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LUBING

Norel

Olmix

Pancosma

General approach towards mould and mycotoxin problems

The first thing to do when a mycotoxin problem or mycotoxicosis is suspected is to remove the suspect feed and replace it with mycotoxin-free feed.

A detailed inspection of grain storage bins and mixing equipment (if a home mixer), as well as on-farm feed storage bins and feeders for evidence of caking up (as this material favours mycotoxin production), mouldy feed or musty odours, can then be undertaken.

All feed line equipment should then be cleaned and sanitised with an appropriate product to decrease fungal levels.

Analyse feed samples for mycotoxins. In addition, environmental swabs can be examined for fungal counts and types. Although fungal counts per se can not confirm a diagnosis, they can be helpful as they can indicate contaminated areas which are more likely to be associated with mycotoxin production.

If grain storage conditions are less than satisfactory or grain moisture levels are high, the use of in-feed mould inhibitors should be seriously considered, although these will not destroy any mycotoxins already present.

The practice of diluting contaminated feed with a clean feed might have to be considered, but remember this might change the disease picture from a clinically visible one to an unseen subclinical one. However, this could still be robbing you of pig performance and, since you have diluted the feed, the problem could be with you for a longer time.

Since mycotoxin effects can be delayed, if you are in a mycotoxin risk area collect and store a sample of every feed for later analysis if required. Do not use polythene bags because, if sealed, they can produce a microclimate that favours mycotoxin production during storage and, consequently, false results. Use paper bags for prolonged storage.

Always take representative feed samples for laboratory analysis.

Consider measuring moisture levels and storage temperatures.