proper maturity. Moisture at time of ensiling must take precedent over maturity if we are going to have proper fermentation with corn silage.

Ensiling and storage:

- Cover silo with plastic attempting to eliminate as much oxygen as possible.

• Recheck covers on a regular basis and repair holes. Covers on tower silos become loose as silage settles. Weighting the edges or persistent tucking can help with this.

- Consider using inoculants or preservatives as added insurance to feed quality.

Storage and feeding:

- Silage remains silage all year if the above procedures are a yearly practice and not just thought of at time of ensiling.

- In bunks, feed evenly from

face and use four to six inches per day.

• Always dig a wedge from the bottom first and then knock feed down from above it until you're at the top.

• This will prevent cracks and air entry back through the feeding face.

• In tower silos feed five to six inches until you reach well-packed silage and then three to four inches.

• Remove spoiled feed from feeding areas promptly so good feed doesn't become contaminated.

There are not new ideas but will serve as reminders that feed quality is a year-round job. Doing all the above should lessen the chances of a toxin problem.

I would encourage everyone to assess the feed management changes made in the last 20 years and then adapt new strategies that will help deal with the problems that come along with new management. In today's modern dairies that use wet feeds in higher proportions than ever before, toxins will be a problem because a nice layer of mold forms on top every time we stop filling for a period. We don't see it as it blends in with other feed coming out. Bunks that aren't covered certainly are a potential spot to find molds and toxins. With toxins being very water soluble, every time it rains toxins are moved down into our pile of feed.

Even silage bales are suspect to toxins. Often silage bales are

made when the weather doesn't allow us to make the feed in any other way. This weather is also what allows molds and toxins to develop on standing crops.

Follow good feed making procedures. Test for toxins regularly when conditions and feeding styles promote toxin de-

velopment. Look for telltale signs of toxin activity such as reduced dry matter intakes, cystic ovaries, increased SCC and clinical mastitis, abortions, decreasing cow health. As always contact your nutritionist and veterinarian to solve the problem. Lastly, my phone line is always available to you.

ACRC To Award Four Scholarships To FFA Members

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Agricultural Container Research Council (ACRC), a non-profit organization which sponsors free crop protection product container recycling programs nationwide, will be awarding four \$1,000 scholarships to high school students involved in the National FFA Organization.

Candidates must be pursuing a degree in commercial agriculture, natural resources/conservation, environmental science, plant sciences, agricultural communications, or related disciplines at a four-year accredited university, and must be interested in stewardship programs for the land.

One scholarship for each of the four regions of the National FFA Organization (southern, central, western, and eastern) will be awarded, with preference given to those students who have at least a 3.0 GPA and who demonstrate financial need. Winners will be profiled in the ACRC newsletter.

FFA is a national youth organization of 453,902 student members preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business, and technology of agriculture with 7,220 local chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. FFA strives to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education. Visit www.ffa.org for more information.

For more information on the ACRC, or for a list of member companies, contact Yassir Islam at (877) 952-2272 or visit the ACRC website at www.acrecycle.org. For more information concerning the scholarship or information on the FFA, contact Becky Manning from the National FFA Organization at (317) 802-4321.

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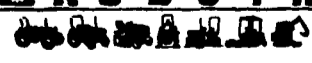
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