

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension and Outreach

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Another Year Yields Another Message about Grain Safety

AMES, Iowa – Nearly every year Iowa experiences at least one grain suffocation. So it should not be a surprise that one of the Farm Safety and Health week message has a focus on grain safety.

“Most people don’t truly understand the tremendous force grain has unless they’ve experienced it,” said Charles Schwab, farm safety specialist with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. “The misconception for most people is that they can easily be rescued once they are entrapped in flowing grain. The reality of the situation is as a victim sinks deeper and the grain exerts more force the magnitude of force holding the victim in grain can easily exceed 2,000 pounds.

Even when the grain has stopped flowing, it is difficult to help a submerged victim escape. Those with great upper body strength can't pull themselves out if they are buried to the chest. The force holding the submerged victim in the grain is too much. Trained first responders don’t pull victims out of flowing grain. They labor with great effort digging each one out as the hours tick by.

Flowing grain suffocations are preventable and that is why each one is a tragic event.

There are several ways to prevent flowing grain entrapment. Always lock all access doors to grain storage structures. Never allow anyone to play or ride on grain wagons or grain semi-trucks. Lock out power to all types of grain-handling equipment when entering storage bins. Notify a second person of where you are at all times when loading or unloading grain.

Helping others understand the dangers associated with flowing grain and entrapment hazards that often lead to suffocations is the first step. Do your part putting farm safety into practice this fall by sharing your rules for handling flowing grain hazard and seeing that everyone follows those rules.

Links:

<http://www.abe.iastate.edu/extension-and-outreach/agricultural-health-safety/>

Related Publications:

<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/4614>

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