

COCERAL

Presentation for EFSA 35th StaDG-ER Meeting

*“COCERAL Mycotoxin management report” –
edition 2025*

11 June 2026
Granada, Spain

COCERAL mycotoxins management report (scope)

COCERAL is considered as the voice representing the European (and UK) cereals, oilseeds, pulses, olive oil, oils and fats, animal feed and agrosupply trade. COCERAL members act in the food and feed supply chain, both at the level of agrosupply distributors and grain traders (see next slide).

This report aims to show the results of a **biannual** survey on the management of mycotoxins carried out by COCERAL members, and it highlights their best practices in preventing and controlling mycotoxins development in grains.

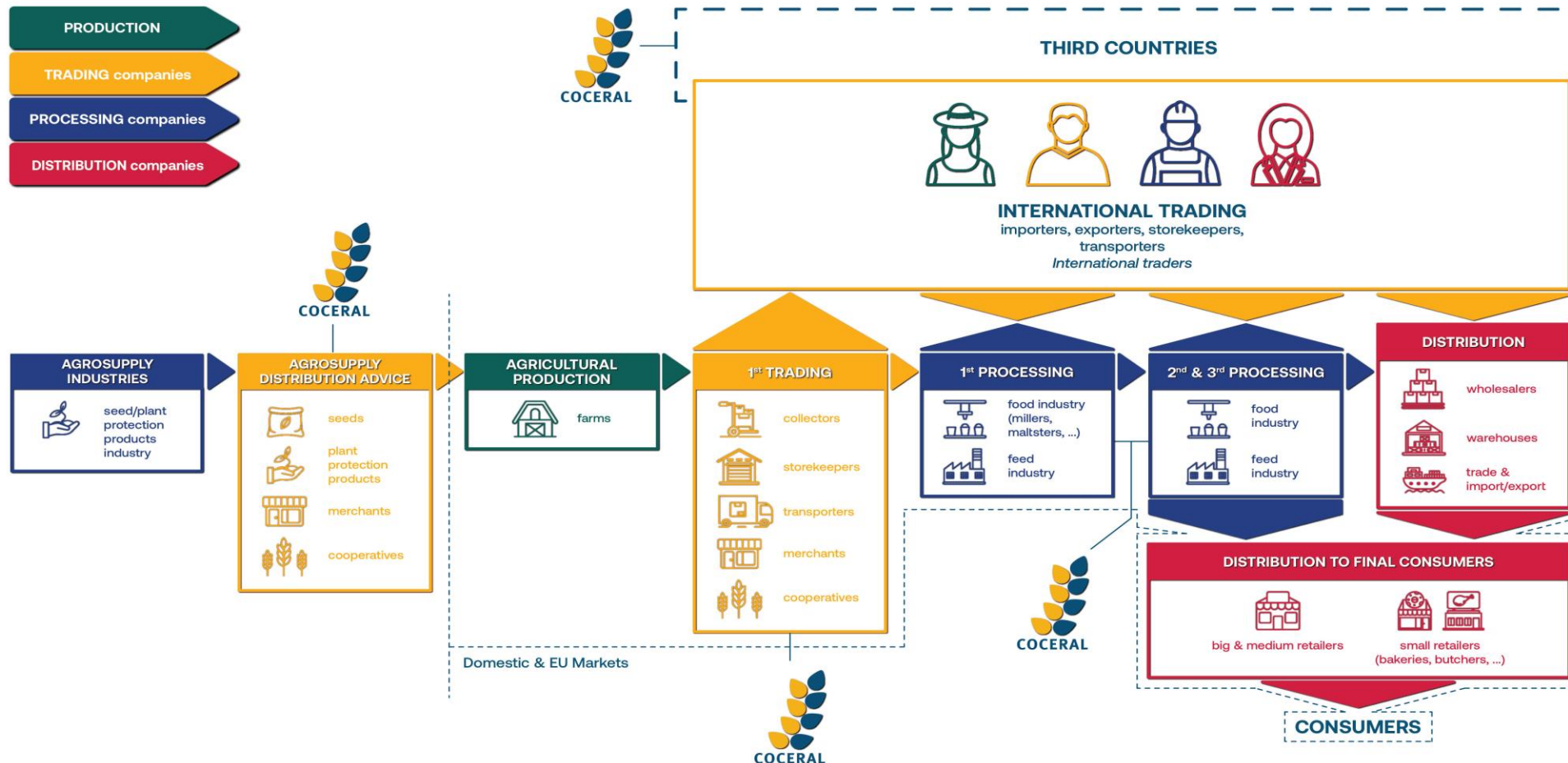
Mycotoxins are a major concern for the food and feed supply chain and having an overview of management measures implemented by grain traders and agrosupply distributors, within European Member States and the United Kingdom, is essential to support advocacy actions undertaken by COCERAL.



COCERAL's relation with the food and feed value chain

FOOD & FEED CHAIN

COCERAL Representation



COCERAL mycotoxins management report (how it is done)

• Population of concern

- The operators who are consulted, and reply to the survey, are members of national associations of COCERAL, which are
 - European and UK agrosupply distributors
 - European and UK grain collecting/importing/trading companies

• Enquiry setting

- Operators are consulted via an online questionnaire*
- Last enquiry lasted 6 months (from October 2025 to April 2026), to allow a wider participation and representation
- The COCERAL Secretariat receive, save and process the replies

• Method design

- The replies sent by the operators are assumed to be representative for the whole country they represent.
- Each participant specified the volume of cereals traded in crop years 2024 and 2025; the total volumes mentioned representing XX% of the total volume of cereals traded in those countries.



COCERAL mycotoxins management report (how it is done)

● Calculation steps and formula

- The reply to each question was weighted by the total contributions received for that country thus returning the country's-dependent mean reply: R_C (%)
- The volume of grains traded within each country was divided by the volume of grains traded within all the countries participating in the survey, thus obtaining W_C .
- The overall result, R (%), was obtained as the average of all member states-dependent mean (R_C) weighted by W_{MS} (weight of the member state)

$$R = \sum_{MST} R_C * W_C$$

R (%) = overall result

R_C = mean reply for member state (%)

$W_C = V_C / V_{all}$; where V_C = Volume traded in the participant country

V_{all} = Total volume of countries participating to the survey



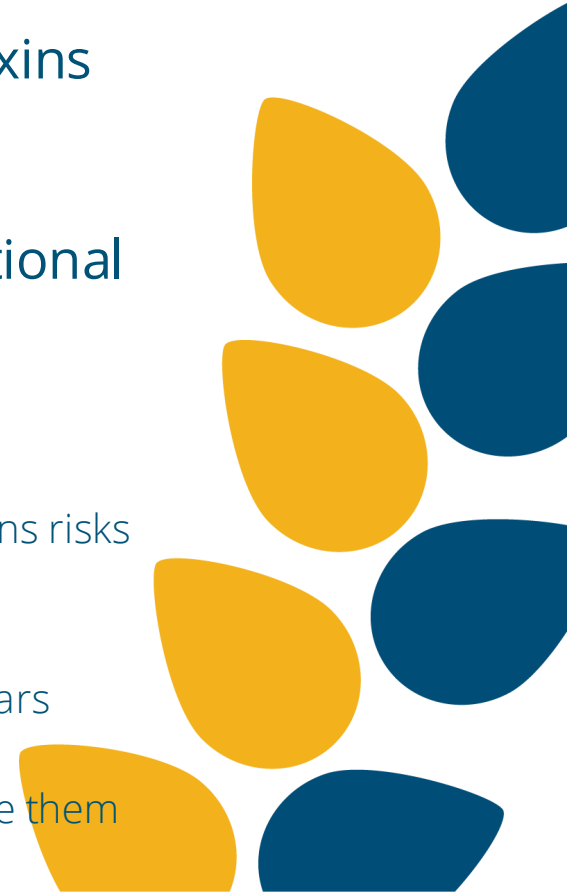
COCERAL mycotoxins management report (how it is done)

- The COCERAL Secretariat received 37 replies (+ 4 from agrosupply members) from: Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain, the Netherlands, and UK, covering a total volume of traded grains of around 86 million tonnes (equivalent to more than 27% of total EU+UK market share)
- For comparison, last edition of the report (2023) received 19 replies, covering a total volume of traded grains of 36 million tonnes (equivalent to 16% of total EU market share)
- *Key importance of the online questionnaire (easier for members to answer and easier for the Secretariat team to process the answers), this led to higher participation (In all terms: number of respondents, wider EU geographical coverage, higher tonnage represented!)*

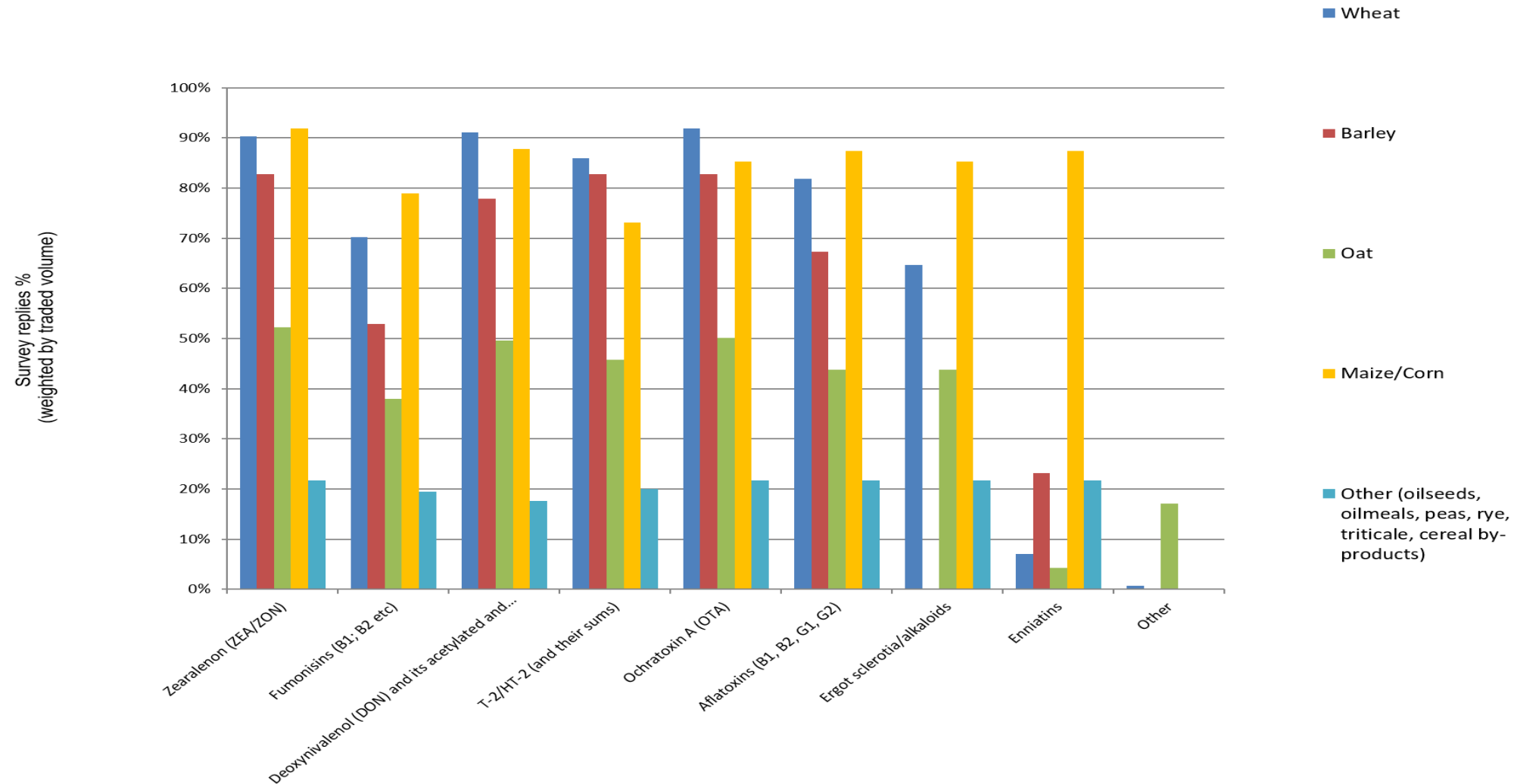


COCERAL mycotoxins management report 2025 (main items)

- It explains (for a general audience) what mycotoxins are and what are the risks for human and animal health
- It provides detailed info on how EFSA works and how the EU regulatory framework (and how decision to introduce new regulatory levels are taken) works, plus lists the CURRENT EU regulatory levels for mycotoxins in food and feed
- It explains the agrosupply distributors' contribution to prevention of mycotoxins risk in the field*
- It lists sampling and testing practices (when, where, on what commodities/mycotoxins, and how) pursued by grain collectors and international traders**
- It lists the answers provided by our members to a series of qualitative open questions, meant to assess:
 - The measures taken by our members (and/or asked by customers) to prevent and mitigate mycotoxins risks in operations
 - The measures taken by suppliers to prevent and mitigate mycotoxins risks in the field
 - how members think that the effect of climate might impact mycotoxins occurrence in the next 10 years
 - the constraints that (considering a possible increase in occurrence and co-occurrence of different mycotoxins in cereals and oilseeds) current or new EU regulatory levels for such mycotoxins will pose them



Most frequently tested mycotoxins (crop years 2024 and 2025)



Sampling methods

- Main used is the CEN method EN/ISO 24333:2009, but there has been a drastic increase in use of internal methods (from 3% to 68%) since last report (also contractual methods (such as GAFTA 124, and FOSFA) are used although less than in 2023)
- Most of our members declared to adopt the aflatoxins protocol by EFISC-GTP and/or GMP+ (as they are certified according to one or both food and/or feed safety management schemes)
- Collectors mainly test at harvest, in store but also at loading before transport (testing before harvest, or at delivery to first processing industry, is done only to a minor extent).
- When importing and trading within the EU and/or UK, testing tends to take place more frequently at loading before transport (e.g. loading of trucks/vessels/barges, etc.) but also (to a minor extent) in store.



Sampling constraints

● Constraints experienced in sample taking:

- Strong heterogeneity and inhomogeneity of cargo and mycotoxin distribution
- High variability of results (especially for ergot contamination)
- Difficulty obtaining representative incremental samples under real conditions
- Large sample size required (e.g. for Aflatoxin testing)
- Logistical and safety limitations affecting sampling operations at grain terminals (limited time during loading/unloading operations; access restrictions (e.g. sealed trucks, vessels))



Testing methods

- When carrying out mycotoxin analysis internally, operators use mostly bandage kits, o such as E.L.I.S.A. (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay) semi-quantitative and quantitative tests
- When rapid analysis is required, most collectors and traders also use external analysis. However, external analysis is also used to validate analysis carried out internally, or to complement for missing data, for example when internal testing equipment is not available
- Most external laboratories used by our members are accredited according to the international standard ISO/IEC 17025:2017
- Most tests carried out for our members by external laboratories is done by High-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) and, to a minor extent, Gas chromatography (GC).



Impact of controls received by our members in the framework of the OCR*

- Most of our members, which received an official control in the framework of the official control regulation for mycotoxins in foodstuffs, declared no significant structural constraints overall, and sampling processes generally clear
- Nevertheless, some of our members expressed concerns related to the transparency, timeliness, and reliability of official control procedures:
 - Limited transparency in both processes and outcomes, reporting delays exceeding six months in some cases, and results that were at times unclear or difficult to interpret
 - Improper sample storage, false positive findings associated with deficiencies in sample preparation and handling, occasional laboratory delays linked to workload, and operational timing constraints during inspections
 - This eventually makes it more difficult for our members to take timely corrective measures for the respective batch.



Measures taken by our members to prevent and mitigate mycotoxins risks in operations

- Use of preventive measures, such as Good agricultural practices, pre-harvest testing, and supplier approval
- Use of control measures, such as risk-based testing, appropriate drying and storage, and full traceability
- Use of corrective measures such as segregation, restriction, and recall of non-compliant lots.



Measures declared by our members' suppliers to prevent and mitigate mycotoxins risks in the field

- Implementation of good agricultural practices, including crop rotation, soil management, and the use of resistant varieties
- Application of plant protection and pest management measures, including approved fungicides
- Sampling, testing, and monitoring at pre-harvest, harvest and delivery
- Adoption of an end-to-end risk management approach covering the chain from field to delivery



Which mycotoxins might become more prevalent in the future (next 10 years), also in relationship with effect of climate change?

- Overall, our members expect climate change, and changing weather patterns, will increase the relevance of several mycotoxins in the future:
 - Aflatoxins (especially Aflatoxin B1) were most frequently identified as a key concern, particularly in maize and in relation to higher temperatures and humidity
 - Fusarium toxins remain a major issue, notably DON, ZEA, and T-2/HT-2 toxins, with expectations of increased prevalence under more variable and wetter weather conditions
 - Ochratoxin A (OTA) was also highlighted as a recurring concern, with moderate increases expected in some cases
 - Fumonisin were identified as an additional risk, especially for imports from warmer regions and depending on origin and climatic conditions
 - Ergot was noted as an increasing concern in a wider range of crops, not only rye, potentially linked to drier summers, greater weed pressure, and restrictions on weed control



Which constraints are experienced or expected when new regulatory levels for mycotoxins are going to be proposed/voted in the European Union?

- Stricter regulatory limits, including possible zero-tolerance approaches, could impose significant operational and commercial constraints on the sector
- Mycotoxin occurrence is influenced by weather conditions and agricultural practices. Climate change results in more extreme weather conditions, which in turn results in more volatile mycotoxin occurrence. This influences the accuracy of risk assessments and mitigation measures. This, in combination with lower thresholds, increases the risk of non-compliant batches
- Advances in analytical methods are also contributing to more detailed and demanding compliance requirements, with respondents anticipating more frequent testing, broader analytical panels, higher sampling rates, increased costs, and longer turnaround times, plus greater segregation needs, more complex logistics, increased contract and claims management
- Importance of risk-based approaches supported by harmonised EU and UK guidance, validated analytical methods, and proportionate regulatory thresholds to safeguard both food and feed safety and the continued viability of agricultural supply chains.



COCERAL mycotoxins management report (date of publication)

- Tentative date of publication: end of June 2026
- Currently under review by members
- A press release will be done, and the new report will be published in the COCERAL website and will be available for everyone interested.





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