Silo Safety –

Whole Shell Corn in a Top Unloading Silo

Unless otherwise designed, today’s top unloading silos are designed for non- free flowing materials. When a silo is filled with non-free flowing materials, the feed settles downward which helps dissipate wall pressure. When a silo is filled with free flowing material there is very little settling. As a silo is filled, the wall pressure increases dramatically.

Look at a bottom unloading stave silo and compare the number of hoops to a top unloading stave silo. There are significantly more because of the difference in wall pressure.

So how do you determine if a material is free-flowing? Take a 5 gallon bucket and pack your feed into it. Let it stand in the milkhouse overnight. Next morning, flip it over. If the feed stands in a shape similar to the bucket, it’s not free flowing. If it runs all over the floor, it’s free flowing.

Remember, make sure free-flowing material isn’t put into a silo that’s not designed for it. ***Collapse is a real possibility.***

\*These articles are contributed by Bruce Johnson, President of the International Silo Association (ISA) and other members of the ISA. They are meant to call attention to silo safety. They are not all inclusive. Your best source of information is the International Silo Association’s “Silo Operator’s Manual” which is available on our website at http://silo.org/silo-operators-manual/ . You can also contact us at 1-833-472-7456, info@silo.org or on our Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/InternationalSiloAssocialtion/