

# Late Harvesting Could Cause Grain Bin Trouble



## CORN TALK NEWS

PENNSYLVANIA MASTER CORN GROWERS ASSOC., INC.

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Be careful when entering grain bins this fall. A trip into the bin to dislodge some spoiled grain caked against the walls could be the last thing you ever do.

Each year, between 25 and 35 people become victims of grain drowning, a slow suffocation that occurs when a person is trapped and buried in grain. But this fall, there is an even greater risk of the accidents occurring, said an Ohio State University Extension associate safety specialist.

"The wet year and late planting produces a higher risk of grain drowning in grain bins," Tim Lawrence said. "Harvesting high moisture corn, anything greater than 14 percent, increases the chance of grain bridges or caking of grain along the sides of bins."

Grain bridges occur when several inches to a foot of the top layer of grain spoils and solidifies, producing a crust, or bridge, on top of the grain. The danger occurs when grain is removed from under the crusted layer, and the bridge remains intact. Farm workers checking a bin they think should be almost empty, but instead looks full, may walk on the bridge to see what's happening. The bridge breaks and the worker is trapped in grain.

Workers also can become trapped when trying to break loose spoiled grain that is caked along bin walls. If a worker tries to break up the caked material by picking at the bottom of the mound, large sections of grain could break off the top and cover the worker instantly.

However, it is important to remember that grain drownings can occur even in bins where no bridging or caking has occurred. Loose grain acts like quicksand. It doesn't take long for someone to become trapped, Lawrence warns.

"If you get trapped in grain over your knees, you're not going to get out by yourself," Lawrence said. "And too often this occurs with the bin's auger still running."

Once trapped in flowing grain, victims are rapidly drawn to the bottom of the bin where they can become entangled in the unloading auger. A person can be completely submerged in grain in less than eight seconds, and even faster with

larger unloading equipment.

"During harvest time is a good chance to warn farmers of this danger," Lawrence said. "They need to realize that in situations with high moisture corn, added precautions need to be taken to avoid drowning in grain."

To reduce the risk of grain drowning, Ohio State University Extension offers the following guidelines:

- A person entering a grain bin should be fastened to a safety rope or harness that is tied to a point outside the structure. Two additional people should be involved — one

who can see the person inside the bin and another on the ground who can assist in lifting the inside worker to safety, quickly go for aid and ensure that no one starts the unloading equipment.

- Never enter a bin of flowing grain. If you drop a grain probe or shovel, first stop the flow of grain and take the precautions given above, then retrieve the lost item. Remember, no piece of equipment is worth a human life.

- Don't enter a bin without knowing if it has a history of grain spoilage. This is especially true if the surface appears crusty; that is

an indication that the grain has bridged. Always be cautious before walking on any surface crust.

- If you believe you must enter a bin alone and the bin has unloading equipment, you should lock the control circuit, tell someone what you are doing and post a sign on the control switch informing other workers that you are in the bin. Likewise, check each bin before you begin to unload to be sure that no one is inside.

- Be careful in any rescue attempt to avoid being pulled into

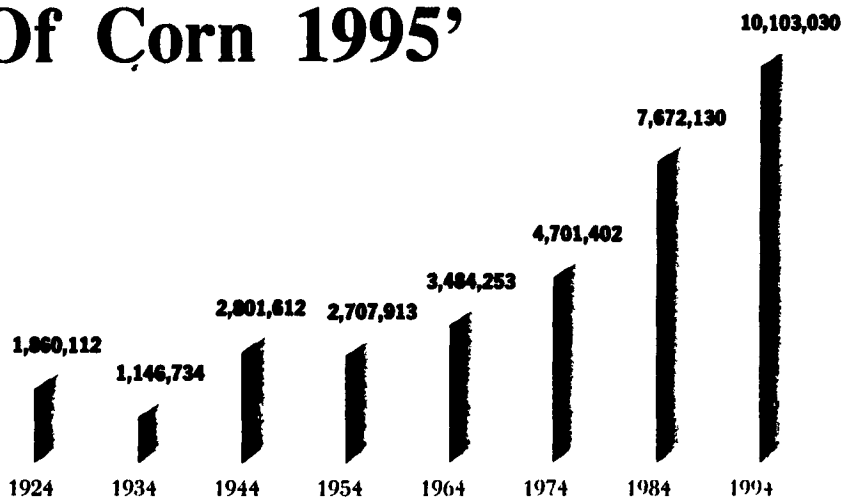
the flowing grain and becoming a second accident victim.

- Install ladders and ropes on the inside of bins.

In an emergency, farmers who did not take the above precautions and find themselves caught in an emptying grain bin should try to get to the wall of the bin, and then continue walking around the edges. The greatest danger is in the middle of the bin.

These safety precautions should be discussed with your family, employees or fellow workers in order to avoid the possibility of grain drownings.

## Facts From NCGA's 'The World Of Corn 1995'



1,000 BUSHELS

1919	2,341,870	1934	1,146,734	1949	2,946,206	1964	3,484,253	1979	7,928,139
1920	2,695,085	1935	2,001,367	1950	2,764,071	1965	4,102,887	1980	6,639,396
1921	2,556,924	1936	1,258,673	1951	2,628,937	1966	4,167,608	1981	8,118,650
1922	2,229,496	1937	2,349,425	1952	2,980,793	1967	4,860,372	1982	8,235,101
1923	2,429,551	1938	2,300,095	1953	2,881,801	1968	4,449,542	1983	4,174,251
1924	1,860,112	1939	2,341,602	1954	2,707,913	1969	4,687,057	1984	7,672,130
1925	2,382,288	1940	2,206,882	1955	2,872,959	1970	4,152,243	1985	8,875,453
1926	2,140,207	1941	2,414,445	1956	3,075,336	1971	5,646,260	1986	8,225,764
1927	2,218,189	1942	2,801,819	1957	3,045,355	1972	5,579,832	1987	7,131,300
1928	2,260,990	1943	2,668,490	1958	3,356,205	1973	5,670,712	1988	4,928,681
1929	2,135,038	1944	2,801,612	1959	3,824,589	1974	4,701,402	1989	7,531,953
1930	1,757,297	1945	2,577,449	1960	3,906,949	1975	5,840,757	1990	7,934,028
1931	2,229,903	1946	2,916,089	1961	3,597,803	1976	6,289,169	1991	7,474,765
1932	2,578,685	1947	2,108,320	1962	3,606,311	1977	6,505,041	1992	9,476,698
1933	2,104,725	1948	3,307,038	1963	4,019,238	1978	7,267,927	1993	6,336,470
								1994	10,103,030

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