

Purdue University

**Purdue e-Pubs**

---

Historical Documents of the Purdue  
Cooperative Extension Service

Department of Agricultural Communication

---

10-10-1996

## Cob Rot Damaged Corn

Charles Woloshuk

*Purdue University*, [woloshuk@purdue.edu](mailto:woloshuk@purdue.edu)

Don Scott

*Purdue University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/agext>

---

Woloshuk, Charles and Scott, Don, "Cob Rot Damaged Corn" (1996). *Historical Documents of the Purdue Cooperative Extension Service*. Paper 1096.

<https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/agext/1096>

For current publications, please contact the Education Store: <https://mdc.itap.purdue.edu/>

This document is provided for historical reference purposes only and should not be considered to be a practical reference or to contain information reflective of current understanding. For additional information, please contact the Department of Agricultural Communication at Purdue University, College of Agriculture: <http://www.ag.purdue.edu/agcomm>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.



## Task Force

### Cob Rot Damaged Corn

*Charles Woloshuk, Botany and Plant Pathology*

*Don Scott, Botany and Plant Pathology*

Cob rot damage is one of the many reasons why grain inspectors dock the price paid on a load of corn. There has been a steady increase of cob rot damage over the past few years in parts of Indiana. Cob rot is primarily caused by a preharvest disease known as *Diplodia* ear rot.

*Diplodia* ear rot occurs primarily in the western half of the state. When infection occurs within two weeks after silking, husks prematurely become bleached or straw colored, and entire ears are white to grayish or grayish brown, shrunken, and lightweight. Lightweight ears generally stand upright with the inner husks adhering tightly to each other. Black specks (pycnidia) may be scattered on the husks, cobs, and sides of kernels. Ears infected later in the growing season generally have a somewhat uniform whitish to grayish mold growth over and between the kernels starting at the base of the ear and progressing towards the tip. Infected kernel tips are discolored. Some isolates of the causal fungus may cause vivipary (premature germination).

*Diplodia* ear rot is enhanced by dry weather prior to silking followed by wet conditions at and just after silking. Hybrids may differ in their susceptibility to *Diplodia* ear rot. Ears are most susceptible to this disease during the first 21 days after silking. *Diplodia* ear rot is more severe where corn follows corn with reduced-tillage practices. The disease is usually not severe with crop rotation or clean plowing of corn residues.

Proper storage at or below 15% moisture prevents further development of this disease. Long term storage is not recommended because of the damage to kernel integrity and the increased amounts of foreign matter (cob and broken kernels) in the grain. There are no known mycotoxins produced by the *Diplodia* fungus in the United States, therefore feeding the grain to livestock is possible, keeping in mind that the nutrient value of the grain may have diminished.

*Grain Quality Fact Sheets can be accessed on-line through:*  
*World Wide Web (Mosaic or Netscape) URL address:*  
*<http://hermes.ecn.purdue.edu:8001/server/purdue/acspub.html>*  
*(select) Grain Quality*  
*or*  
*Almanac:*  
*send e-mail to: [almanac@ecn.purdue.edu](mailto:almanac@ecn.purdue.edu)*  
*message: send grain guide*  
*or send grain catalog*  
*or send grain factsheet#12 (for example)*  
*or send acsonline GQ-12*