**Maintenance Tip: Shell Corn in Conventional 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.**

The phone call often comes; “Can I put shell corn in my top unloading silo?” There is no clear-cut answer.

Unless your silo was built specifically for free-flowing materials, it’s not designed to hold them. Compare a standard top unloading stave silo to a bottom unloading stave silo. There is a big difference in the hooping. Free-flowing materials put more outward pressure on the silo wall.

So, what is free-flowing material? Remember the days at the beach? It was great fun to fill a pail with moist sand, then flip it over and build sandcastles. If you want to fill your silo with shell corn, whether it be ground, cracked, rolled or whole, do the same thing.

Pack a five-gallon pail with the corn you plan to put in your silo. Let it stand overnight in the milk house. Flip it over the next morning. If it runs all over the floor, it’s free- flowing.

If putting shell corn in your silo, a silo inspection is recommended. If it’s free-flowing corn, re-hooping is needed. Also if the silo has a surface drive unloader, consideration should be given to the unloader to make sure it will drive properly.

**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 and used properly. And remember; ---- filling a silo with shell corn requires steel pipe and good distribution.**

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.