

FOR RELEASE: Immediately
FROM: Ken Bolton, UW-Extension Jefferson County Dairy & Livestock Agent
SUBJECT: TIMELY TOPICS

Using Flood Damaged Grain

When grain storage bins have been flooded, the stored grain is damaged, said Charles Schwab, Iowa State University Extension professor, Ag and Biosystems Engineering. The grain has been soaked by the floodwater and, in some cases, the bins have burst.

Dan Loy, Iowa State University Extension beef specialist, said producers have three alternatives for using the grain. Producers can dry the grain, feed it immediately to their livestock or perhaps ensile the grain for livestock feed. The wet grain can be fed to cattle or hogs.

"There is no problem, other than spoilage within three to five days, with using wet corn as a livestock feed. Just replace the corn in the animals' current diet with the wet corn," Loy said. "Remember to adjust amounts fed for moisture."

Wet, whole soybeans can be fed to cattle if the soybeans are limited to 10 to 12 percent of the ration's dry matter.

"Soybeans substitute well for the protein in soybean meal, but they need to be fed with a vitamin-mineral-additive premix if substituted for a complete protein supplement. It is not necessary to heat-treat the soybeans for cattle," Loy said. "Also, if adding whole soybeans to diets high in distillers' grains, watch the total ration fat content."

For hogs, raw soybeans can only be fed to mature sows, Loy said. The soybeans need to be heat treated if fed to younger pigs.

Producers need to decide what to do with the grain quickly because wet grain will spoil in a few days, according to Schwab. When corn re-wets by 2 to 3 percent, it expands, which creates seven times more pressure on the bin, causing the bin to break. Just trying to remove the wet grain from the bins can be a problem for producers.

"Grain unloading augers may not work because the grain has expanded and does not flow properly. One alternative is to lease or rent a pneumatic conveyor to remove the grain from the top of the bin. The pneumatic conveyor works similar to a vacuum cleaner by sucking up the grain," Schwab said. "Exercise caution when using a pneumatic conveyor in a bin. If the grain is removed too rapidly, you may be sucked into the grain and suffocation may result."

Wherever possible, separate the wet grain from the dry grain, which is easily done with a pneumatic conveyor. The wet grain will spoil within a week of getting wet if not taken care of promptly, Schwab said.

The moisture won't travel more than a few inches above the floodline in the corn bin. The dry corn should be re-stored, and the wet corn should be dried or treated with an organic acid as soon as possible after the water recedes, and re-stored or sold.

If no drying equipment is available, producers could spread out the flood-damaged grain on a concrete slab or feeding floor or on the ground. It will at least partially dry. Feed or sell it as soon as possible.

For more information on managing dairy and livestock exposed to flooding contact the UW-Extension. Jefferson County Office, at 920-674-7196.