

Maximize mycotoxin control with DTX™

~ Nicole Mackinder

Cows off feed, fluctuating production and diarrhea; the symptoms were all too familiar for Tim and Sandy Ver Hage, west Michigan dairy producers. Before Tim sent a feed sample in for testing he knew there was a mycotoxin problem with the silage.

“The last time our cows showed these symptoms was in 1992,” recalls Tim. “Our corn didn’t ripen completely that year due to the weather and our chopping season extended well into October. When the cows began to go off feed we realized there was a problem from the previous year’s crop.”

At that time test results revealed the corn silage contained mycotoxins, so Tim’s veterinarian suggested starting the herd on Select DTX™, a direct-fed microbial designed to combat the effects of mold-driven problems.

“Within two weeks of adding DTX to the ration, the herd’s feed intake and production stabilized,” states Tim. “We were relieved to see them regain consistency and decided to leave the herd on DTX in case we encountered mycotoxins in the feed again.”

DTX was included in the herd’s ration for several years when the Ver Hages decided to switch to Select Bio Cycle Plus™. Comprised of the same ingredients as DTX, Bio Cycle Plus also includes additional L-form *Lactobacillus* bacteria, yeast, enzymes and specialized proteins. Together these ingredients are designed to combat the negative effects of mycotoxins, while enhancing metabolism and improving overall reproduction and herd health.

“Our herd stayed healthy for more than 10 years with the addition of DTX and then Bio Cycle Plus to the ration,” states Tim. “Then all of the sudden the symptoms of mycotoxins returned.”

Already providing a microbial in the ration, Tim didn’t understand how the herd could still be affected by the mycotoxins. “Even if we had another batch



Tim and Sandy Ver Hage

of moldy feed, I didn’t think the cows should be experiencing these symptoms,” Tim noted. “So we sent in a feed sample to help us figure out what was going on.”

The feed sample revealed that the ration did in fact contain high levels of mycotoxins. The mycotoxin DON (*vomitoxin*) was extremely high as it had soared to over 1,000 ppb.

“Our veterinarian said the DON level was one of the highest he had ever seen,” remarks Tim. “Even though the herd was currently receiving Bio Cycle Plus, the mycotoxin level had become so high that the cows needed additional assistance.”

Following their veterinarian’s advice and a standard protocol for extremely high mycotoxin levels (when a microbial is already being fed), the Ver Hages added DTX to the ration which already contained Bio Cycle Plus. Within one week the herd was back on their way to normal feed intake and the diarrhea had subsided.

Ongoing feed testing confirmed the moldy feed had been used up within six months and the Ver Hages were able to remove the additional DTX from the ration. “Adding DTX on top of Bio Cycle Plus to the ration was the most economical solution to regaining control of the mycotoxins and I was glad to have a solution to the

feed problem,” states Tim. “Our main business here is producing embryos and thankfully we caught the problem before it affected reproduction.”

Today the Ver Hage’s 70-cow herd boasts a rolling herd average on twice a day milking of 32,148 pounds of milk, 1,447 pounds of protein and 972 pounds of fat, while maintaining a somatic cell count score of under 100,000. In addition to continuously ranking among Michigan’s top herds for production, Ver Hage Holsteins also has a 107 BAA, ranking them among the top herds in the United States. With performance levels like this it’s no wonder the Ver Hages have marketed cattle to 22 states and exported embryos to 20 countries.

“We used the Bio Cycle direct-fed microbials for 14 years and will not take our cows off these products,” declares Tim. “In respect to our herd’s health, Bio Cycle Plus is the most vital ingredient in our feed and we wouldn’t take that away from our cows.”

For more information on the complete line of Select Bio Cycle products and the benefits they can provide your herd, visit with your NorthStar representative or call 1.800.631.3510.

When to consider increasing microbial dosage:

1. Mycotoxin levels are high

- Various test dates and locations in feed bunk help determine average daily intake of mycotoxins
- Presence of multiple mycotoxins compound effects

2. Animals are showing symptoms (inconsistent feed intake, poor reproductive performance, loose manure)

3. Animals under stress

