

Filling A Silo Is Dangerous Job



HAPPENINGS

Saddlebusters 4-H Club

For the last two months, the Saddlebusters 4-H Club has been busy. The club held its monthly meeting at the Bald Eagle Grange on Monday, April 19 at 7 p.m.

The club learned about at the Leadership Workshop held by County Council. Upcoming dates the club is concerned with are May 30- Annette Fry's trail ride; June 1- identification sheets due to the extension office; June 11- workshop at the Lazy-E, Warriors Mark; June 18 and 19- overnight workshop at the Lazy-E, Warriors Mark; and July 30- district horse show.

The club discussed Earth Day, and decided to participate in "Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful." The club committed itself to a morning of picking trash on May 8. Thirteen members took part in the environmental activity.

On May 17, the club met at the Bald Eagle Grange. The upcoming calendar of events were discussed. New business included the decision to purchase T-shirts. Anyone interested should contact Heidi Harpster (814) 632-5925.

The club also needs members to work in the concession stand at roundup. If you are available, contact Alisa Lang at (814) 632-8604.

The meeting ended with the reminder that project books must be completed by June 11.

If you are interested in joining 4-H, we encourage you to do so. If you have any questions, contact the extension office at (814) 643-1660.

Indiana County 4-H

Three Indiana County 4-H clubs have been named recipients of grants from the National 4-H Council. The Indiana County Clubs are the only groups from Pennsylvania to receive funding.

The Marion Center Handy Helpers Sewing Club won a \$1,000

grant from the Metropolitan Life Foundation for a "Youth in Action/Community Service Grant Promotion." This grant requires the club youth leadership to provide the idea and major planning for the community service program.

Club President Jessica Griffith coordinated the grant with assistance from leaders Leanne Griffith, Anne Shannon, and Sandy McFarland. Club members plan to make handmade clothing and toys to donate to two local hospitals. The club will invite and organize other groups in this effort. Thirty-eight grants from \$100 to \$1,000 were awarded to clubs from 30 states.

The Sugar & Spice 4-H Club has received a grant from the Dr. Scholl Foundation in the "Handicapped Youth Initiatives Grants." Awards were given to 14 groups from 11 states. The Indiana County Club received \$300 to assist in providing 4-H programming to 50 handicapped youth that attend Camp Sunrise. Club members will provide workshops in such areas as nutrition, crafts, and plant science. They will also plan and organize several holiday activities for the campers. Club leaders are Sue Glass and Laurie Zack.

The Gordon 4-H Club will conduct pork promotion activities with a grant received from Bob Evans Farms, Inc. and Owens Country Sausage. Pork promotion grants from \$500 to \$3,000 were awarded to 10 groups in nine states.

The local club has received \$975 to plan and conduct a swine and pork awareness program for 500 grade school students in four area districts. Club members will develop a curriculum to teach students about pork as a food, how swine grow, parts of a hog, and materials produced from swine. Club leaders are Frank and Sue Glass and Pete and Jeremy Cattau.

Few farm operations are as dangerous as filling a silo. This complex task combines raising heavy equipment and working in close quarters with powered machinery, loud noise and deadly silo gases.

It sounds like a potential disaster, but knowing how to handle these hazards will let you fill your silo safely.

Preparation for silo filling includes raising the unloader to the top of the structure. Do this on a calm, dry day to reduce the risk of slips and falls. Make sure all cables, wires, pulleys and connections are anchored and working properly before you start.

One person at ground level should raise the unloader. Another person should watch from the blower pipe platform, signaling if problems arise. Never enter the silo while the unloader is being raised or try to crawl out onto it after it is suspended. An unloader can easily crush you if it falls.

Moving machine parts pose the greatest risk during silo filling. Both self-unloading forage wagons and silo blowers are operated by power takeoff (PTO) shafts that often aren't properly guarded.

A PTO rotates at 9 or 16 times per second at full speed. No one can react fast enough to pull away once caught in the revolving shaft. Stepping over PTO shafts makes accidents much more likely. Walk around tractors and wagons instead.

Unloading wagons have a combination of moving aprons, beaters, conveyors or augers and an assortment of chains and sprockets. To prevent getting snagged keep all protective machinery shields in place, wear comfortable but close-fitting clothing and keep long hair tied up or under a hat.

Never enter a self-unloading wagon or reach into an unloading chute to speed the unloading rate while the machine is running. If it gets clogged, disengage the PTO and stop the tractor. PTO's can accidentally slip into gear, so always stop the engine. Keep the unloading wagon's emergency

shut-off device in good working condition. It could save your life.

As forage moves from the wagon into the silo blower hopper, it's carried by an auger or conveyor to the blower fan, which forces it into the silo. Silo blower operators need to watch out for the PTO shaft, the exposed conveyor or auger and the blower fan blades.

Blower accidents are most likely when the machine plugs up. If this happens, don't climb onto the hopper or try to force forage into the blower blades. Turn off the blower, cut the power and make sure the fan blades have stopped turning before you try to clear the machine.

Also be sure to securely fasten the silo blower to the tractor drawbar. Otherwise, the PTO could separate or vibrations could make the blower pipe fall.

Machinery is not the only danger associated with silo filling. Silo gases can cause unconsciousness, injury and even death, especially in the first 48 to 60 hours

after filling. If you must enter the silo during this time, wear a self-contained breathing apparatus. If you don't have one, stay out of the silo.

Dangerous levels of silo gas may persist for two to three weeks after filling. Before entering without a self-contained breathing apparatus, use the blower to ventilate the silo. Open all doors, run the blower fan for 20 minutes and leave it running while you're in the silo. Enter only after you have put on a respirator for toxic dust and have a second person standing by to assist in an emergency.

Silo blowers, unloading wagons and the tractors that power them are loud enough to cause noise-induced hearing loss. When all of these machines are operated together, the hazard increases. Workers should wear hearing protection.

Children often think silo-filling time is fun, without knowing the danger. They may want to climb on wagons and tractors or help.

Families To Share

(Continued from Page B12)

families to think of life in the city for these children.

"I would never want to live in the city. Farms are for families. We are so blessed to have one and I want to share it with other children."

This summer, open the doors of your home for two weeks and let a

little Fresh Air in. Hosting a Fresh Air child may be the perfect remedy for the dog days of summer. Children from ages 6 to 12 are available. Arrival dates are June 29, July 13, and July 27.

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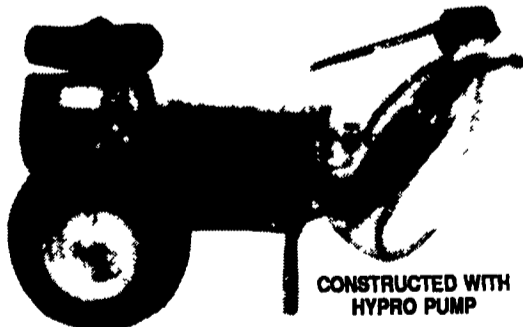
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