

## Midwest Blending of Aflatoxin Contaminated Corn: Risk Assessment

The Office of the Texas State Chemist (OTSC) Advisory Committee convened twice via conference call during the Fall of 2012 to discuss the food safety risk resulting from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) decision to approve Midwest state requests to blend corn containing greater than 20 ppb aflatoxin with other corn. The blending of aflatoxin contaminated corn (>20 ppb) with other corn containing no aflatoxin is adulterated per the Food Drug and Cosmetic Act section 402(a). The FDA blending approval does not extend use of blended corn in human food or dairy cattle feed. Firms distributing this product in Texas must be licensed with the Texas Feed and Fertilizer Control Service of the Office of the Texas State Chemist.

During the conference call on December 10, 2012, advisory committee members were provided an update to the aflatoxin website <http://otscweb.tamu.edu/Risk/Aflatoxin/Default.aspx>. The website lists states that have petitioned and received FDA approval to blend corn, aflatoxin levels in those states by area, and facilities that have submitted applications to blend corn. None of the FDA blending-approved states intend to monitor industry conformance to permit requirements, reported by each state's representative via phone conversation with the OTSC associate director and Freedom of Information request by OTSC to those states. Two states have not shared the names of the facilities that have blending permits, claiming an exemption under the states' respective Sunshine clause.

Corn samples collected by OTSC from out-of-state corn shippers and tested for aflatoxin revealed that 28% possessed aflatoxin in excess of 20 ppb and none were correctly labeled (Table 1). The Office has required these firms obtain a license to distribute aflatoxin contaminated corn in Texas. OTSC will continue to monitor out-of-state corn shipped into Texas and will update the website as new data become available.

Table 1. Fall 2012 aflatoxin results for corn samples originating from out-of-state.

Transporter Type	Aflatoxin Level		Percent Violation
	Samples $\leq$ 20 ppb	Samples >20 ppb	
Rail	11	3	21%
Truck	5	3	38%
Bag	2	1	33%
Total	18	7	28%

In anticipation of the risk posed by the Midwest drought on the availability of corn containing less than 20 ppb for the Texas dairy, broiler and pet food industry, OTSC is conducting a state and national feed inventory. Results from inspections of 285 Texas grain establishments indicated that 96% of Texas corn contains less than 20 ppb aflatoxin. The Office is performing a quantitative risk assessment to assess the risk posed by the Midwest drought and the FDA corn blending policy.