

December 18, 2009



Have You Heard?
By Randy Pryor
Extension Educator
Saline County

WET GRAIN DEMANDS ATTENTION

When you have a harvest where it was a bear for our grain to dry down, maybe Holiday guests this year will need to have a little compassion if that fan is still running. Those seeds are not dead but very much alive packed with energy. I am writing a third column on grain handling this fall for a reason, I am concerned about the condition of some of our corn in storage in the area.

With wet corn above 16% in your bin, please review the following winter storage tips:

- Use a grain thermometer to monitor temperature. (This is a sturdy thermometer attached to a metal rod that can be pushed several feet into the grain mass). Probe several places near the bin walls and a couple of places near the center of the bin. Allow several minutes for the thermometer to equalize with the temperature of the grain before taking each reading.
- Run the aeration fan if the thermometer detects heating anywhere in the grain mass or if there is more than a 5-8 degree difference in grain temperature between any two spots in the bin.
- At the very least, start the aeration fan and immediately climb up and lean into the access hatch at the top of the ladder. If you detect a moldy smell or the air hitting your face is warmer than expected, or you see condensation on the underside of the bin roof on a cold day, this could signal a hot spot is forming in the corn. If you find any of these symptoms, continue aerating until conditions improve.
- If you have a stirring system in the bin, run a couple of rounds while aerating to break up wet spots and even out the moisture in the bin. If you don't have a stirring system and continue to see indications of a hot spot, unload enough grain to locate or break up the wet spot.
- If you can't get the corn to 15% moisture before discontinuing fan operation (which is the case for much of the grain this season), it is critical that you get the temperature down to 25-30 degrees F to arrest mold growth. Always push a cooling front completely through the bin before discontinuing aeration for longer than a few days. He suggests that an estimate of the hours of fan operation required to push a temperature front through a bin of corn is 15 divided by the airflow rate in cubic feet per minute per bushel (cfm/bu). If your drying fan can produce 1.0 cfm/bu, it will take about 15 hours, but if you have a storage bin with a small fan producing only 0.2 cfm/bu, it will take 75 hours. With extreme cold at night run during the day.

I hope you'll check out our management tips posted at the CropWatch website at <http://cropwatch.unl.edu>. Timely tips have been added. So check that wet grain this winter, either once a week, or at the least, once every two weeks, and for Pete's sake, be safe out there!