

ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE ONTARIO CORN COMMITTEE WITH RESPECT TO DON IN CORN

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: November 17, 2018

At its annual meeting on November 13, 2018, the Ontario Corn Committee (OCC) spent much time discussing how best to respond to the current *Gibberella* ear rot outbreak that is resulting in the high levels of DON in corn this year. The OCC is deeply concerned about the impact this is having across all sectors of the corn industry in Ontario, especially for the many farmers who are most directly affected.

Regrettably, the OCC does not have data indicating the relative susceptibility of hybrids to infection by *Gibberella* and the production of DON. However, the committee is undertaking two initiatives that it hopes will allow the committee to give more guidance to farmers in the future.

1) Samples were collected from each plot in several OCC trials across south-western Ontario during harvest this fall. These samples will be analyzed for DON in the lab and the results will be reviewed by the committee as soon as possible. These results may assist the committee, industry and crop advisors in providing growers with more information about:

- the factors associated with DON production,
- the range in tolerance among hybrids to mycotoxin accumulation
- the consistency of hybrid tolerance across environments and
- what growers can do to reduce their risk for next year.
- research or testing that the OCC could undertake to improve our knowledge about hybrid response to *Gibberella* and/or management practices to reduce the risk of DON accumulation.

2) The OCC also established a working group, consisting of growers, plant breeders, seed companies, extension and pathologists, charged with recommending actions and/or research that the OCC can implement beginning in 2019 to assist the industry in reducing the risk of a similar crisis in the future. This will include investigating a system to develop hybrid ratings.

The OCC understands that these actions do little to ease the devastation and desperation currently being experienced by corn growers across Ontario. However, OCC is committed to doing all it can to help find solutions for the future.

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The ONTARIO CORN COMMITTEE is made up of representatives of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs, the University of Guelph, the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, the Grain Farmers of Ontario and the Canadian Seed Trade Association. Hybrid Performance Trials are conducted each year by the following cooperating agencies: Ridgetown Campus, University of Guelph, Ridgetown; Plant Agriculture Department, University of Guelph; Winchester Research Station, University of Guelph, Kent Ag Research Inc., and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada at Ottawa.