



October 20, 2017

## LONG-TERM GRAIN STORAGE REQUIRES GOOD MANAGEMENT

A lot of corn this year will be stored on-farm in grain storage facilities. A wise person told me one time, corn in a farm grain bin should never have a birthday. If it does and you store new grain on top, it adds to a lot more risk.

As I write this column, Farmers Cooperative, November corn sales price is \$2.97 per bushel with a 52 cents basis (or difference between Chicago price and local price). Flint Hills ethanol plant at Fairmont was \$3.24 per bushel and buyers call on white corn was at \$3.44 per bushel at Dorchester.

Guess what the breakeven price cash cost in our UNL Extension budgets were for the 2017 yellow field corn crop? The answer is it varies but several budgets come in at a breakeven on corn for total cost of production, labor and overhead of \$3.70 per bushel. It's no wonder why there are prayer intentions at St. Wenceslaus Church in Wilber this fall for fair and just prices for grain and livestock.

With a lot of grain going into storage, it's always good to review with some solid management guidelines that work so dockage does not occur later in the year. The following are some excellent tips for storing grain:

- 1) Aerate the grain to cool it down immediately after binning it, we've experienced some warm weather for this time of year.
- 2) Do not place new grain in bins with last year's grain. Any insect infestations or spoilage that starts in last year's grain will affect the new grain. Insects are dormant below about 50°F and insects are killed if grain is below 30°F for a few weeks. Farmers that have their restricted use pesticide license can no longer comply with the EPA label on using phostoxin pellets or when using other grain fumigants. Use a commercial grain fumigant service if an insect infestation ever becomes a problem.
- 3) Check the grain at least every two weeks until it has been cooled for winter storage and every two to four weeks during the winter. There is no reason to get grain below 25 to 30 degrees for winter storage. Remember the holidays; Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas and turn on the grain bin aeration fans. As my friend Paul Hay used to say, it's a great way to get out of the house if you were wanting to avoid a certain relative!
- 4) If you can't get the corn to 15% moisture before discontinuing fan operation, it is critical that you get the temperature down to 25-30°F to arrest mold growth. Always push a cooling front completely through the bin before discontinuing aeration for longer than a few days. An estimate of the hours of fan operation required to push a temperature front through a bin of corn is 15 divided by the airflow rate in cubic feet per minute per bushel (cfm/bu). If your drying fan can produce 1.0 cfm/bu, it will take about 15 hours. If you have a storage bin with a small fan producing 0.2 cfm/bu, it will take 75 hours.



- 5) Verify that the moisture content is at the recommended storage level and check the grain temperature. The most important information on the sales ticket in the winter and spring is not the price or test weight or moisture. It's the temperature of the grain. Always ask the grain clerk what the temperature is when selling grain.

For more information go to: <https://goo.gl/XK66yR>

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