**Today’s Maintenance Tip: Silo Hoops**

**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 call came in the fall, “One of my silo hoops is broken. Do you think I can fill my silo anyway?” Upon inspection, eight hoops on the bottom of the silo needed replacement. In a stave silo, the hoops hold the structure together. Every hoop put on a silo is there for a reason. When hoops are damaged or broken, they must be replaced.

Every time your silo is filled, its hoops are stressed. After the feed settles and is removed, your silo hoops relax. Is it a good idea to check your silo hoop tensioning? Ye bet, and here’s a simple test. With a hammer, walk around the bottom of your silo and tap the hoops up and down. If they move easily, there is something wrong.

What else do you look for? Check for deterioration, especially in the area inside the chute and below it. To accommodate the door opening, you will find hoop spreaders. These spreaders consist of tie rods and channels. If the channels are located inside the chute, careful inspection is needed. In some cases, these channels may have deteriorated enough that the rods are pulling through them.

Another type of spreader (sling spreader) has vertical angles that hold the tie rods apart at the doors. When the silage cart or tractor bucket knocks these angles out, the spreader collapses. These rods, being loose, become ornaments. They look good, but serve no purpose. If these angles are out or have rusted badly, they must be replaced.

In older poured concrete silos, the exposed rebar across the open door column needs inspection. Wet and feed covered, these chute bars do deteriorate. When these weaken, the structure loses cylindrical strength. If they are badly deteriorated, they may have to be replaced by continuous hoops around the silo.

**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. If the rods or rebar on your silo are showing signs of wear or rusting, you must repair or replace. And remember; never, never, never fill a silo with damaged or broken hoops. If it is an older poured concrete silo with chute bars, check them for deterioration. And remember: ------ If they are bad, fix your silo before filling.**

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.