

AF36: The Proven Solution for Aflatoxin Control in Agriculture

National Awareness Campaign Launches as Peak Growing Season Begins

PHOENIX, AZ, UNITED STATES, April 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With the growing season underway, the Arizona Cotton Research and Protection Council (ACRPC) is urging farmers to take action against aflatoxin contamination by applying AF36, a biological solution that reduces risks in

crops, feed, and food production. Backed by over 25 years of research and field success, AF36 is an integral tool for improving soil health, food safety, and economic sustainability for farmers and dairy producers.



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Aflatoxin contamination is serious and impacts not just individual farms but the entire supply chain... AF36 is a game-changer.”

Mark Killian, Director, ACRPC

To further extend the reach of this vital information, ACRPC is launching a nationwide campaign highlighting AF36's success and urgency during the critical pre-harvest period.

Mark Killian, Director of ACRPC, is a longtime leader in agricultural policy and farming, having served as Director of the Arizona Department of Agriculture. Killian

emphasized the significance of AF36 in protecting Arizona's food supply and economy: “Having grown up in a multi-generational farming family and dedicated my career to agricultural policy, I understand the challenges our producers face. Aflatoxin contamination is serious and impacts not just individual farms but the entire supply chain. I've seen firsthand how devastating aflatoxin contamination can be for growers, dairy producers, and consumers alike. The Arizona Cotton Research and Protection Council has been at the forefront of addressing this challenge, and AF36 is a game-changer. Backed by decades of research, AF36 is a necessity for farmers looking to protect their crops, their herds, and their livelihoods. I strongly encourage producers to adopt this proven technology to strengthen food safety and ensure long-term sustainability in our industry.”

Aflatoxin contamination is a persistent issue for growers and dairy producers, as it can severely impact feed quality, milk safety, and overall food supply integrity.

“Once we saw aflatoxin levels rising in milk, we knew we had to act,” said Niles Jennett, a dairy consultant with Progressive Dairy Solutions. “We started incorporating AF36 into our strategies, and the results were clear—aflatoxin contamination started to decrease. This is not just about feed safety for cattle but also about improving food quality in nuts, corn, and other crops.”

Dairy producers routinely test for aflatoxin to meet regulatory standards, as contaminated milk must be discarded, leading to major financial losses. AF36 plays a direct role in reducing risks at the source by improving soil microbial balance and lowering pathogen exposure in feed.

Aflatoxin is a major concern for corn silage production, especially in hot, dry regions. Recent USDA research confirms that field-applied biocontrol strains, including AF36, effectively displace aflatoxin-producing fungi from soil to harvest and beyond, significantly reducing contamination risk in dairy feed. The study found that treated fields maintained aflatoxin levels below 10 ppb, reinforcing AF36’s value in long-term, area-wide aflatoxin management.

Pistachio growers in Arizona—the nation’s second-largest producer—are particularly vulnerable during peak fungal growth periods between June and August. Jim Cook, a pistachio grower in Cochise County, AZ, has relied on AF36 for over 16 years. “AF36 is the only product we use,” said Cook. “We’ve worked closely with Dr. Peter Cotty and the Arizona Cotton Council for years. The results speak for themselves—every load we export meets the strictest safety standards.”

Cook also noted the industry-wide commitment to AF36 within his operations. “No nuts are brought to our processing facility unless AF36 was used by the growers,” he emphasized. “I’ve



Crops most susceptible to aflatoxin include cotton, corn, figs, and tree nuts such as almonds and pistachios.



As a fungus coated on a sterilized sorghum seed, AF36 serves as both a carrier and nutrient source for growth.

never tried any of the competitor's products because I've never had a reason to—AF36 works.”

AF36 Prevail is a biopesticide that outcompetes aflatoxin-producing strains of *Aspergillus flavus*, significantly reducing contamination in crops such as corn, cotton, figs, pistachios, and almonds.

□ **How It Works:** The non-toxic spores from AF36 displace harmful fungi in the soil by competing for nutrients and resources, lowering aflatoxin contamination at the source.

□ **Spore Yield:** Long-term lab tests confirm that AF36 Prevail produces an average of 6 billion spores per gram—140% more than the minimum standard of 2.5 billion spores per gram.

□ **Soil Persistence & Multi-Season Impact:** USDA research indicates that AF36 spores accumulate in treated soil over multiple seasons, increasing their ability to displace harmful fungi in subsequent years.

□ **Timing & Application:** To ensure maximum effectiveness, AF36 should be applied before fungal populations peak, ideally before mid-June, to establish beneficial fungal dominance before aflatoxin producers spread.

ACRPC's advertising campaign, which launched in March 2025, will focus on:

□ Educating how AF36 improves soil health and reduces aflatoxin contamination.

□ Highlighting research and testimonials that showcase AF36's effectiveness.

□ Encouraging adoption across key agricultural sectors, including cotton, corn, and nut production.

Research shows that *Aspergillus flavus* fungal populations peak between June and August. Applying AF36 before the peak ensures maximum efficacy, as beneficial spores establish dominance before harmful fungi can take hold.

“Our best approach to reducing pathogen exposure is to lower their competitive edge,” added Jennett. “AF36 is one of the best examples of quality microbes competing against harmful pathogens. If we continue investing in this research, we could see even broader applications in sustainable agriculture and food safety.”

In many instances, field populations of aflatoxin-producing fungi have been reduced up to 95% following multiple years of treatment with AF36 Prevail. This directly leads to reduced aflatoxin levels in the crop and soil. Ongoing research is examining how enhancing beneficial fungi populations in the soil can further reduce the presence of harmful mycotoxins.

"AF36 is a field-proven strategy for reducing aflatoxin," said Killian. "It's a platform for the future. Developed by growers, for growers—it delivers results you can count on."

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About the Arizona Cotton Research and Protection Council

The Arizona Cotton Research and Protection Council is dedicated to advancing agricultural research and solutions that benefit cotton, corn, figs, and tree nuts such as almonds and pistachios. With a focus on sustainability, innovation, and grower support, ACRPC leads initiatives to improve soil health, reduce contamination risks, and ensure a safer food supply. To learn more about AF36, call us at 602-438-0059 or visit us at <https://cotton.az.gov/af36-program>.

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