**Maintenance Tip: Fill Pipes**

**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.**

A call came during filling; “I touched the blower and got a jolt that set me on my fanny”. (Not his exact words)**. “**What’s going on?” Another call came; “I just blew my PVC pipe apart. What happened?”

As a youngster, during winter, did you ever take a balloon and rub it on the carpet? Magic! You could get it to stick on the wall. Well, not really magic, it’s static electricity. Because PVC pipe doesn’t conduct electricity, when enough static charge is generated, you can get a good shock off of it or it can blow apart. That’s why PVC pipe carries a warning sign not to use with feeds below 45% moisture. Steel pipes must be used with these feeds.

Isn’t duct tape great! Sometimes you can find a silo pipe with duct tape in more than five places. It’s great for a quick fix, but the hole didn’t go away. Eventually you’ll run out of tape and that pipe that was smooth on the inside is now rough and it won’t blow properly.

The flange on steel pipe is just spot-welded. Warnings on the steel pipe read; “Blower pipe flanges are for alignment purposes only. Spreaders, goosenecks and silage guides must be firmly secured to the silo as well as bolted to the blower pipe.” Pipe clamps are recommended every 12-1/2 feet for PVC pipe and every 15 feet for metal pipe.

Pulling pipes up every year is not recommended because both the gooseneck and pipe need to be attached to the silo properly. There are a lot of stories told about pulling pipes up to fill a silo and most

**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. What’s the answer? For best performance, inspect your fill pipe system, make necessary repairs, and use it properly. And remember: ---- never, never, never use PVC pipe to fill your barn with straw or dry hay!**

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.