

Aflatoxin Q&A

If grain tests more than 20 ppb aflatoxin, it is illegal to offer the same grain for sale in interstate markets again.

Q: Does this apply to any test or just the ones conducted by official grain inspection locations?

A: Any test, if you have reason to believe that you have corn +20ppb. Acting on black light tests is a fuzzy area because you don't "know" how much or even if it is there. Elevators accepting black light positive grain need to keep good records, and store all that grain together, with file composite samples retained. Producers need to keep good records of testing and grain storage.

Q: If the grain is run through a grain cleaner, is it still the same grain or is it different grain?

A: Same grain. Cleaning is considered reconditioning

Q: If a crop insurance adjuster's sample reveals more than 20 ppb aflatoxin in a field and the grain from the field is later offered for sale, is it the same grain?

A: Yes. The producer took money on the basis that he had some grain +20ppb. If that grain was put with other grain after knowing the test, then the entire lot is considered adulterated. The grain must be handled according to the FDA guidelines and not blended with other grain. If the blending occurred before the test results were back then the entire lot into which the af corn was blended is now legally contaminated and subject to FDA rules. (See the opening paragraphs at <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~lrd/fdaact.html>.)

Q: I talked with a fellow yesterday who watched a sample being processed at an official grain inspection lab. Apparently the lab divided the 5 pound sample in half, kept half and then subdivided the other half until it had 50 g of grain. The lab then ground the 50 g sample. I was under the impression that the official method was grinding the sample and then dividing it. Obviously, I was wrong, right?

A: You were right. The USDA GIPSA Procedure book states very clearly that the entire whole grain sample is to be ground before subsampling. If an Official Agency is not doing that, they are not following the procedure. Dividing the whole grains will give many low values and

once in a while a very high one. <http://www.gipsa.usda.gov/reference-library/handbooks/aflatoxin/aflatoxin-ch03.pdf>

Based in a Q & A between Virgil Schmitt (Q) and Charlie Hurburgh (A) on October 18, 2005.