

Extension Notes
Personal Column for October 19, 2010
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Tip Top Shape for Stored Grain

Remember all the problems we had last year harvesting and storing wet moldy grain? How could you forget? Just because we have tremendous harvest conditions, with low moisture, high test weight grain this year doesn't mean you can ignore properly storing your grain.

Don't forget that the moisture content for corn and sorghum should not exceed 14 percent if stored up to one year. Soybean moisture content should not exceed 12 percent and other small grains 13 percent.

Regardless of grain moisture content, controlling grain temperature is vital to the life of your grain. To maintain favorable temperatures, air needs to be moved through the entire grain mass in a uniform fashion. A well-designed aeration system with a perforated floor, combined with clean grain and a level surface, is the best combination for obtaining a uniform temperature.

Grain should be stored at a seasonably cool temperature. In other words, keep grain within 10 degrees of the average monthly air temperature and make sure temperatures do not vary more than 10 degrees from place to place within the bin. Hold grain at 35 to 40 degrees through the winter and warm to about 60 degrees for the summer months with proper transitions in between.

Aeration fans are necessary to move cooling and warming zones throughout the grain. The rate of movement depends on airflow rate, length of fan operation, and outside temperature. Keep fans running continuously when changing grain temperatures, as turning them off stops movement of the temperature zone.

Maintaining proper grain temperature plays an important role in the prevention of convection currents that can concentrate moisture at the top center of the bin. This excess moisture is indicated by damp grain and formation of a crust at the surface of the grain.

Be sure to inspect your grain once a month during the winter and once every two weeks during other seasons of the year. Recording temperatures from several locations within the mass of grain, combined with outside temperatures, will help you do a great job of keeping your grain in great condition.

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