

# Grain Suffocation Risk Higher This Year

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Grain farmers and their families may face deadly hazards this spring and summer when working with grain bins, said a farm safety expert in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

"According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, at least nine farmers recently have suffocated to death after being buried alive in stored grain," said Dr. Dennis Murphy, professor of agricultural engineering.

The risk of suffocation may be higher this year than usual. "Last year's wet fall and large crop forced farmers to store grain wet and for a longer time," Murphy said. "Moisture can cause the grain to cake or crust at the surface, a process frequently called 'bridging.'"

Bridged grain is extremely hazardous because it prevents grain flow and hides underlying pockets in the grain. Farmers walking on or trying to break up the bridged material have fallen through the surface and become engulfed in grain.

Farm workers also can be buried while stored grain is being emptied from the bottom of the bin. Typical unloading rates will bury a person in less than a minute.

"Like quicksand, flowing grain can pull you completely into the bin," Murphy said. "The force created by the unloading grain is so great that once you're waist deep in the grain, you're unlikely to be able to escape, even with a safety rope."

Spoiled grain increases suffocation risks. "Spoiled grain emits carbon dioxide, which displaces oxygen in the bin. Even if a worker isn't completely buried, he or she can suffocate from the lack of oxygen above the grain surface."

Grain caked along the bin walls presents another hazard. "When workers try to break the caked material loose from below the level of grain, large sections of grain may break off, burying them below," Murphy said. "Never enter a storage area from the bottom when material is caked to the sides of the bin or bridged overhead."

Break up crusts from outside the bin. "Break crusts through the roof door with a weighted line or a wooden or plastic pole that can't conduct electricity," Murphy said. "Don't use conductive poles, since they may contact power lines near the bin."

If you must enter a bin, stay above the grain at all times. "Never stand on stored material," Murphy said. "Assume that all stored materials are bridged and unstable."

Before entering the bin, stop the

grain flow. "Never load or unload the bin while a worker is inside," Murphy said. "All equipment used to fill or empty a bin should be turned off and locked out to prevent other workers from starting it accidentally."

Also turn on ventilating equipment. "The bin should be thoroughly ventilated with unheated air before and while a worker is in the bin."

Wear a safety belt or harness equipped with a properly fastened life line that will keep you above the stored material if you fall. "A

similarly equipped standby person should remain outside the bin," Murphy said. "Safety equipment won't protect you in the event you fall below the level of stored material."

Some storage bins can be modified with equipment that mechanically breaks up bridges and clumps. "Commercially available equipment can assist in breaking crusted grain surfaces from outside the bin, but the safety of these devices remains untested," Murphy said.

## Pa.'s Winter Wheat Crop at 8.25 Million Bushels

LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — With winter wheat harvest beginning soon, Pennsylvania farmers expect to produce a 8.25 million-bushel crop for 1993. The winter wheat crop is down from 1992's 10.17 million-bushel crop, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's June crop production report.

USDA officials indicated the

national average farm price for wheat may range from \$42.55 to \$2.75 per bushel.

Winter wheat producers in the State expect to harvest 165,000 acres this year, compared to 185,000 acres last year. Crop yields are expected to average 50 bushels per acres in 1993, compared to 55 in 1992.

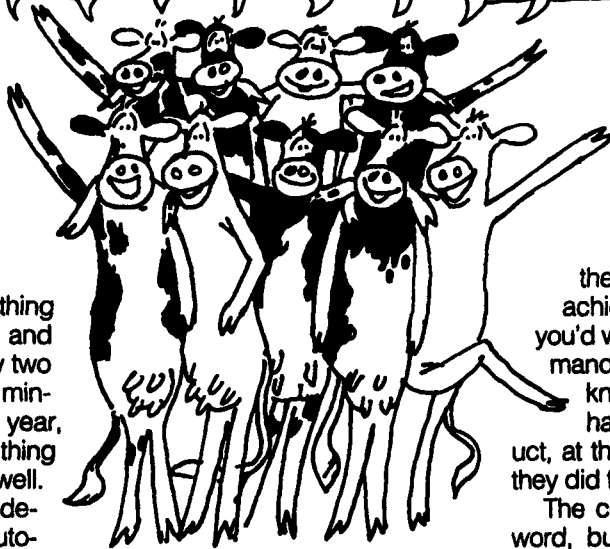
Richard Trouman, chairman of

the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), said crop conditions in the county have been good so far. About 1,025 acres of wheat are enrolled in the county's 1993 farm program.

Nationally, winter wheat producers are expected to harvest 44.3 million acres to produce an estimated 1.82 billion-bushel winter wheat crop in 1993 — 14 percent more than in 1992. Crop yields for winter wheat could average 41.2 bushels per acres in 1993.

# If your cows had the last word on which take-off they'd rather have, it would be...

## UNIVERSAL RETRAC™



Let's face it.

If you had to have something hooked up to a very sensitive and complicated part of your body two or three times a day for five minutes at a time, 305 days a year, you'd make darn sure that the thing worked well and kept working well.

When Universal's engineers designed the new ReTrac™ automatic take-off, they had two things in mind: your cows and you. They knew if ReTrac worked safely and efficiently on your cows day after day, that was by far

the most important goal to achieve. It's not only what you'd want, but what you'd demand. Universal's engineers know that to succeed you have to have a great product, at the right price. We think they did their job.

The cows may have the last word, but it's still your money. We believe the new ReTrac from Universal will make you both happy. Contact your dealer for a free demonstration.

**AGWAY SERVICE CENTER**  
E. College Ave.  
Pleasant Gap, PA  
1-800-533-3866

**AGWAY DAIRY SERVICE**  
Route 886  
Curryville, PA  
814-793-2167

**AGWAY DAIRY SERVICE**  
409 B. Grant St.  
Chambersburg, PA  
1-800-356-4572

**QUARRYVILLE AGWAY DAIRY SERVICE**  
27 East Fourth St.  
Quarryville, PA  
717-786-2126

**WYSOX AGWAY FARM & HOME**  
Box 7, Sullivan St.  
Wysox, PA  
1-800-432-0027

**UNION CITY AGWAY FARM CENTER**  
West High St. Extension  
Union City, PA  
1-800-328-7768



**U™**  
**Universal**  
Better ways to dairy better.

© Copyright 1993, Universal Dairy Equipment, Inc. S3303

**SEARCHING FOR A GOOD BUY? YOU'LL FIND IT IN CLASSIFIEDS**



## HERNIA?

No hernia is unreparable, even after several previous failed attempts. We specialize in outpatient hernia repairs, and most patients are able to return to full work within several days.

PLEASE CALL COLLECT OR WRITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

**MID ATLANTIC SURGICAL SERVICES**

217 Harrisburg Ave., Suite 201  
Lancaster, PA 17603

(717) 295-5454

MOST INSURANCE ACCEPTED

**Need Your Farm Buildings Painted?**

Let us give you a price!  
Write: Daniel's Painting

637-A Georgetown Rd.  
Ronks, PA 17572  
(or leave message)

(717) 687-8262

**Spray on and Brush in Painting**