Conservation News

Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District

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Before You Enter The Grain Bin, Review These Safety Best Practices

By Ellen G. Duysen, Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health, University of Nebraska Medical Center

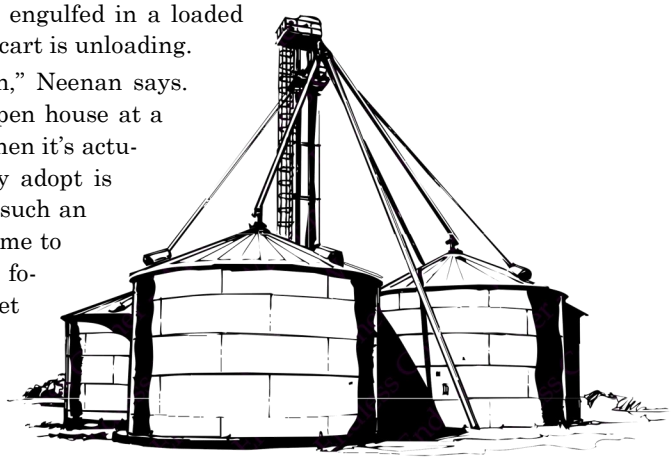
"Do I really need to go inside this grain bin?" That's the first question Dan Neenan, Director of the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS), recommends farmers ask before taking the risk of working inside a grain bin. If entering a bin is absolutely necessary, implementing grain bin entry safety practices will reduce the risk of injury or death. "Entrapment happens for a couple of different reasons," Neenan says. "If the auger is running when you enter the bin, you can be pulled into that grain up to your waist within 15 seconds. In just 30 seconds you can be completely submerged."

Grain Bin Entry Safety Best Practices

- **No one should be alone** when they enter a grain bin. For safety purposes, a minimum of two people should be present.
- A key grain bin entry safety step is to **lock out and tag out** the grain auger power source, disconnecting it and attaching a tag to indicate it cannot be operated until the tag is removed.
- Before entering a bin, it's necessary to **evaluate the bin's air quality**. At a minimum, there should be 19.5% oxygen inside the bin. Grain bin dust affects people in different ways, including difficulty breathing. Wearing a mask, equipped with a high efficiency filter, will protect workers from dust and mold.
- A **fall protection harness** and lifeline or boatswain's chair secured to an adequate anchorage point greatly reduces fall risks. Roof components and bin ladders have proven to be inadequate anchors when dealing with the forces of grain flow.
- To reduce possibility of a fire or explosion in the bin due to grain dust, never smoke, weld or grind anything near grain bins.
- In the event a grain bin worker becomes trapped, the **attendant should not attempt to enter the bin** and rescue them. Because the force of flowing grain is so great, it's not possible to extract someone without proper equipment and assistance.
- Farmers with young children need to understand the **dangers of having children in the vicinity of grain carts**. Children and adults can quickly be engulfed in a loaded grain cart or become entrapped or entangled in the auger as the cart is unloading.

"I encourage parents to never allow their children to play in grain," Neenan says. "Even though grain play-boxes are often part of an event like an open house at a business, it can give children the idea that playing in grain is fun, when it's actually a deadly activity." One of the deadliest practices farmers may adopt is taking a risk and avoiding a tragedy. The complacency that follows such an experience can lead to disastrous consequences. "It only takes one time to get caught in a risky situation," Neenan says. "We are especially focused on working with youth in agriculture to overcome that mindset so they can enjoy years of safe farming."

Additional information about safely entering grain bins can be found at http://www.necasag.org/safetytraining/



Upcoming Events:

October:	November:	December:
6th– Fish Sale Pick-up, 10am	10th—Board Meeting	14th—Board Meeting
11th—Columbus Day (Office Closed)	11th—Veteran's Day (Office Closed)	24th –Christmas Eve (Office Closed)
12th—Board Meeting	25th—Thanksgiving (Office Closed)	31st—New Year's Eve (Office Closed)

Prescribed Burn Planning & Equipment Assistance Available

In combination with the Lincoln Heritage Chapter of Pheasants Forever, the Coles County SWCD offers equipment such as sprayers, drip torches, blowers, and Nomex fire-resistant clothing. The equipment is free to use, but a deposit is required. Please call ahead to ensure availability.

Most conservation programs require a burn plan and open burning permit to be on file prior to a controlled burn. Our staff can connect landowners with an agency or technical service provider who writes these plans. Once a burn plan is obtained, we can assist with the application for an Illinois EPA open burning permit. Give us a call at the office or stop by with any questions.

For Rent:

15' John Deere Drill ($100 minimum)	$10/ac.
6' Truax Drill	$75/Day
Truax Seed Slinger	$50/Day
Prescribed Burning Equipment	Free!

For Sale:

Pin/Marking Flags	$0.20/ea.
Pollinator Seed Packet (10 sq. ft. area)	$5
Pollinator Seed "Bear" (50 sq. ft. area)	$20
SWCD License Plate Frame	$5
Tree Guard + Stake	$3/ea.
Well Water Test Kit	$30
Vinyl "Pollinator Protector" Sign	$15

Ask us about ordering seed for larger habitat areas!

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Call the SWCD office at 217-345-3901 ext. 3 for more info or to schedule a rental!

Notice of Election of Directors

To All Owners and Occupiers of Lands Lying Within the Boundaries of Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District:

Notice is hereby given that an election will be held on the 3rd day of February, 2022 from 7:00am to 5:30pm at 6021 Development Drive, Ste. 2, Charleston, IL 61920. Three (3) Directors will be elected to serve the Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District of the State of Illinois.

All persons, firms or corporations who hold legal title or are in legal possession of any land lying within the boundaries of the said district are eligible to vote at said election, whether as lessee, renter, tenant or otherwise. Only such persons, firms, or corporations are eligible to vote.

Charleston Field Office Staff and Directors

Coles Co. SWCD Board of Directors

Bill Janes: Chairman

Justin Thomas: Vice Chairman

Todd Easton: Secretary/Treasurer

Pat Harrington

William Tapella

Coles Co. SWCD Associate Directors

Larry Coutant

Coles Co. SWCD Employees

Terina Coffey
Administrative & Education Coordinator

Lauren Spaniol
Resource Conservationist

NRCS Employees

Andy Brantner: District Conservationist
Stephen Head: Soil Conservationist
Bridget Ragan: Soil Conservation Tech.
Kent Macy: Technical Biology Specialist
Matt Dasenbrock: Area Engineer
Aaron Pryer: Agricultural Engineer
Kerry Bushue: Civil Engineering Tech.

As a cooperator of NRCS, SWCD must provide reasonable accommodations to USDA customers with disabilities, where appropriate. Individuals requiring reasonable accommodation for any NRCS or SWCD programs or services should contact Carzella Pritchett, Illinois NRCS' Disability Emphasis Program Manager, at (217) 353-6651 directly. Determinations on requests for reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis. USDA-NRCS/SWCD are an equal opportunity employer and provider.

STAR Releases Annual Report Highlighting Impacts of Voluntary Conservation Efforts in Illinois

STAR's second annual report provides insights to the initiative's continued growth

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. – Today, STAR (Saving Tomorrow's Agriculture Resources), an initiative developed by farmers for farmers, is excited to release its annual report for the 2020 crop year. The report documents STAR's continued growth and summarizes the benefits of in-field practices implemented by Illinois' farmers and landowners.

"The Illinois Department of Agriculture commends STAR on a year of growth," said Illinois Department of Agriculture Director Jerry Costello II. "STAR is a prime example of how a tool developed by Illinois farmers can encourage improvements in on-farm soil health and downstream water quality. We look forward to working with the STAR initiative to further cultivate conservation on Illinois farms."

The goal of STAR is not only to evaluate the use of conservation practices, but also to demonstrate the benefits of management changes, encourage improvement and recognize participants for their commitment to nutrient loss reduction and soil health. STAR uses a simple field form to capture information on practice and management activities, assign points to each activity, and provide a rating from one to five STARs.

For the 2020 Crop Year, 385 participants utilized the STAR tool on 155,605 acres over 2,276 Fields, more than doubling its use in Illinois compared to 2019. Statewide, over 70 Soil & Water Conservation Districts locally administer the program, providing one-on-one technical assistance to farmers and landowners interested in improving their STAR Rating.

Report Highlights:

• The use of no-till and strip-till by IL STAR farmers accounted for 4,075 truckloads of sediment kept out of Illinois waterways, 17,028 pounds of phosphorus kept in the field, and provided climate benefits equal to removing the greenhouse gas emissions from 9,767 passenger cars from the road for one year.

• The use of cover crops by STAR farmers accounted for 2,548 truckloads of sediment kept out of Illinois waterways, 143,888 pounds of nitrate-nitrogen and 10,781 pounds of phosphorus kept in the field and provided climate benefits equal to removing the greenhouse gas emissions from 3,525 passenger cars from the road for one year.

To read the full report and learn more about the practices supported by STAR, visit https://bit.ly/STARCY2020.

Farmers interested in enrolling their fields are encouraged to fill out a 2021 Field Form. In addition to the standard fillable Field Form, STAR launched its Web App allowing participants to fill out a form on their phone, tablet, or computer with features that help simplify the process. Crop Year 2021 Field Forms will be collected through January 2022.

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