

Silo failure

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Structural failures can be the result of several factors, according to the Cornell meeting, including hoop failures, unbalanced loads and stave failure.

Hoops on a new concrete stave silo generally will loosen after the first or two. To remedy this, Dick Guest, Cornell ag engineer, suggested farmers work out an agreement with the silo builder for a follow-up inspection and hoop retensioning.

High speed filling can create a void that can cause a stave to buckle inward. To prevent this, it was suggested a distributor be used and that it be properly adjusted for even filling.

If silage moisture at the time of filling is higher than 65 percent, high volumes of silage acids can cause damage to concrete staves. An inspection of the silo that fell on Bill Gotwals' farm in Oley showed erosion over a large area and one spot where the staves were eaten completely through. He had been putting up "green" silage for a couple of years because of heavy fall rains.

Bill Irish, Cornell ag engineer, offered suggestions for proper maintenance of a concrete stave silo of modern size.

The silo should be inspected during filling and after it is emptied. Check for movement, deterioration, drainage or equipment problems. Simple measurements and careful observations should be recorded and compared with future inspections. From outside, check the vertical with a plumb bob from two directions. If the top is leaning more than 2 percent of the height, one foot in 50 feet, check it again for movement.

The examination should include any bulges or flat spots and their location. Staves can buckle inward, but hoops hold bulges. Move closer to the silo and check for sagging hoops, cracked concrete staves and holes between staves. The bottom six feet has the greatest stress, but all hoops should be tight to keep staves in place.

At the base of the silo, check the foundation. Is it level and sound? Is the concrete cracked or scaling? Is the site dry, poorly drained or bubbling with silage juice? The foundation and its drainage are critical to maintain stability.

Next check the lining, doors, chute, roof,

distributor and unloader. Recommended interior coatings to protect concrete include linseed oil, silicone and asphalt paints, cement plaster and epoxy coatings. Each has its limitations. If silo juice gets behind a coating, it can come off in sheets.

Doors should be sound and tight to keep silage free of air. Some leaks can be reduced with draped sheets of plastic twice the width of the door frame. But don't let them get tangled in the silo unloader.

Check the silo unloader, its supports, cables and winches. Follow manufacturer's recommendations for yearly maintenance for both the silo unloader and the silage distributor. Silage will settle and pack more uniformly if distributed in layers. Ringers of silage make more uniform wall pressures and help to avoid loose pockets in the silage.

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Craft Days open today

LANCASTER — The 25th annual "Craft Days" weekend will be held today and tomorrow, from noon to 5 p.m. at the Pennsylvania Farm Museum of Landis Valley. There will be a three dollar admission charge for adults; those persons over age sixty-five or under twelve will be admitted free.

"Craft Days" is an outdoor festival featuring demonstrations of more than 40 different crafts and activities associated with rural life from 1750 to 1900.

Among participants will be The Getz Brothers, Bill, Bob, and Noah, who will be firing up the Peerless Steam Engine and cutting wooden

shingles. Their mother, Mary, and her granddaughter, will use a dryhouse which the Getz family donated to the Pennsylvania Farm Museum. The Getz family has been demonstrating at "Craft Days" for the past 24 years.

Other "Craft Days" activities range from baking to weathervane making.

Several buildings will be open to the public for the first time during "Craft Days", including a Country Doctor's Office located near the exit and Gift Shop; and Issac Landis Gallery located at the rear of the Issac Landis House. Visitors will also have a chance to see the

Veterinarian's Office, an area open only on special occasions.

A Conestoga Wagon will be driven around the museum grounds today. Another new feature is a display of objects made by students from craft classes offered during March and November at the Pennsylvania Farm Museum.

The Pennsylvania Farm Museum of Landis Valley is located four miles north of Lancaster on Route 272, the Oregon Pike.

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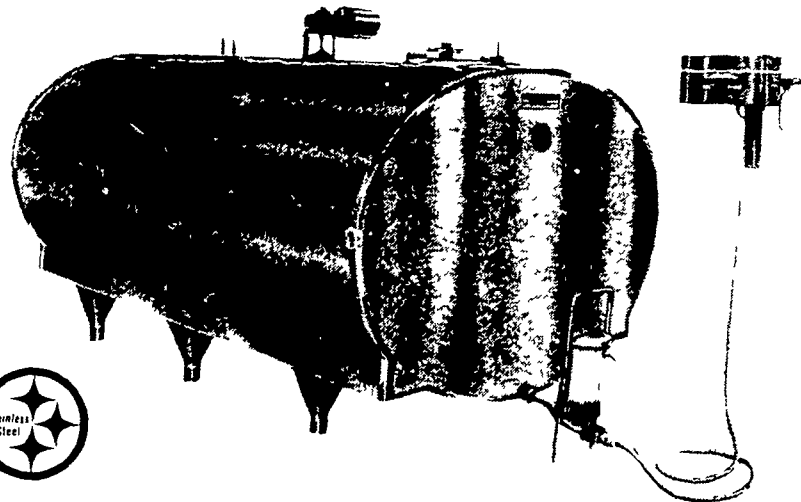
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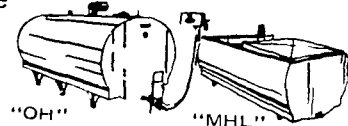
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