



Dairy Tech-Line



Tips to Prevent Molds & Mycotoxins in Dairy Feed

Preventing molds and mycotoxins in dairy cattle feed is imperative to keep a herd healthy and on track to meet operational goals. Since there are few ways to overcome issues once mycotoxins are present, it is essential to prevent them from creeping into the ration.

Molds can infect dairy cattle causing a fungal disease, commonly known as mycosis. This most likely occurs during stressful periods when cows have a suppressed immune system.

Molds can also impact cattle by producing mycotoxins in the feed. Mycotoxins can cause reduced feed intake and nutrient absorption, alter endocrine and exocrine systems, suppress the immune system and alter microbial growth. This can lead to many issues including protein deficiency, malnutrition, diarrhea, irritability, abnormal behavior and occasional death.

Paul Windchitl, a dairy nutritionist with Hubbard Feeds, offers the following tips to help producers battle against molds and mycotoxins in their operation.

Grain Tips

- Once harvested, grains should not reach moisture levels greater than 15 percent.
- Grain stored for more than two weeks should be kept aerated and cool. - Protect feedstuffs against rain and water.
- Stored feed should be checked periodically to determine if heating and molding is occurring.

Hay Tips

- Mold growth may occur in hay at moisture levels greater than 15 percent.
- If moisture levels are high, use a forage treatment, like Silo Guard[®], to prevent mold growth.
- To increase dry down of hay create air spaces between bales, reduce size of stacks, alternate direction of stacking and avoid other wet products in the same area.

Silage Tips

- Harvested silage should have moisture content between 60 and 70 percent to ensure a good pack.
- Cut and wilt forage during favorable weather conditions.
- The chop should be uniform and 1/2 to 1 inch in length for processed silage.
- Use an effective fermentation aide, such as Sil-All[®] or Silo Guard.
- Pack silage sufficiently and quickly to eliminate air and cover securely.

High Moisture Grains

- Should be stored at proper moisture content levels to exclude air.
- Must be handled in quantities which allow them to be fed within 7 days.

Hubbard Feeds Inc., based in Mankato, Minn., is a leader in animal nutrition, dedicated to providing innovative feed products. Hubbard specializes in providing nutritional expertise and high quality service to help producers be more successful. Hubbard was the first major U.S. feed manufacturer to be ISO 9001 registered and HACCP certified, the international standards for feed quality management and food safety. For additional information about Hubbard Feeds, visit hubbardfeeds.com.