



Agronomic Tip: Specific Timing for Straight Cutting Oats

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Premium Oat Markets

For the premium quality oat horse and milling markets, weathering or discolouration prior to harvest is a major issue. The horse market demands a white, bright oat with no discolouration. The milling market requires an oat with no discolouration of the groat (the core of the grain beneath the hulls). Oats that have dark tips on the hulls are not acceptable for the horse markets, but may be acceptable for milling if the groats are not discoloured.

Research by John Rowsell at the New Liskeard Agriculture Research Station found the following:

1. Colour, whiteness and brightness begin to deteriorate with delayed oat harvest.
2. The rate of weathering and discolouration is greater when swathed than with direct harvest.
3. Using a fungicide did not affect the amount of weathering.

If the harvest weather looks to be unfavourable, you are better to harvest grain when it reaches 16% moisture and artificially dry it down to 13-14%. Waiting for the crop to dry in the field will risk weathering damage. Grain at 13-14% moisture will maintain its food quality and make it safe for storage. The \$5 to \$10 per tonne drying charge can be easily lost if harvest is delayed, resulting in lower grades.

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