Producing and Marketing Clean Grain

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Regulations have been changed so that grain with certain types of contamination cannot be used either for human or animal consumption. Thus, in addition to the loss in weight and food value, contaminated grain could be subject to diversion from food or feed uses in the coming season. Accordingly, grain producers and handlers must prevent both the contamination of grain and the mixing of contaminated lots with clean lots, which could result in extensive losses.

Grain often becomes contaminated after harvesting, usually due to careless or improper handling. Problems of proper handling of grain are greater when production exceeds the normal capacity of storage and handling facilities. Temporary, additional storage facilities usually increase the possibility of contamination by insects, birds, rats, and other pests. Older storage facilities, placed back in use, often do not provide adequate protection of the grain to meet today’s clean-grain standards. On-farm storage facilities should be examined before the storage season to be sure that they meet minimum requirements for protecting the grain.

Clean Grain Protection Begins Before Harvest

Quantities of dust or old grain around the storage area can be sources of insect infestations for the new crop, and should be removed. Bins should be swept clean and sprayed with a recommended insecticide. Market grains should be stored as far as possible from feed bins.

Spilled grain, feed, loose boards, and litter around the storage area tend to attract and harbor insect and rodent pests that can infest the grain. Remove their shelter and feed that attract them will make insect and rodent control much easier.

Repair walls, windows, and doors. (Check roof, walls, windows, and doors.)

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Protecting Clean Grain

After grain is placed in storage, make frequent inspections to be sure that the grain is in good condition and that insects and rodents are excluded. If storage problems develop, take corrective steps immediately before extensive losses occur.

If the grain is to be stored for an inconsiderable period, it may be advisable to use a grain protectant to hold down insect infestations. Information on recommended materials for bin spraying, grain protectants, and rodent control is available through local county extension offices.

CLEAN GRAIN CHECK LIST

Harvest and handling equipment

Is the area around the bin free of spilled grain and debris that would attract and provide cover for rodents and insects?

Is the bin thoroughly swept down and sprayed with an approved insecticide prior to storage?

Are combines and trucks thoroughly cleaned before harvest?

Are the windows, doors, and ventilators screened against birds, rodents, and pets?

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Is stored grain checked monthly for deterioration or insect infestation?

Is the bin closed against weather, rodents, and insects?

Is the floor moisture-proof?

Is the storage bin weatherproof? (Check roof, walls, windows, and doors.)

Has a grain protectant been applied?

Is stored grain checked monthly for deterioration or insect infestation?

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Store Only Dry Grain

Storing grain with a high moisture content, green weed seed, or broken kernels favors development of molds and insects during storage. On-farm storage facilities usually are not equipped with forced-air ventilation equipment or elevators to stir the grain while in storage. Grain going into on-farm storage must be as dry or drier than that being accepted by commercial warehouses.

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