

NDSU

EXTENSION SERVICE  
DIVIDE COUNTY

# Ag Alert

Northwest North Dakota

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## FEEDING HIGH VOMITOXIN (DON) WHEAT

The increased prevalence of vomitoxin in local wheat and durum crops, brought about by the wet and humid growing conditions this summer, has left many producers in the area wondering how to market their high DON grain. One option to consider is selling the grain to livestock producers as a feed source. Although DON infected wheat is toxic at high levels, it can be a viable feed when diluted with other feed products to construct a ration. Relatively high hay prices this year may provide additional incentive for livestock producers to use grain in their winter feeding program and free up potential hay reserves for marketing. In most cases, wheat containing DON can be used as livestock feed.



**Beef Cattle:** Research conducted in North Dakota and Minnesota has suggested growing and finishing cattle can tolerate dietary levels of DON up to 18 ppm, although the FDA recommendation is 5 ppm.

**Dairy Cattle:** FDA limits the level to 2 ppm DON in the diets of lactating dairy cattle.

**Poultry:** Poultry can be fed grain containing DON. Total dietary levels should not exceed 5 ppm.

**Swine:** Swine are more sensitive to feeding high DON wheat than ruminant animals. Growing and finishing pigs may be fed grains containing DON, provided the level does not exceed 1 ppm. Do not feed wheat containing DON to gestating or lactating sows or pigs weighing less than 50 pounds.

**Horses:** There is no data currently available on feeding high DON grain to horses.

## FEEDING GUIDELINES

When feeding high vomitoxin wheat it is important to mix it with uncontaminated feed sources such as hay or other clean grain products in order to dilute the toxins. NDSU Extension Service recommends testing your ration for DON levels before feeding to determine if more blending will be necessary to make the feed safe. Make sure to monitor your herd for reduced feed intake and a decrease in gains, which is a sign they are ingesting too much of the toxin.

In addition to the problems related to DON, feed wheat is a grain that requires diligent feeding management to be successfully included in a ration for cattle. Wheat ferments very rapidly, making it difficult to feed at high levels. Greg Lardy, NDSU Extension beef cattle specialist, has these guidelines for feeding wheat:

- Wheat is higher in protein and similar in energy to corn.
- Limit wheat to 40 percent or less of the ration in backgrounding and finishing diets.
- Limit durum to 30 percent or less of the ration in backgrounding and finishing diets.
- Gradually adapt cattle to wheat-based diets. Start with low levels (10 to 15 percent) and then gradually increase the wheat level up to 30 percent (durum) or 40 percent (hard wheats).
- Wheat should be coarsely rolled or cracked, but not finely ground for optimum performance.
- Wheat should not be fed in self feeders.

**UPCOMING EVENTS****Land Reclamation Meeting**

Wednesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> 9:30 am to 3:00 pm at the Williston Research Extension Center  
Speakers will discuss various aspects of pipeline installation and reclamation. David Saxowsky will speak on eminent domain and understanding easements, Kevin Sedivec will talk about plant communities and how to reclaim disturbed land to foster plant growth, Dept. of Agriculture representatives will discuss the North Dakota Pipeline Restoration and Reclamation Oversight Program, and Austin Link and Chris Augustin will provide an update on an experiment looking at different crop rotations for pipeline reclamation now underway at the Williston REC. This event is organized by Danielle Steinhoff, Williams County extension agent.

**Crop Opportunities Meeting**

Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at the Williston Research Extension Center, time TBD  
This will be a joint meeting for producers in Divide, Williams, and McKenzie Counties. We would like to help you get to know your county ag agent: Brandon Biwer in Divide, Danielle Steinhoff in Williams, and Morgan Myers in McKenzie. Other speakers include Chris Augustin, Clair Keene, and ag economist Frayne Olson will provide a market update on current crop prices and an outlook for 2017.

**Divide County Ag Day**

Wednesday, January 18, 2017, location TBD  
Save the date! Speaker list is still under development but will include Brian Jenks discussing new weed control options and Audrey Kalil reporting on pulse crop diseases in Northwest ND.

**National Hard Spring Wheat Show**

February 7-9, 2017 at the Grand Williston Hotel in Williston  
Save the date for this annual event! Speaker list is still being developed but will include NDSU plant pathologist Andrew Friskop, NDSU entomologist Janet Knodel, and NRCS soil health specialist Jay Fuhrer.

**MonDak Pulse Day**

February 15, 2017 at the Grand Williston Hotel in Williston  
Save the date! The theme of this year's Pulse Day will be pulse diseases. We will have Michael Wunsch from Carrington REC speaking about the effect of shortening crop rotations on pulse diseases and John Dhuyvetter livestock specialist from North Central REC discussing feed value of pulses to livestock if the crop is compromised by disease or hail.