

OTSC Quarterly Newsletter



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Biological Methods Added to ISO Scope



OTSC has achieved ISO accreditation status through A2LA (American Association for Lab Accreditation) for several years now. Accreditation is used to verify that a lab has an appropriate

quality management system and can properly perform certain test methods according to its scope of accreditation. A third party, such as A2LA, assesses the lab and evaluates its compliance to the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025. Accreditation positively affects the public by necessitating higher quality standards within a lab. It inspires confidence in quality and defensibility of results. Early in July, OTSC expanded its ISO/IEC 17025 accredited scope to include four biological methods.

Methods for determination of *Salmonella*, detection of Shiga like toxin (STEC) producing *E. coli*, determination of *Listeria monocytogenes*, and screening for *Bacillus anthracis* (specifically in foods) were added. To date, OTSC has 31 tests, chemical and now biological, on its scope of accreditation. Plans for further scope expansion include additional biological methods and radiochemical analyses. In addition to ISO/IEC 17025, OTSC is accredited to ISO 17034 (reference material production) and to ISO/IEC 17043 (proficiency testing provider). Links to all accreditation certificates and scope of accreditation can be found on the OTSC website.



OTSC Continuation of Feed & Fertilizer Sampling, OSS & FDA Inspections

As requested by the OTSC advisory committee, the Texas Feed & Fertilizer Control Service (FFCS) is contracted to perform most federal animal feed inspections in the state. Due to COVID-19, this work was put on hold between March and June 2020 under a partial FDA Stop-Work Order that postponed all domestic routine surveillance inspections while continuing for-cause and emergency response activities without interruption. The resumption of FDA inspections follows the White House Opening Up America Again guidelines, which are based on current public health conditions at the state and local level.

In accordance with public health best practices all OTSC inspections, both federal and state, are now pre-announced with the goal of carrying out our feed and fertilizer regulatory mission in the safest and least intrusive way possible. This new approach also impacts 2020 One Sample Strategy mycotoxin risk management activities otscweb.tamu.edu/Risk/OneSample. Management at participating locations are conducting their own employee evaluations (pre-harvest) and weekly monitoring (during harvest) while FFCS field staff continue to provide oversight through regular, but brief and socially-distanced, onsite visits to review records and collect file samples for verification analysis. Managers at participating locations report that the changes have made it easier to coordinate employee training and manage day-to-day corrective actions. Thirty six locations are currently approved for the 2020 crop year.

Official Texas mycotoxin results, both regulatory and One Sample Strategy, are reported daily during harvest at mycotoxinbmpps.tamu.edu. To date, the prevalence

of aflatoxin and fumonisin in the 2020 corn crop appears to be low in comparison to past years. While the highest aflatoxin level is above 500 ppb, the overall average is 1 ppb. (Fig. 1) The highest fumonisin level in corn is 32 ppm and the overall average is <1 ppm. Check maps often for updates - levels and prevalence may change throughout harvest.

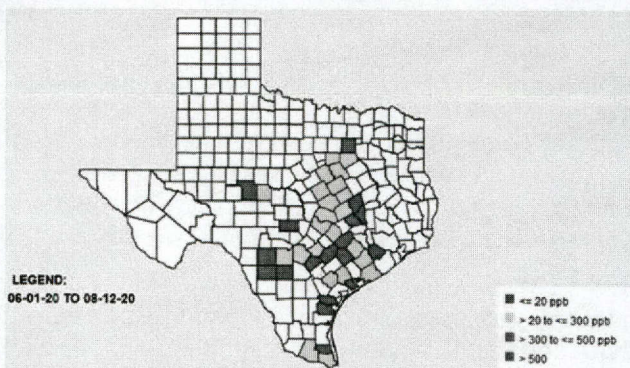


Figure 1. Level of Aflatoxin in Corn Sampled & Tested by OTSC-2020 Crop Year by County (06-01-2020 to 08-12-2020).

For more information about One Sample Strategy, please contact oss@otsc.tamu.edu.

Office of the Texas State Chemist

Mailing Address:

P. O. Box 3160
College Station, TX 77841

Physical Address:

445 Agronomy Road
College Station, TX 77843

Phone: 979-845-1121

Fax: 979-845-1389

Web: <http://otscweb.tamu.edu>

Protects consumers & enhances Agri-Business through its Feed & Fertilizer Regulatory Compliance Program, surveillance & monitoring of Animal-Human health & environmental hazards, & preparedness planning.

Online Company Product Identifier Web Portal

OTSC initially launched Company Product Identifier Web portal in July 2019 as a first step in offering online service for feed/fertilizer companies that distribute products in container of five (5) pounds or less only. Entry of the company product identifiers is not mandatory. It is designed as an option to allow companies for easier reconciliation with their product listing while processing the OTSC annual product billing. In July 2019 and June 2020, emails were sent out to remind companies to enter their company product identifiers. As of August 2020, 388 companies out of 1205 signed up for online access to enter their company product identifier (SKU, UPC or product number) corresponding to the OTSC product number and product description. As per record, those companies have already entered 3,324 company product identifiers in our online portal. Therefore, when the FY21 Annual Product Billings were mailed out in July 2020, that company product identifier would appear alongside the OTSC product number and product description. After the implementation of this feature, OTSC will no longer enter the company product identifiers in the product description.

The Company Product Identifier web portal can be accessed through the OTSC main website using the link "Report > Product Identifiers Portal" or through the direct link, <https://otscweb.tamu.edu/CompanyPortal/PortalLogin.aspx>

OTSC is presently developing an online portal to report tonnage, pay tonnage inspection fees and file fertilizer distribution (statistical) data online. The program is in the development stage and is projected to have the online capability for quarterly tonnage companies in 2021 to enter tonnage information and the ability to pay tonnage inspection fees through online ACH transaction. As the online program development proceeds, OTSC will keep companies notified.

OTSC Welcomes David Rooney

David has been a College Station local most of his life and naturally did not think of going anywhere else for college or employment. He graduated from Texas A&M University in May of 2016 with a degree in Food Science and upon graduation accepted a research technician position at the Texas A&M Maize Breeding and Genetics Lab. David's first job was with this same group, working most summers from high school through college. During his time at the lab, he was able to help with graduate projects, assist and teach proper self and cross pollination techniques to student workers and graduate students, and maintain the seed stocks for the program. He enjoyed many aspects of the job, especially being outside where he could observe the growth of the corn in the field and during harvest when he could see the results of a breeding trial.

Dr. Seth Murray, the maize breeder at TAMU, always challenged his graduate students and employees to explore new opportunities. October 2019, David took Dr. Murray's advice and started working for the USDA-ARS Pecan Breeding and Genetics Lab. His responsibilities included: grafting pecans, making controlled pollinations in pecans and hickories, and maintaining the orchards. Due to funding issues, he left at the beginning of July 2020 for a more permanent position at the Office of the State Chemist.

David was hired as a Program Coordinator. To learn more about the various programs within OTSC, David is currently assisting with labelling and registration. A typical workday involves reviewing feed and fertilizer applications, entering new products or new companies into Alfrims (Agricultural, Laboratory, Financial, Regulatory Information Management System), and helping companies with the necessary documentation. He looks forward to learning about all the programs at OTSC especially inspections and sample collection.

