**Maintenance Tip: Leaning Silos**

**Presented as a Public Service for the purposes of Farm Safety**

**LET’S TALK SILOS - SILO SENSE - COMMON SENSE**

**For many years, tower silos have stood – like soldiers standing at attention – protecting farmers valuable feed crop – protecting it from not only spoilage but against contamination and other negative outside sources. Tower Silos have performed so well and for so long that often little attention is given to their value and importance on the farm, or to their maintenance.**

Like most mornings, the farmer’s son headed out of the house first for morning milking. As he walked to the barn, he counted two silos (last night there were three silos standing behind the barn). He turned around, went to the house and told his dad that one of the silos was gone. His dad questioned the number of beers he had the night before. But on their next trip out, they both realized one of the silos was gone. It fell away from the barn, thankfully, and laid on the ground like a big sausage. The silo had been filled recently. It was an old silo and recommended maintenance had not been done.

The first call went to the silo service man in the area. The second went to the silo company. Within a few hours, a plan and date for cleanup were set. On that day, the 16’x70’ silo was cleaned up with the help of neighbors, the silo company and a backhoe by 1:00 PM. The debris was separated and disposed of and the feed was piled and covered. The next year, a new silo stood in its place.

In some cases, a silo fails in a matter of minutes. Other times it moves slowly and may stabilize. In all cases, it’s time for a professional. Sometimes, it’s better to let the silo fall and clean it up. If buildings are in its path, it’s better to stabilize it.

What do you do? First, call a professional. Some smaller silos have been stabilized with poles propped against them. Sometimes cabling the silo stops it. Other times, it takes cables and a concrete sheave to stabilize them. Depending on how much the silo leans, modifications will be needed on the unloading equipment. Above all, extreme caution needs to be used. Your best resource is a professional.

Before feed removal can begin on a leaning silo, a plan for getting the structure down needs to be developed. Sometimes it can come down with a silo scaffold. Other times, it takes a crane and man-basket. Always, Always, Always, safety is the major consideration.

**Your tower silo is protecting your valuable feed. It needs to be in top condition to do its job. You can’t expect it to do its job if it’s not maintained. Common Sense tells us to have the silo inspected periodically and perform the recommended maintenance.**

 Disclaimer

These articles are contributed by Bruce Johnson of Wisconsin Silos. They are meant to be informative and fun to read. They are not all inclusive. Your best source of information is the International Silo Association Operator’s manual or call the International Silo Association at 610-607-3622.