

Proper disposal of flood-damaged grain

by Jim Crawford

Sudden and unexpected flooding can have many detrimental consequences to a farming operation. One of these is when we are unable to empty grain bins before they flood. After the water recedes, we are left with the question of what to do with the grain in the bin.

Flood-damaged grain is considered adulterated grain because of the potential for contaminants contained in the flood water. The flooded grain should not be blended with dry grain and should be destroyed. Under the Food Safety Modernization Act, it is illegal for flooded grain to enter the market either blended or as livestock feed. Before removing any grain, take pictures and get an accurate measurement of how much grain is damaged in case there are any future programs that may compensate for the damaged grain. If the grain is sealed, check with FSA before you do anything with it.

The clean, dry grain from the top of the bin can be removed. Water will usually only wick up about a foot above the maximum water level, so that will allow you to estimate the amount of undamaged grain in the bin. Since the grain is considered contaminated, regulations for its disposal fall under the direction of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources who have specified three legal means for the disposal of flood-damaged grain:

- Composting
- A registered landfill
- Surface application to fields

Most producers will opt for the third option. The grain cannot be piled or windrowed on the field but must be spread thinly, such as with a fertilizer or manure spreader. Grain should be applied at no more than 146 bushels per acre for corn and 50 bushels per acre for soybeans. There is no need to incorporate the grain into the soil. When spreading, keep a record of how many bushels and over how many acres you applied the grain. When spreading the grain, you should maintain the same minimum setback distances used for the

land application of manure as found in MU Extension publication [G9219, Setback Distances for Land Application of Manure](#), and Table 1 in this document.

Because the grain will tend to sprout, we would suggest spreading damaged corn on fields that will be planted to soybeans and damaged soybeans spread on fields that will be planted to corn. This will allow for better chemical control of volunteer plants.

Table 1. Recommended separation distances for land application of bio solids.

Type of sensitive setback area	Separation distance
Wells, abandoned wells, sinkholes, caves and losing streams*	300 feet
Permanently flowing and intermittent streams	100 feet
Privately owned impoundment (ponds) not used as a water supply*	100 feet
Property lines*	50 feet
Neighboring houses or public use areas*	150 feet

*Required by Missouri regulations (Department of Natural Resources, Clean Water Commission, Chapter 8, Design Guide (10 CSR 20-8.020)).

