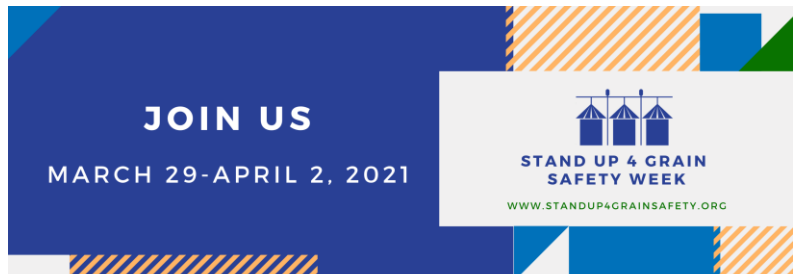




March 31, 2021



## BIN MAINTENANCE

Regular maintenance of grain bins is critical to ensure quality of stored grain.

- Check the foundation for cracks. Any crack more than 1/8 inch should be sealed to prevent damage.
- Check all walls. Look for broken or missing bolts.
- Check the roof. Leaks need to be sealed to prevent moisture in the grain.
- Make sure openings seal completely.

## QUALITY MATTERS

It is a well-known fact that most grain bin incidents begin with out of condition grain. Grain bridges, grain stuck to walls that breaks loose and causes an avalanche, big clumps that will not go through unloading sumps, and poor air quality all occur because



of moldy, decomposing and insect-infested grain. It is important to understand that the overall quality of stored grain always deteriorates. It is never as good as the day it is put in the bin and how we monitor and manage the storage conditions makes the difference when it comes to safety.

To maintain grain in good quality condition, it is important to avoid storage problems. Managing moisture, temperatures, molds, and fines are key to the length of time grain can be safely stored. You can't fix something if you don't know it exists. Monitoring grain bins is critical to prevent safety incidents stemming from out of condition grain. Follow these tips for safe monitoring of grain bins:

- ✓ The safest way to check for grain problems without entering the bin is to start the fans and smell and note the temperature of the very first air that comes off of the grain. Higher temps and a musty odor indicate mold growth.
- ✓ If you have to climb the bin to visually check the grain, always keep both hands free while you climb (ladder or stairs). Use a tool belt, carry a backpack, or use a bucket on a rope to keep your hands free to climb safely and maintain 3 points of contact at all times. Keep it slow and steady and don't rush. A loss of focus could result in a fall. Also, visually inspect the ladder or stairs before climbing.
- ✓ Weather can affect bin conditions. Rain, condensation, snow, and ice can reduce friction and grip for hands and feet. Wind speeds over 20 mph can cause instability while climbing. Avoid climbing in inclement weather conditions.
- ✓ Check the grain surface for any crusting, moist, sticky, or warm grain. If you must enter the bin, always take the necessary precautions. Use safety harnesses, lifelines, and have a person outside the bin to monitor you. Also have appropriate respiratory protection such as a dust mask.

Preserving grain quality has many benefits and a key benefit is grain bin safety. By monitoring grain regularly, we have the opportunity to correct small problems before they become large.

This special edition Stand Up 4 Grain Safety bulletin is a publication by Maplehurst Farms and Fehr-Graham. Suggestions for content are welcome. Please send all questions or suggestions to [safety@maplehurstfarms.com](mailto:safety@maplehurstfarms.com)