

HOT NEWS

WATCH OUT FOR MOLD FEEDING INSECTS

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Hopefully flood-damaged grain has been dried or disposed of by now. However, the risk for storage insects, especially mold feeding insects remains high for the remainder of the storage season. Molds spores are a favorite food for mold feeding insects such as the hairy fungus beetles and foreign grain beetles. The combination of warm temperatures and numerous mold sources has resulted in a steady increase in these storage pests. Although these insects do not directly damage homes, grain or bite people, they will become a nuisance pest in and around flooded structures and nearby grain storage facilities.

Mold feeding insects thrive in warm moist organic matter, and some mold feeding beetles, especially like mold species that produce aflatoxin. For example, aflatoxin production by *A. flavus*, a favorite

of Hairy fungus beetles, occurs when equilibrium MC exceeds 85% and grain temperatures range from 54° to 104°F. Both conditions will exist around previous flooded residential and business structures (especially grain elevators).

Under normal storage conditions, fungus feeding beetles may be found indoors or outdoors in places where grains or other food products are stored under conditions favorable for mold to grow. Flood-damaged grain is even better, and even when dried, mold spores and aflatoxins will persist. The presence of mold feeding insects is an excellent indicator that grains may have been flood-damaged and/or are going out of condition. For the remainder of this storage season, be on the lookout for mold feeding pests in grain samples.



Hairy fungus beetle



Foreign grain beetle