**Maintenance Tip: Unloader Service**

**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.**

About mid-February, the silo walls have frozen up pretty good. It’s warmed up, so now it’s time to check things out. Grab the remote control for the unloader and head up with a scraper. The couple of inches of frozen feed come off the wall pretty easily. The chunks break up without a lot of problem. Now, climb above the feed in the chute and watch the unloader run. About three trips around and all the frozen feed is down. The walls are clean, so head back down.

Whooa !! We’ve got a problem. You can’t get out of the silo. With nothing to take the feed away, the chute filled up with feed. Jumping on it just packs it tighter. Good thing it’s not too cold. You’re going to have to wait till Ma comes out to get you out.

On new unloaders today, remote control switches or unloader disconnects in the silo are standard. These are vital when servicing the unloader because it allows you to lock out the power from inside the silo. It also allows you to observe unloader operation from the chute. This is a good-sense safety and convenience feature.

But, remember, when going up the silo to service the unloader by yourself, tell Ma what you’re doing and if you’re not down in an hour, have her check on you. If you fill the chute up, she is going to give you a hard time, but that’s better than spending a half-day in the silo wondering how you’re going to get out.

**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. When servicing the unloader practice common sense safety and let someone know you’re in the silo. Better yet, practice the buddy system and have someone with you on the ground at all times when servicing the unloader.**

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.