

Toxin ALERT!

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Last fall, large segments of the

U.S. saw unusually high tests for DON (vomitoxin) in corn and small grains. In turn this suggested

that the toxin-producing strains of *Fusarium* would proliferate and could be present in even greater numbers to affect crops in 2010.

We have heard of DON contaminated wheat this year, and, depending on what the remainder of the growing season brings (temperature, rainfall, etc.), don't be surprised if this year's corn is also above average again in contamination rates at harvest. Add to that some real dilemmas: *Fusarium*-infected plants faced with presence of DON or other toxins while they are still growing attempt to get rid of them by adding sugars, often just the simple sugar, glucose.

A DON-glucose molecule cannot be detected by our antibody-based rapid tests. A number of published scientific articles now indicate we likely underestimate DON in corn and wheat by as much as 80 percent! And, plants deal similarly with the other mycotoxins to form these sugar-toxin combinations (called glycosides).

Also, keep in mind that while we talk about "DON", that name applies to one chemical entity which in nature can be made by the mold in alternative forms. Examples of this are common and usually involve the substitution of acetic acid for a hydrogen atom somewhere on the molecule. So, labs with extensive analytical capability are often reporting 3-acetoxy-DON or 15-acetoxy-DON in addition to straight DON. All of these forms of DON impact the production animal.

Since detailed lab procedures add much extra cost and reporting delay time, it is important to understand that



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we should look for ranges of toxin values, not specific numbers! A DON positive means you've got mold and toxins (plural). When your test value moves into the greater than 500 ppb range, your problem is quite serious and you should be taking immediate action for your herd.

One cannot reliably predict the coming season with respect to molds and mycotoxins, but producers can be prepared to deal with DON and the

many, many other mold toxins which affect dairy production, cow health, and reproductive success. Be sure you understand your options. If you don't, ask your NorthStar Cooperative representative right away for guidance on programs that will give you successful control of fungal toxin contaminations throughout the year. ★

Call for candidates

Stockowners in Districts

3, 4, 9 and 10 are needed to run for a three-year-term position on the NorthStar Cooperative board of directors. Candidates are also needed to run for a one-year-term on the board of directors for district 6. Additionally, stockowners are needed from each district to serve on the resolutions and advisory committee.

All common stockowners are eligible and encouraged to run for any of the available positions. To be included in the election process, a candidate must submit a "letter of intent" form to the Cooperative by **November 1, 2010**.

The "letter of intent" form can be obtained online at northstarcooperative.com under the "Cooperative Profile" tab. For more information regarding the responsibilities of the available positions contact Gary Smith, NorthStar Cooperative general manager at 800.631.3510.

