Detecting mycotoxin problems in cattle…

PRACTICAL FACTS AND FIGURES : MYCOTOXINS

Why perform laboratory tests?

Given that some molds are invisible, that mycotoxins cannot be observed with the naked eye, and that the effects in cattle are variable and non-specific, laboratory analysis is the only sufficiently reliable means of verifying and assessing a mycotoxin problem in a herd.

Furthermore, before specifically suspecting a mycotoxin problem based on barn observations, analysis of production and herd health data is necessary to validate perceptions. A team discussion between the producer, the veterinarian and the feed advisor will help assess the situation from every angle, examine all probable causes and ultimately, identify the appropriate solutions.

Depending on the circumstances, it may be decided to proceed with

laboratory analyses to confirm the presence of a mycotoxin problem.

When is it appropriate to perform lab tests?

In a perfect world, it would be very useful to know the contamination status of each feed and each animal as often as possible! In practice, considerations such as time and money justify prioritizing the use of testing in certain situations. For example:

- The entire herd is fed feed with visible mold.
- A large proportion of the ration is made up of feed with visible mold.
- A significant variation in production is observed in several animals consuming the same feed.
- Health problems are observed in several animals consuming the same feed.
- Other probable causes have been investigated, but there is still no explanation for the signs observed.

What kind of tests are available?

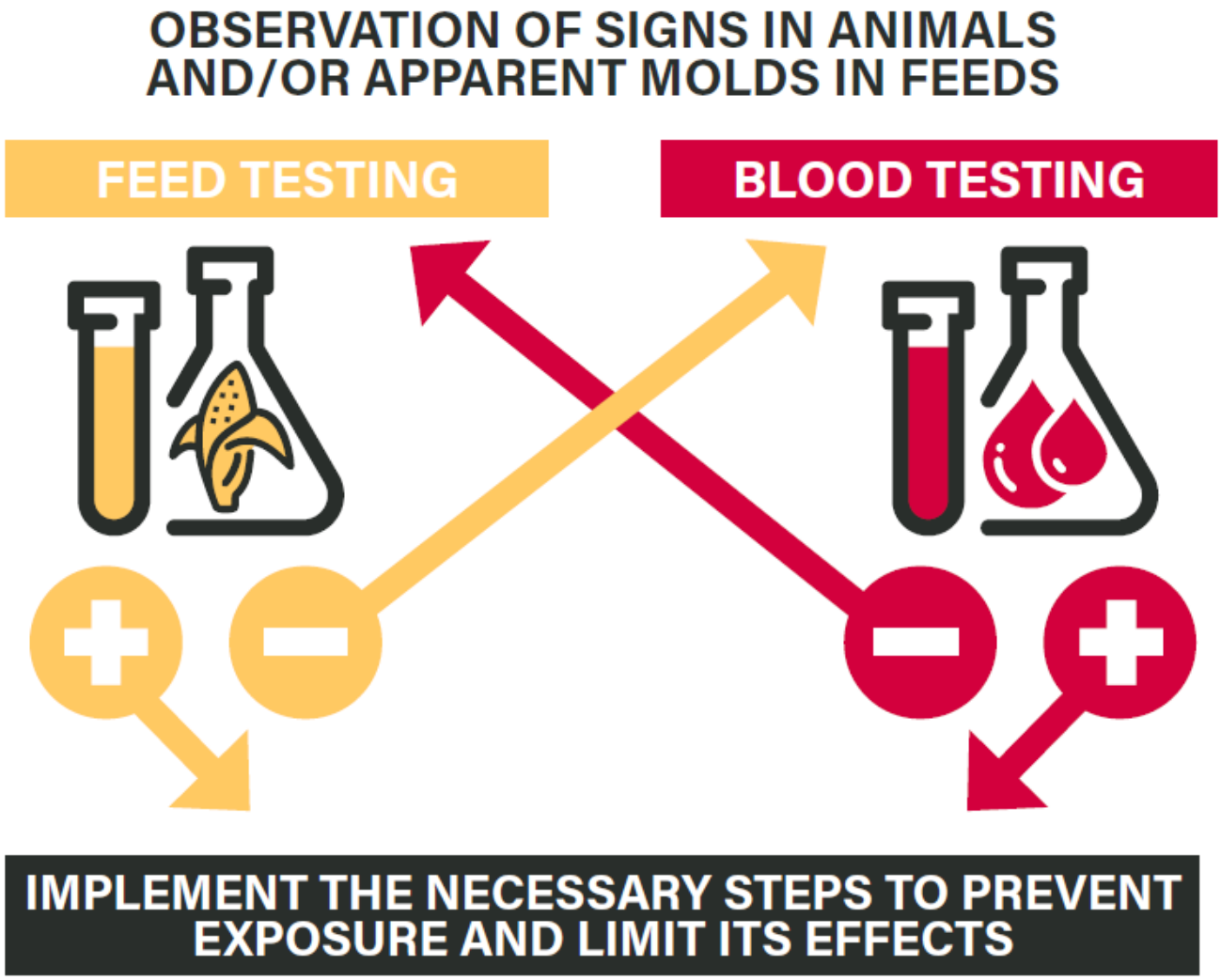
Two types of tests can detect a mycotoxins problem in cattle:

- testing the feeds
- testing the blood of the animals.

the most frequent mycotoxin in cattle and is often found in thresholds of concern, it will become possible to decide on the steps to be undertaken to limit the exposure to the contaminants and/or the effects on the animals. On the other hand, if the feed analysis results are negative or indicate a level of mycotoxins below the thresholds of concern, it would then be advisable to continue the investigation and proceed with blood

tests.

Figure 8. Simplified diagnostic approach depending on the result obtained in the first analysis.



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