

IMPACT OF INCREASED DON LEVELS ON THE MILLING AND BAKING INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Currently the Milling and Baking Industry operates under a Federal Advisory that “re-recommends” that wheat flour produced for human consumption contain < 1.00 ppm DON (vomitoxin). There is currently no guidance level for the raw wheat from which the derivative flour is generated. Milling companies have found over the years that there is a “milling loss” of DON associated with the milling of wheat into flour. Typically this “loss” was on the order of 50%. Therefore, if your raw wheat contained 2.00 ppm of DON, the derivative flour of this wheat would typically test at 1.00 ppm of DON or less. With this historical data in hand, the Milling Industry would specify DON levels of 2.00 ppm or less in their grain contracts in order to meet the Federal Advisory Level of 1.00 ppm or less in flour intended for human consumption.

With this crop year, particularly in the Soft Red Winter Wheat of the Mid-Atlantic States, this “milling loss” appears to have dropped from 50% to 20% or less. Specifically, if the raw wheat tests at 2.00 ppm DON, the derivative flour will test at 1.80 ppm DON or higher. When DON reaches levels such as these in wheat flour products, not only is the Milling Industry unable to satisfy Advisory Levels issued by Federal Regulatory Agencies, it is unable to deliver flour to its customer base since they are unwilling to process flour into baked goods if the flour does not meet regulatory guidelines.

Investigation by various Milling Industry entities has revealed that there probably never was a “milling loss.” What was actually happening is that the wheat cleaning equipment in the flour mills was taking out the diseased shriveled kernels. With this crop year, we are seeing kernels that are “infected” and are still plump and therefore not removed by the cleaning process. Hence the higher DON loads.

The purpose of this panel discussion is to give the audience to direct specific questions to the panel as to the impact of increased DON loads in the grains they purchase, and the strategies that are being pursued to deal with this issue.