The Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) was held July 30 through August 1, 2011 in Austin, Texas. Over 200 attendees, including guests from Brazil, Canada, and Saudi Arabia, participated in the meetings. As a highlight of the program Dr. Lynn Post, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Veterinary Medical Officer (Toxicologist), delivered the keynote presentation which focused on the Federal-State model of cooperation.

Dr. Post began to work out of the Office of the Texas State Chemist in February 2011. Among his many responsibilities with the FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) include acting as a liaison between FDA and the Office of the Texas State Chemist. Other duties include serving as a member of the Texas Rapid Response Team as a toxicology expert, advising OTSC on toxicology issues for feeds, pursuing an adjunct faculty position with the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine, bridging communication across all state and federal agencies involved with FDA regulated products, touring food/feed facilities with state and federal inspectors, attending public meetings on aflatoxin action levels and giving presentations on the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).

These newly assigned duties provided Dr. Post with a better understanding of the Office of the Texas State Chemist. “States can innovate and launch new programs and ideas faster than FDA” according to Dr. Post who added, “Texas is a laboratory of innovation.” Elements for a successful implementation of FSMA with the new FDA enforcement tools have already been in place within Texas and many of the states for years.

The Association of American Plant Food Control Officials (AAPFCO) annual meeting followed the feed meeting and was held August 1-3, 2011 in Austin, Texas. Over 120 attendees, including guests from the U.S. and Canada participated in the meetings. The program included a keynote presentation from Ms. Julie Borlaug, Assistant Director of Partnerships at the Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture at Texas A&M, which focused on the role of fertilizer in the mission to feed the world.

“As many of you may know, my grandfather was recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, Medal of Freedom and Congressional Gold Medal for his pioneering work in developing high yielding wheats for areas with limited cultivation for land and increasing populations. These wheats and improved crop management practices transformed agricultural production in Mexico during the 1940s and 1950s and later in Asia and Latin
Continued: AACO Annual Meeting

America, sparking what today is known as the ‘Green Revolution.’

In preparing for this morning’s remarks, I reviewed many of my grandfather’s speeches and interviews on the subject of fertilizer. Fortunately, I came across my grandfather’s key note address at the IFDC’s Travis P. Hignett Memorial Lecture in 2003.

My grandfather was many things, a teacher, a warrior against hunger but he was first and foremost a scientist. He often said that the fear of change is the greatest obstacle to progress. He came down on the side of innovation, and was known for being bold and quick to act. Industry leaders were fond of my grandfather because he has been such a strong advocate for innovation and technological change.

My grandfather’s most potent view of science was that man’s most advanced knowledge and technology should be used in the battle against hunger and poverty. He was greatly troubled by the unwillingness of nations to employ the best technologies in food production. In his view there was no technology too advanced for developing nations.

Even fellow scientists and research administrators did not escape his admonition when they moved slowly on research to develop high protein maize, and rust resistant wheat. There is a Nobel Prize waiting he said, for the person who finds the rust resistance gene in rice and moves it to the wheat plant.

As many of you know, we as an industry face a great challenge - how to feed the world in 2050. We are going to need to produce more food than ever before. This is to feed the growing population but also the changing way people are eating. At the beginning of the 21st century with a population of 6.1 billion in 2000 and headed for 9.2 billion by 2050, the challenge of yet again doubling food production in only 50 years has become a daunting task. The situation is further exacerbated because now, we must also double food production sustainably by 2050 on approximately the same area of arable land using less resources, particularly, fossil fuel, water and nitrogen at a time when we must also mitigate some enormous challenges associated with climate changes as we have seen with the drought in the Horn of Africa and here in Texas. Furthermore, there is the critical and urgent humanitarian need to alleviate poverty, hunger and malnutrition.”

Julie Borlaug’s speech will be published in its entirety in the AAPFCO official publication and is available on the OTSC website http://otscweb.tamu.edu, under what’s new.

RMA Approves “One Sample Strategy” Program

Approval of the One Sample Strategy for Aflatoxin Risk Management in Texas was announced by the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) on July 26, 2011. The bulletin (MGR-11-011), which was issued to all approved insurance providers and RMA field offices states, “The Risk Management Agency (RMA) has been notified by the Office of the Texas State Chemist (OTSC) that they will implement a new program in Texas for Aflatoxin testing that is referred to as “One Sample Strategy (OSS).” Participation by grain elevators will be on a voluntary basis and they must meet specific guidelines to be considered for the program.

The OTSC will administer the OSS program within the State of Texas and provide training and certification for personnel from each participating elevator who performs sampling and testing. The sampling and testing process will be monitored on a weekly basis by the OTSC.

The OTSC began implementation of the program in July 2011. Certified sampling and testing personnel wear special identification badges and clothing identifying them as OTSC official samplers and testers. Certificates issued by the OTSC will be posted at the participating elevator facility indicating that it is an OTSC-approved OSS Aflatoxin testing facility. Participating elevator personnel will be certified yearly by the OTSC. Certified personnel may be decertified if the OTSC determines they are not meeting the prescribed standards.

The program requires use of Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS)-approved test kits that validate up to 100 parts per billion (ppb) for Aflatoxin, along with FGIS approved sample grinding equipment.”

Participation in the One Sample Strategy currently includes 3 firms that manage 5 grain elevators in south and central Texas. Two additional firms are in the process of acquiring equipment and completing sampling and testing plans in preparation for approval. At this time there are a total of 26 designees, 17 of whom are approved analysts.

To measure program performance, OTSC Agricultural Analytical Services utilizes high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) to analyze samples retained by participating elevators. To date, OTSC has analyzed 22 retained samples with an average result of 93 ppb aflatox-
Continued: One Sample Strategy Approved

In comparison, firms utilizing FGIS-approved aflatoxin test kits averaged 84 ppb aflatoxin. The average deviation of these results is 23%.

To evaluate the impact of the One Sample Strategy, the Office is currently conducting a performance evaluation of Texas grain elevators. The results of the current activity will be compared with benchmarks from a comparable evaluation conducted in 2010.

“For the 2011 crop year, Approve Insurance Providers (AIP) may consider OTSC-approved Texas grain elevator facilities to be approved laboratories for corn aflatoxin testing for crop insurance purposes.

AIPs are reminded that production that is to be stored on the farm must be tested prior to on-farm storage. AIPs may submit samples of corn that is to be stored on the farm to OTSC-approved testing facilities for Aflatoxin testing. For corn with Aflatoxin that is initially stored on the farm and later delivered to an elevator for purchase or commercial storage, AIPs must use for claim settlement the Aflatoxin test result taken prior to the corn entering on-farm storage; no other Aflatoxin test result will be considered. The elevators may charge policyholders for the Aflatoxin tests and test certificates.

The OTSC will provide a list of participating elevator facilities that are certified to test for aflatoxin on their website for verification purposes.

This list will be updated weekly. If an elevator is decertified by the OTSC, aflatoxin tests conducted by that elevator after the date of decertification must not be used for Federal crop insurance purposes.

The OTSC will provide official test certificates of analysis documenting the level of aflatoxin which will be completed by the participating elevator and provided to the insured. AIPs using these test results for claims settlement must obtain a copy of this official test certificate for the claim file.

AIPs may continue to use other approved private, State, or university laboratories for Aflatoxin testing in lieu of any elevators operating under the OTSC’OSS program.

To ensure program integrity, RMA will annually reauthorize the use of the OSS program for crop insurance purposes.”

ONE SAMPLE STRATEGY FOR AFLATOXIN RISK MANAGEMENT IN TEXAS

Texas Feed and Fertilizer Control Service
Office of The Texas State Chemist

ISSUE

Multiple aflatoxin measurements from the same truckload of corn produce different results. Grain elevator operators test the corn to make purchasing decisions, insurance providers test to determine the value of the corn for insurance purposes, and the Office of the Texas State Chemist (OTSC) performs tests to control the sale and distribution of corn over 20 parts per billion (ppb) aflatoxin. There is a need to bring these activities together into a single sample that meets USDA and OTSC sampling, mixing, and testing criteria to produce a single reliable result.

SOLUTION

To minimize the negative market impact of multiple aflatoxin tests, the One Sample Strategy aligns sampling and measurement techniques used by commercial grain elevator operators with official procedures used by USDA and the Office of the Texas State Chemist. The One Sample Strategy incorporates official procedures for sampling and testing, validated aflatoxin test kits for measuring corn over 100 ppb aflatoxin, training of grain elevator personnel, recordkeeping and verification to achieve the following:

- Standardized sampling, grinding and aflatoxin testing
- Standardized training of employees
- Verification of employee performance
- Documented program outcomes through recordkeeping
- One sample result for multiple uses
- Reduced market and food safety risk

One Sample Strategy

http://otscweb.tamu.edu/risk/onesample
Mercer Milling Company - First to Pass HACCP Audit

Mercer Milling Company became the first feed establishment in the United States to receive a certificate of conformance using the “Verification System for a Voluntary HACCP Plan” developed by an Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) feed industry taskforce. The audit was performed by Texas feed control officials in the Office of the Texas State Chemist (OTSC).

Mercer Milling Company is located in Liverpool, NY and manufactures premix and basemix products, primarily for the dairy industry including sale of product into Texas.

The auditing process associated with the HACCP certificate of conformance is a rigorous process that includes a review of the company’s website, product labels and HACCP plan prior to the onsite inspection of the plant operation. The onsite inspection includes an audit of the company’s conformance to the BSE (mad cow) regulation (21 CFR 589.2000-1) and the AAFCO model GMP regulations in addition to the HACCP audit. For a firm to pass the inspection, the firm must meet all criteria during the inspection or correct deficiencies within a prescribed period of time. The onsite inspection took approximately 3 investigators days to perform.

The benefits of participating in a voluntary HACCP audit by a competent authority are significant. Firms seek legal certainty when they manage risk. The adoption of HACCP principles, which are preventive in nature, conform to global feed safety requirements as well as the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), signed by President Obama in January of this year. Third party audits by a regulatory body provides the unbiased verification by experienced investigators that a company, their customers, and their customer’s customers are seeking. The feed and food trade are global in nature and the market demands on food safety are ever increasing.

The Office of the Texas State Chemist, which issued the certificate of conformance, provides regulatory oversight of feed firms that distribute feed in Texas, including the Mercer Milling Company of Liverpool, NY. Of the 3000 firms licensed to distribute feed in Texas, approximately 2000 of those firms are located outside Texas. The auditing service is provided to in-state firms at no cost and out-of-state firms are required to cover the auditor’s travel cost. The voluntary HACCP inspection aligns with the office mission to “protect consumers and enhance agribusiness.”

OTSC Fall Advisory Committee Meeting Date Set

OTSC Fall Advisory Committee Meeting

When: Friday, September 23, 2011

Where: Texas A&M University Campus, College Station, TX