

Disaster Relief

Salvaging Wet Stored Grain and Forages

Grain

Flood-damaged grains must be salvaged quickly, because grain can begin to spoil within a few hours. Wet grain molds and heats up quickly, possibly resulting in spontaneous combustion.

You can remove dry grain and store it separately, but the best way to save wet grain is to get the grain to a commercial dryer quickly. If part of a grain bin has been flooded, remove dry grain from the top, using a vacuator or other means. If the remaining wet grain has not started to sour, run it through a grain dryer several times.

If dry storage is available, use a natural air drying system with a metal perforated floor or a lateral duct system.

- Put the grain over this drying tunnel to a depth less than 6 feet.
- Use a crop drying fan to force air up through the grain.
- Use supplemental heat only during periods of high humidity.
- Do not raise air temperature more than 10 or 15 degrees.
- Use peanut-drying wagons when available.

If you can't get a commercial dryer or a drying tunnel, spread the grain in as dry a place as possible, no more than 6 inches deep. If it is not possible to dry grain artificially, try to find a local market for the wet grain. This grain must be sold at a salvage price, possibly to a large livestock feeder who can use it before it spoils.

Keep grain in airtight storage to prevent spoilage. Wet grain that has not begun to deteriorate is worth as much as other grain for feeding purposes. Shelled corn can be ensiled wet if the moisture is 25 to 35 percent. Place the grain in a bay concrete or metal silo, and use it for livestock feed. You may need to increase the reinforcement of the silo, particularly if it is filled deeper than 30 feet.

To prevent air from leaking around silo door openings, cut plastic sheets to extend 4 to 6 inches beyond the opening. Place a plastic cover over the grain in a concrete stave silo. Dig a trench around the edge of the grain, and push the plastic down and out against silo walls.

Wet seed grain is probably unsuitable for seed. Wetness causes the seed to germinate. Later drying stops germination and probably kills the seed or reduces its viability. Do not feed seed grain to live-stock, because it may contain toxic additives.

Ear Corn

Dry wet corn as soon as possible. Separate dry ear corn, and store it on high ground. If the ground is wet, first cover the area with plastic or building paper.

Handle wet ear corn as follows:

- Dry the corn if you have facilities and equipment.
 - Remove the corn from crib, since mush and debris washed into the crib may make drying difficult or impossible.
 - Then place the ear corn over a drying tunnel, and force air through the corn with a crop drying fan.
- Shell the corn if you have shelling equipment.

Hay Stored in Stacks

Wet hay heats and molds very quickly. Spontaneous combustion could occur within 2 or 3 days. Move and restack any dry portions of hay.

- Promptly take wet hay from buildings, and spread it out to dry.
 - Turn and shake it frequently.
 - Open wet bales, and spread them out well.
- Mechanical drying is better and faster than manual drying.
 - Build a drying tunnel of dry hay bales.
 - Stack the hay over the tunnel no more than 6 feet deep.
 - If you stack baled hay over the drying tunnel, break the bale ties first.
 - A fan pushed into the side of a haystack also speeds drying.

Silage

Wet corn silage will probably not be greatly damaged if flood waters are drained away from around the silo soon after flooding. Watch silage for evidence of spoiling as you remove it for feeding.

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