

## Going against the grain could mean harvesting big trouble

CONTAMINATED grain could cause costly problems by hitting feed intake, growth and causing reproductive problems ie it hits you in the pocket!

Though it is not a widespread problem, the effects on an individual farm can be extremely serious and the key has to be vigilance.

Mycotoxins such as Fusarium, Ochratoxin A (OTA) and ergot are among the most serious of naturally occurring toxins that can contaminate food supply.

To avoid problems such as feed refusal and reproductive difficulties grain must be stored correctly, in a cool, dry and clean environment.

After harvest it is vital to reduce the moisture content of grain to less than 18% as soon as possible and below 14.5% for long-term storage within no more than ten days.

Incorrect moisture levels increase the risk of OTA being produced.

Ochratoxin is a potent toxin and can cause both acute and chronic disease, affecting mainly the kidneys. The HGCA have reviewed

current information on OTA including its rate of production during storage; as a result they have developed a 'safe storage calculator' (CD free from HGCA) and there is an ongoing project looking at 'safe' drying scenarios (Project Progress sheet 13).

This new information suggests that previous recommendations of drying to 14.5% within 10 days may need reviewing, however details of this have yet to be determined.

Other mycotoxins to look out for include **ergot** (hard purple-black 'sclerotia' resembling rodent droppings), high levels of contamination will reduce intake and cause a marked growth check, pink grains associated with **Fusarium** and **mouldy grain**.

For further information on drying, cooling and storing grain visit [www.hgca.com](http://www.hgca.com).

Finally do not buy in contaminated grain, it can be cleaned but this is a slow and costly process.

Do not mix grain to 'dilute' contaminated stocks (Contaminants feed directive 2002/32/EC) and do not feed grain suspected of mycotoxin contamination to livestock.



■ Top: fusarium in wheat  
■ Bottom: ergot in wheat

Pictures courtesy HGCA

### IPPC - don't delay get under way

Work on applications needs to be started now. You will need to submit site specific information, only available from the Environment Agency, when applying - this can take 40 days to obtain.

Use the EA request letter which can be found with the model applications on the BPEX website.

All applications must be 'duly made' by January 31 2007 - that means checked and cleared so you should look at **January 15** as the last day for applying.

Operating without having a 'Duly Made' permit application will become a criminal offence.

Those caught will risk formal caution, potential prosecution with the risk of fines and/or imprisonment. The EA has made it clear that they will be actively seeking sites which are operating illegally. Don't risk it.

Applications made after 31 January 2007, will be treated as being for a new installation.

The application process will be different and associated costs could be greater. It may be better to apply between November - January as an existing site.

More IPPC workshops are being planned to help farmers with their applications. For further details of these, or for advice on completing your application, please contact the MLC Technical office (01908 844734) or the Environment Agency (08708 506 506).

### The 'I's have it for better herd health

Herd health is the key to a sustainable and profitable future for the pig industry.

And to help producers attain that Holy Grail, BPEX is organising a series of autumn seminars around the country.

To achieve that end producers need Interpretation, Improvement, Integration and Implementation

- Interpretation of British Pig Health Scheme (BPHS) data to get more out of it with a presentation from Vetscore
- Improvement by using de-stock/re-stock with details from a producer who has benefited from it.
- Integration of new gilts with expert advice from Danish breeding company SPF.
- Implementation and maintenance of biosecurity with advice on veterinary health plans

BPEX Director of Pig Industry Development, Mark Wilson, said: "These seminars are a must for producers. Herd health is one of the main areas

BPEX is targeting because improvements there will rapidly result in better productivity which in turn helps create a more profitable and sustainable industry. Improving herd health need not be a costly option for producers.

"The expertise and knowledge to achieve this exists, we just need to get it out to more producers. That is the aim of this programme of seminars."

**The seminars are on Tuesday 10 October, The Golden Lion, Northallerton, N Yorks; Wednesday 11 October, Bishop Burton College, Humberstone; Tuesday 17 October, The Park Hotel, Diss, Norfolk; Wednesday 18 October, The Bear Hotel, Hodnet, Shropshire; Tuesday 24 October, Donnington Valley Golf Club, Newbury; Wednesday 25 October, Exeter Racecourse. For information get in touch with Radha Ray on 01908 844105, [radha\\_ray@mlc.org.uk](mailto:radha_ray@mlc.org.uk)**

To find out more go to [www.bpex.org.uk](http://www.bpex.org.uk); [www.stotfoldpigs.co.uk](http://www.stotfoldpigs.co.uk) or contact Miriam Drewett on 01908 844749 or by email: [miriam\\_drewett@bpex.org.uk](mailto:miriam_drewett@bpex.org.uk)