

Mycotoxins

Fact Sheet

The Challenge

Mycotoxins are toxic substances that are produced through growth of certain fungal species on grains and other materials in the environment and have the potential to adversely affect animal and human health if eaten in sufficient quantity.

High Risk Conditions

In the UK, contamination by the fungi *Fusarium* species is common, especially in moist, cool conditions. *Fusarium* species need high relative humidity (more than 70%) or grain moisture of more than 22% for growth. These species produce:

- **Zearalenone (commonly referred to as ZON or ZEA)**
- **Deoxynivalenol (commonly referred to as DON)**

At risk are: growing crops (mainly wheat and barley) when there is high rainfall at flowering or pre-harvest; stored grain with a high moisture content; finished feed stored in unsuitable conditions or when left to go stale in feeders in warm, humid buildings.

Is my herd affected?

The signs can be difficult to spot sometimes because some pigs are more affected by contamination than others. Below are some key signs for ZON and DON contamination.

ZON contamination

- Unexplained infertility
 - Anoestrus
 - "Not in Pig"
- Vulva swellings in growing pigs
- Prolapse "outbreaks"

DON contamination

- Reduced feed intake, lower growth rate
- Feed refusal
- Vomiting
- General restlessness
- Increased vices



