

Feeding Damaged Wheat to Cattle

BROOKINGS, S.D. - Recent rains caused delays in completing the wheat harvest leading to reports of damaged wheat, particularly in the northern areas of South Dakota. If the damage levels are high enough, the wheat can be unmarketable through regular channels. Feeding damaged wheat to cattle can be a way to salvage the crop.

If cattle producers are thinking about feeding the damaged wheat, Warren Rusche, SDSU Extension Cow/Calf Field Specialist said they need to consider factors such as vomitoxin or ergot which may affect cattle health and performance.

Vomitoxin is a mycotoxin that may be produced in wheat grain infected by Fusarium head blight or scab.

The FDA guidelines on vomitoxin for feedstuffs fed to beef cattle older than four months is 10 parts per million (ppm), as long as the affected feed does not exceed 50 percent of the diet. Rusche said that because wheat is rapidly fermented in the rumen, wheat grain should be limited to 40 percent of the diet to reduce the chances of digestive upset.

"Be extremely cautious feeding wheat screenings. The cleaning process removes a large percentage of the

smaller, scab-infested kernels resulting in increased concentration of any mycotoxins present," Rusche said.

Rusche said the safest option is to not feed wheat screenings from scab-infested wheat at any level.

If they are fed, these feedstuffs have to be lab tested prior to feeding. "The risk level of the grain cannot be determined by visual examination, as not all wheat with scab contains vomitoxin and those levels do not necessarily correlate with the physical symptoms in the grain. The only certain measure is a lab analysis," Rusche said.

These mycotoxins can also be found in wheat straw. Rusche said the safest option would be to use straw from fields known to contain vomitoxin as bedding for feedlot or mature cattle. "If the straw is to be fed, it should be tested prior to feeding and diluted accordingly," he said.

Ergot
Ergot in wheat has also been reported in northern South Dakota in 2015. Wheat containing more than 0.05 percent ergot may be rejected in the commercial grain trade.

Studies show that ergot concentrations greater than 0.1 percent have affected cattle performance.

Delayed harvest can also lead to issues with sprouted wheat. "This grain will be significantly discounted in commercial channels. However, there have been no performance losses observed in cattle feeding trials, indicating that marketing sprouted grain through cattle is a viable option," Rusche said.

He added that these grains should still be tested for vomitoxin and fed at no more than 40 percent of the diet dry matter.

Other tips for feeding wheat (normal or damaged) include:

* Adapt cattle by introducing wheat at low levels (10 to 15 percent of the diet) and increase that amount in steps over a number of days.

* Wheat should be coarsely cracked for improved digestibility, but not finely ground.

* Including an ionophore will help reduce over consumption and acidosis.

* Do not feed wheat in a self-feeder.

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GAME MEAT DONATIONS DOWN BUT FUTURE PROMISING

By: Ron Fowler, South Dakota Sportsmen Against Hunger

Donations of game meat to needy families by hunters through South Dakota Sportsmen Against Hunger (SAH) were down in 2014 due to decreased deer harvest but the forecast for 2015 is optimistic. Deer populations are starting to recover from unusually high losses in recent years, and the number of deer hunting licenses for 2015 have been increased in a number of areas including East River and the Black Hills.

In addition to a favorable outlook for deer donations, an additional increasingly significant source of game meat has been Canada geese (during special early seasons) and pheasants. With about equal amounts of Canada geese and pheasants being donated the total increased from about 9,000 pounds in 2013 to over 11,000 pounds in 2014. As populations of these game birds continue to be the same or higher than last year, and as hunters become increasingly aware of the opportunity for donating game birds, donations are expected to continue to increase.

Even though donation of game meat from all sources decreased from 48,100 pounds in 2013 to 37,600 pounds in 2014, the number of meals of meat provided to needy families is still significant (over 150,000 meals in 2014). However, much more is needed. According to Feeding South Dakota, one in eight people of South Dakota live at poverty level and one in five kids go to bed hungry. A primary food shortage is fresh meat which is in high demand and difficult for lower income families to afford. Of particular demand is game meat because of its nutritional value in having low fat and high protein content.

The willingness and ability of hunters to provide this much-needed meat to poverty-level families has continued to grow in relation to opportunity. Additionally, SAH continues to look for and utilize other opportunities for obtaining game meat such as from city deer reduction programs, salvageable road-kills, and game confiscated by the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

And with help of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks in publicizing opportunities for donation of game meat through SAH, the 40-plus game processors across the state who process donated game meat at reduced fees (SAH helps pay for processing of antlerless deer), and the numerous food pantries associated with Feeding South Dakota who distribute donated game meat to needy families, the future of SAH being able to arrange for donation of game meat to needy families is promising.

For more information on South Dakota Sportsmen Against Hunger and how to donate visit website www.feedtheneedsd.com.

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