

Resolution #11 – Middlesex SCIA - Variability of DON Testing Results

WHEREAS there is huge variability in DON results due to sampling, grinding (amount) and particle size, and,

WHEREAS this has tremendous financial implications across the industry,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Ontario Agri Business Association work with OMAFRA, University of Guelph and the Canadian Grain Commission to develop training and guidelines for elevators and end users to develop Good Laboratory Practices standards to be followed.

Moved Birgit Martin, Seconded by Ken Robson (Middlesex SCIA).

Carried

SENT TO Richard Smibert, President, The Ontario Agri-Business Association (OABA)
The Honourable Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)
Dr. Franco J. Vaccarino, President and Vice Chancellor, University of Guelph
Gino Castonguay, Chief Grain Inspector for Canada, Canadian Grain Commission (CGC)

COPY TO Dave Bутtenham, Chief Executive Officer, The Ontario Agri-Business Association (OABA)
Crosby Devitt, Vice President, Grain Farmers of Ontario (GFO)
Barry Senft, Chief Executive Officer, GFO

RESPONSE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER ONTARIO AGRI BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

&

RESPONSE FROM MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

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Resolution #13 – Oxford SCIA – Variability of DON Testing Results

WHEREAS farmers experienced significant frustration due to inconsistent and unreliable testing results for DON in 2018, and;

WHEREAS DON sampling protocols vary greatly from elevator to elevator, and;

WHEREAS DON testing results have a significant impact on farmers' financial bottom line.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED OSCIA encourage the Ontario Agri-Business Association to standardize scientifically validated sampling protocols for DON to be adopted at all licensed Ontario elevators.

Moved Warren Schneckeburger, Seconded by Dan Van Weerdhuizen (Oxford SCIA).

Carried

SENT TO Richard Smibert, President, The Ontario Agri-Business Association (OABA)
The Honourable Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)
Dr. Franco J. Vaccarino, President and Vice Chancellor, University of Guelph
Gino Castonguay, Chief Grain Inspector for Canada, Canadian Grain Commission (CGC)

COPY TO Dave Bутtenham, Chief Executive Officer, The Ontario Agri-Business Association (OABA)
Crosby Devitt, Vice President, Grain Farmers of Ontario (GFO)
Barry Senft, Chief Executive Officer, GFO

RESPONSE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER ONTARIO AGRIBUSINESS ASSOCIATION

&

RESPONSE FROM MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

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Resolution #18 – York SCIA – Variability of DON Testing Results

WHEREAS testing results for Deoxynivalenol (DON) has been variable and inconsistent at elevators and export ports.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that OSCIA support a standardized testing procedure for DON and other troublesome grain moulds.

Moved Don Oliver, Seconded by Dave Deacon (York SCIA).

Carried

SENT TO Richard Smibert, President, The Ontario Agri-Business Association (OABA)
The Honourable Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)
Dr. Franco J. Vaccarino, President and Vice Chancellor, University of Guelph
Gino Castonguay, Chief Grain Inspector for Canada, Canadian Grain Commission (CGC)

COPY TO Dave Battenham, Chief Executive Officer, The Ontario Agri-Business Association (OABA)
Crosby Devitt, Vice President, Grain Farmers of Ontario (GFO)
Barry Senft, Chief Executive Officer, GFO

RESPONSE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER ONTARIO AGRIBUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Dear Mr. Graham:

Further to your letter addressed to Richard Smibert, President of the Ontario Agri Business Association (OABA) outlining your organization's concerns with grain elevator DON testing from the 2018 corn crop, I would like to take this opportunity to respond and update OSCIA.

The three OSCIA resolutions you have presented from Middlesex, Oxford and York are correct in identifying some of the challenges that faced all segments of the grain industry in dealing with high DON levels in the 2018 corn crop. That being said, it is important to understand that the challenges of DON in the 2018 corn crop do not only impact farmer deliveries of corn – these same challenges extended throughout the entire corn value chain. In receiving the 2018 corn crop, Ontario grain elevators were exposed to significant financial and operational risks associated with variable DON levels as they purchased and moved corn through the value chain. Over the course of the 2018 harvest, it is estimated that the Ontario grain industry (elevators, feed mills and corn processors) spent in excess of \$6 million to test for DON in corn during the 2018 corn harvest with the objective of ensuring that both sellers and buyers were being treated fairly.

It should be noted that a primary point of variability associated with DON contamination within the 2018 corn crop occurred in the field and was impacted by environmental conditions (including rainfall, humidity, lingering dews, foggy mornings, temperatures), and further influenced by a number of farmer-based decisions (including hybrid selection and the use of fungicides). Once the extent of high DON concentrations was fully identified at the beginning of harvest, the Ontario grain

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elevator industry responded by mobilizing “DON quick test programs” to monitor intakes of corn and effectively manage the financial and operational risks of receiving high levels of DON. In a very short period of time, grain elevator operators were pressed to source DON quick test technology and train elevator receiving staff on the instructions for testing as established by the firm providing the quick test kit. It should be noted that several different “DON Quick Tests” were used by the grain industry – each with a specific methodology. During the harvest period, OABA also distributed two “Member Alerts” and presented a webinar to provide guidance to the membership on sampling and testing. Copies of the two “Member Alerts” are attached to this letter for your review.

Following harvest, OABA partnered with OMAFRA, the University of Guelph – Ridgetown Campus and Grain Farmers of Ontario to establish a Mycotoxin Research Coalition. In co-operation with the grain elevator sector, the coalition assessed the accuracy of quick tests used by the trade during the 2018 corn harvest. Evaluation of the test kit results at elevators revealed that they were not considered a major source of variation when following the protocols and directions provided by the test kit companies. Probe samples (vs. tailgate) were also less of a variable than expected, with a two-kilogram sample from four probes per truck equivalent to a tailgate sample.

The Mycotoxin Research Coalition continues to conduct further research related the preparation of the corn sample for DON quick testing. A key source of variability is determined to be subsampling and the grinding process. Dr. Schaafsma is recommending that standardized training be developed on sample preparation, and that a two-step grinding process be utilized. Implementation of this recommendation will be considered by elevator operators. In support of these findings, OABA has conducted a webinar on grain sampling, and Dr. Schaafsma recently made a presentation at our annual operations meeting. As further research is being conducted, OABA and will continue to communicate findings/recommendations to the grain elevator membership.

The high DON concentrations experienced by the industry during the 2018 corn harvest were unprecedented, and in large part, unexpected. In this regard, OABA continues to support the use (and possible enhancement) of OMAFRA’s annual pre-harvest corn survey as an early indicator of potential DON problems.

OABA would also submit that corn growers must also accept a primary responsibility to implement prevention strategies for mycotoxins in corn. The March 2019 issue of Ontario Grain Farmer includes an article on “Preventing DON in Corn – Best Management Tips for 2019”.

In summary, OABA would submit that the Ontario elevator industry did the very best job possible in receiving, testing and marketing a highly variable and challenging corn crop in 2018. When it comes to DON testing, the elevator industry will continue to implement new technologies, practices and protocols based on credible research and science with the overall objective of ensuring fairness to both buyers and sellers of Ontario corn.

Yours truly,

ONTARIO AGRI BUSINESS ASSOCIATION



David Buttenham Chief
Executive Officer

Cc: Richard Smibert, President, OABA
The Honourable Ernie Hardeman, Minister, OMAFRA
Dr. Franco J. Vaccarino, University of Guelph
Gino Castonguay, Canadian Grain Commission
Barry Senft, GFO
Crosby Devitt, GFO
Grain Section Committee, OABA

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RESPONSE FROM MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

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Dear Mr. Graham:

Thank you for sending me your association's resolutions about the variability of deoxynivalenol (DON) test results for com.

Recent high levels of DON are concerning to farmers, the sector and to me. I know how frustrating and challenging this is for affected farmers. We all want Ontario farmers to succeed, and that means working together to find solutions that will help them ride out the problem's nature can create.

I acknowledge the impact of inconsistent DON test results, which not only elevated stress levels among farmers but also made it difficult to understand the true quality of the grain and segregate it appropriately.

My ministry continues to work closely with representatives of Ontario's com sector, processors and other industry partners to develop immediate and long-term solutions to help farmers affected by DON.

We are supporting the Grain Farmers of Ontario with up to \$550,000 through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership to conduct research on storage, testing and evaluating com hybrids for disease resistance. One specific activity will be to identify the most significant sources of variation in the commercial sampling and testing procedures, which will aim to identify effective and efficient ways to reduce that variation in the commercial grain handling system.

Thanks, once again, for sharing your resolutions with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ernie Hardeman", written over a horizontal line.

Ernie Hardeman
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

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