



# NEWS

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## **ILLINOIS FARMERS ADVISED TO USE PROPER GRAIN STORAGE PRACTICES**

*Cool, wet weather has increased the risk of mold development*

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – The Illinois Department of Agriculture reminds farmers the proper handling and storage of grain is good insurance against losses, especially in a year when the risk of mold development is elevated.

“Mold is a greater concern this year because of the unseasonably cool, wet weather we’ve experienced,” Jim Larkin, bureau chief of Agricultural Products Inspection, said. “Mycotoxins, which are toxic substances that molds produce, thrive in moist environments and can spread in poorly-ventilated grain bins, causing not only grain losses, but also potential health risks.”

To prevent contamination, farmers should keep their grain dry. Larkin recommends that stored grain have a moisture content of 15 percent or less. He also recommends screening grain before storage to remove damaged seeds and kernels that are more susceptible to mold growth. Crops that are stored outside should be covered with tarps and moved off the ground as soon as possible.

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## GRAIN STORAGE/2222

The concentration of mycotoxins that animals can tolerate varies according to the species and its age. Therefore, Larkin advises livestock producers, dairy farmers and horse owners to consult their veterinarian or local Extension office before starting a feeding program and to consider testing their feed grain. Either their supplier or the agriculture department's Centralia Animal Disease Laboratory will check it. The lab charges \$60 for a screen of the seven most common types of mycotoxin and can be reached (618) 532-6701.

For more information about recommended grain handling and storage practices, call the Bureau of Agricultural Products Inspection at (217) 782-3817.

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