

Toxin Reviews &gt;

Volume 27, 2008 - Issue 3-4

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Research Article

# COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF AFLATOXIN CONTROL METHODS: ECONOMIC INCENTIVES

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Pages 203-225 | Received 10 Apr 2008, Accepted 24 Jun 2008, Published online: 02 Dec 2008

Cite this article <https://doi.org/10.1080/15569540802393690>

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## Abstract

Multiple sectors within U.S. crop industries—growers, elevators, handlers/shellers, processors, distributors, and consumers—are affected by aflatoxin contamination of commodities, and have the potential to control it using methods developed at both the pre- and postharvest levels. While methods exist, adoption is low; thus, we seek to investigate ways to improve aflatoxin control methods; and economic incentives within a cottonseed sectors bear the brunt of cottonseed tree nuts, tree nut growers may have no economic incentive to apply preharvest aflatoxin control.

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Postharvest control options are limited and in many cases are not yet approved by the EPA or FDA. The Kaldor-Hicks efficiency criterion may help to resolve this economic dilemma. If this criterion was to be applied to aflatoxin control in peanut and tree nuts, growers could be compensated by shellers/handlers to adopt preharvest aflatoxin control methods. However, the control methods must be cost-effective for this compensatory arrangement to work. We present three case studies of cost-effectiveness to reduce aflatoxin contamination in different crops: AF36 in cottonseed, Bt in corn, and Afla-Guard in peanuts.

Keywords: aflatoxin control methods biocontrol Bt corn economic incentives cost-effectiveness

## Acknowledgment

This work was funded in part by a cooperative agreement from the Aflatoxin Elimination Workgroup, a partnership of the USDA Agricultural Research Services (ARS) and U.S. crop industries. The authors wish to thank the following individuals for their insights and information on aflatoxin costs in commodities affected by aflatoxin: Hamed Abbas, Julie Adams, Larry Antilla, Paul Bertels, Bruce Campbell, Peter Cotty, Joseph Dorner, Bruce Hammond, Merle Jacobs, Robert Klein, Marshall Lamb, Russell Molyneux, Jane Robens, Howard Valentine, Phillip Wakelyn, and Thomas Wedegaertner.

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