**Maintenance Tip: Silo Chutes**

**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.**

First, shake the power cord to get the loose feed down, then hope there’s not an updraft. Climb over the conveyor and under the canvas. Make sure your hooded sweatshirt is tied tight and head up the dirty chute. About halfway up, open your eyes and lean back to rest. Oops, can’t see, head back down for a flashlight.

Or – climb the ladder next to the silo chute, put your hat on, step through the chute door and close the door to stop the updraft. This chute has windows and a poly chute dormer for light. These doorsteps are out farther so feed doesn’t build up so easily on them. These doors are locked shut. Where’s the power cord? This silo has got cord looping. There’s a clean chute system or it is poly lined, poured concrete or made of staves. There’s no place for the feed to catch on the back. If there is a center drop unloader, check it out at deer hunting and – See you next spring! (Not recommended, but normally is the case.)

Who wants to climb a dirty chute? You don’t have to.

Obviously, silo chutes do wear out. There are three concerns; feed is being wasted, a roof that is adjacent to the silo gets covered with feed and wears out quickly, and it’s not safe to lean back on a chute that is junk.

What’s to fix? If it’s structurally sound, a liner can be installed. Also, a clean chute system will keep the feed confined. If it’s not safe, it has to come off and be replaced by a new “bolt-on” chute.

Remember, during filling season, always, always, always **VENTILATE** the silo and chute before entering. Silo gasses produced can be lethal.

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

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.