

# The FDA's List Of Allowable Aflatoxin Levels

In July 2008, we told you about potentially contaminated horse feed from three manufacturing plants in New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland. As you probably recall, the contaminant was believed to be an aflatoxin, a potentially toxic mycotoxin.

Since then, we've received comments that the FDA permits the mixing of high aflatoxin-containing ingredients in with non-contaminated ingredients as long as the final feed doesn't exceed the limit for that class of animal. This is not the case.

The FDA doesn't permit such "blending," except on a limited state level if a special permit has been asked for and received.

When permits are granted, they are done only a state basis and the enforcement and monitoring duties then fall upon the individual state. Blended grains containing high aflatoxin ingredients may not be sold interstate and must clearly specify as to what types of animals may be fed the mixture. Under those guidelines, every individual ingredient going into a horse feed would have to be below the ceiling of 20 ppb.

We'll likely never know exactly what happened with the East Coast feed contamination since no one is giving any details. This includes the FDA. For now, we can only give you the FDA's Action Levels for Aflatoxin. Action levels are the maximum amounts that are acceptable under FDA rules, as contaminants are believed to cause no harm at or below these levels.

## FDA Upper Limits/ "Action Levels" For Aflatoxin Contamination In Feeds And Foods

Commodity	Action level PPB
Corn and peanut products for feedlot cattle	300
Cottonseed meal for beef, cattle, swine or poultry (all classes)	300
Corn and peanut products for feedlot swine, 100 lbs. or heavier	200
Corn and peanut products for breeding stock of beef cattle, swine or mature poultry	100
Corn, peanut products and other ingredients, except cottonseed meal, intended for immature animals of all species	20
Animal classes not specified above (including the horse)	20
Nuts	20
Human foods	20
Milk (contains aflatoxin M1, a carcinogen)	0.5

Note: 1 PPB = 1 mg per million grams. (PPB = parts per billion.)