



Reducing residue risks when feeding sugar cane products

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WARNING

Drought increases the risk of unacceptable residues in stock. Risks include contaminated feed, increased intake of contaminated soil, concentration of existing residues as animals lose condition, and many other causes. Refer to Primefact 312 *Drought increases residue risks* and Primefact 311 *Dangers in feeding waste material to livestock* for details before purchasing stockfeed or making feeding decisions.

Introduction

During drought, livestock producers may consider feeding materials not normally used as stock feed. Frost damaged sugar cane and cane tops are examples of these products. See Primefact 314 *Cane tops as cattle fodder*.

If you are considering using sugar cane products as a stockfeed, take precautions to ensure that this use does not result in your livestock developing unacceptable chemical residues.

Minimising the risks

Before offering sugar cane products to your stock, satisfy yourself that it does not contain unacceptable levels of chemical residues.

1. Obtain a fodder vendor declaration or ask questions to determine:
 - details of all chemicals applied to the crop
 - its potential exposure to other chemicals through spray drift

- the possible presence of persistent organochlorine (OC) chemicals in the soil of the paddock from which it was harvested.
2. Use this information to assess the risk of the material containing unacceptable residues.
 3. If the information indicates a possible chemical residue risk, have specific testing done to determine the level of any chemicals of concern.

Vendor declaration

Producers are encouraged to obtain a commodity vendor declaration for all purchased stock feeds. This is a requirement for producers with an on-farm QA program such as Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) or Cattlecare. It also ensures that you can best answer questions on the National Vendor Declarations for sheep and cattle when selling stock.

Residue risks

There are three main potential sources of chemical residues in freshly harvested fodder: chemicals applied, spray drift and contaminated soil.

Chemicals applied to the growing crop

Determine what chemical treatments, if any, were applied to the crop. If treatments were applied, were they done in accordance with label directions and were withholding periods properly observed?

Spray drift from surrounding crops

Assess the risk of the sugar cane crop being exposed or potentially exposed to other chemical contamination by spray drift.

Inclusion of soil containing persistent organochlorine (OC) chemicals

Cane land in production before June 1985 and cane paddocks where 'mill mud' (a by-product of



the crushing process) has been applied may have OC contamination. Inclusion of OC contaminated soil at the time of harvest and processing will result in OC residues in the fodder.

The risk of OC residues in sugar cane products depends on the OC status of the land from which it was harvested and the way it was harvested:

The risk is lower where the cane was:

- harvested directly with no chance of significant soil contamination – e.g. cut and transferred directly into bins by a cane or forage harvester or
- grown on land that was never treated with OC chemicals nor top-dressed with mill mud.

The risk is higher where the cane was:

- chopped onto the ground and at risk of including soil in the product
and
 - grown on land previously treated with OC, and/or
 - grown on land top-dressed with mill mud (particularly if the application was recent and not thoroughly incorporated into the soil by subsequent ploughing).

Residue testing

The only way to definitively assess if the fodder contains residues of any particular chemical is to have a specific test done for that chemical at an accredited laboratory.

Further information

If in doubt about the likelihood of chemical residues in fodder, contact your livestock or veterinary adviser. They can help with the interpretation of test results and information contained in vendor declarations, as well as providing general advice on residue prevention and nutrition.

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (January 2007). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of New South Wales Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.

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