

## “Mycotoxins!”

**Why is everyone talking about Mycotoxins?** These Toxins have been about for years but it is only now that we are starting to realise what a detrimental effect they can have on your stock.

In the next few lines I will try to explain what they are, where they come from, how to identify if you have them and lastly some tips on ways to deal with the problem.

**What are Mycotoxins?** In very simple speak; they are the waste product of a Fungus. They are not a living organism.

**Where do they come from?** These fungi are naturally found on grasses and straw and most living plant life and are found throughout the growing season.

**How to identify:** You cannot see mycotoxins in forage and so trying to identify with the naked eye is impossible. However you will be able to spot tell tale signs of them being present in the cattle that are eating forage containing the mycotoxins.

If you have milking dairy cows the signs are easier to spot, with a sudden drop in milk being the most obvious, or cows not achieving expected milk yield.

Most commonly these symptoms effect newly calved cows more aggressively resulting in very loose dung and a rapid loss in weight. These same symptoms will affect beef cows mainly causing a mixture of calving problems including still born calves and a whole variety of other problems all connected with the animal's immune system which will show themselves in many different forms.

**Ways to confirm you have Mycotoxin issues:** Until now testing for mycotoxins was very expensive and the tests were never that good as there are thousands of different Mycotoxin strains and you had to state which toxin you wanted the lab to look for. There is a simple test now which will test for the 2 main or more commonly found toxins. Zearalenone and Deoxynivalenol . More commonly known as Zon and Don for obvious reasons. This can be done when sampling your silage for feed value or can be done at any other time with a pit-face sample. This method will let you be aware of the problem hopefully before it becomes one. The other way which is more commonly used by dairy farmers is to add “MT.x +” the mycotoxin binder to the cows diet at 40gms per

day and within a few days to will see normally an increase in milk and a firming of the dung.

If you have suckler cows I am working on a simple way to prevent the mycotoxins affecting your herd and your herd fertility for the following year. The program will vary from farm to farm depending on your circumstances so please contact me to discuss your own situation. It is so important that we get in front of these Toxins as playing catch-up you will be too late.

If you have any questions or need to talk about this subject further please do not hesitate to contact me on:

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This article was to put together in conjunction with Vetsonic the UK suppliers of Mt.x+.