**Maintenance Tip: Feed Distribution**

**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.**

Consider an egg. There’s a lot of mass held by the thin shell, yet it performs well because the shell bears the pressure evenly. Drop it and it fails; simply too much pressure in one place for it to stand.

Consider a coffee can without the lid or bottom. It has the strength to hold about anything you want to put in it. Now squeeze it between your hands. It doesn’t take a lot of uneven pressure and it becomes way out of shape.

Consider your silo. It is designed with the capability for taking massive amounts of pressure. But if that pressure is placed on it unevenly, like an egg or a can, it can be deformed or split open. That’s one reason why feed should be distributed evenly in your silo.

Another reason is that evenly distributed feed packs better. This allows you to put more feed in your silo. This packing eliminates the air faster and promotes better fermentation. With an evenly packed silo, your silo unloader performs better.

Remember, in a 20’ silo, the outer 3’ has over one half the volume. So, it’s important to get the heavier feeds out to the wall where the capacity is. These heavier feeds pack better and keep better out near the wall.

One option for distribution is to side-fill the silo with a spreader. This places the feed in multiple piles in the structure. These multiple piles pack evenly and minimize feed separation. This, again, promotes better fermentation.

The other option for distribution is mechanical. This is accomplished by modifying the silo unloader and using it to distribute. This mechanical distribution directs the feed to the outside wall where the silo’s volume is the greatest. The lighter feeds tend to move to the center where they keep better. The consistent pack provides for smooth unloader operation.

Is distribution important? Yes. It’s good for the silo, it gives you more capacity, improves feed quality and provides greater unloader efficiency. During filling, remember to check on the performance of your distributor.

**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 filled properly. Always check on the performance of your distributor and remember: ---- never, never, never fill your silo to one side.**

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 SiloAssociation Operator’s manual or call the International Silo Association at 610-607-3622