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NEWS RELEASE

ISA REPORT: MANY MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT TOWER SILOS

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For Immediate Release

For More Information,
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Madison, WI—At the International Silo Association's (ISA) annual meeting on December 13, the industry reported on many of the misconceptions held by the general agricultural community.

Chief among ISA's concerns is the perception that tower silos are slow filling and unloading. This perception was embodied in a quote printed in a dairy modernization guide. It read, "Upright silos... have limited value on large dairies because of the time required to fill and unload them.

According to ISA this simply is not true. Reports of silo unloaders with feeding rates exceeding 1500 pounds per minute have been reported in major agricultural papers across the country. These speeds are due to advances in unloading called center discharge unloaders. Individual farmers using this unloading technology consistently report feeding times faster than those achieved when using horizontal storage methods.

In response to the slow filling rates, ISA says, the filling rates on towers exceed the rates possible using methods that require manual packing. ISA has reports of producers and custom harvesters across the country filling towers at speeds exceeding 100 tons per hour, and several who are filling at speeds over 150 tons per hour. These numbers have also been reported in major agricultural papers throughout the country.

According to ISA, it is a common perception that large amounts of feed cannot be stored in a tower silo. However, towers have been built up to 30 feet in diameter and over 130 feet tall. A unit of this size will hold nearly 3000 tons of corn silage or 1050 tons of dry matter. That is enough forage to meet the forage needs of more than 200 milking cows for a year.

Another perception that concerns ISA is the predominate school of thought in the area of dry matter losses in forage, also known as feed shrink. Recently, there has been a lot of talk about dry matter loss and the great costs associated with it. While most people understand that tower silos are very effective in reducing dry matter losses, the tower silo has not often been seen as a solution to this problem.

With the backing of multiple university based studies, ISA reports that when comparing the average dry matter losses in a tower silo with that of a bunker or pile, there is an average dry matter savings of 9%. Multiple producers who have moved from

horizontal storage to towers have reported to ISA that they have seen acreage savings up to 23% after the first year of use.

ISA also refutes the idea that it is expensive to unload from the tower silos. Citing an implement costs study put out by the University of Minnesota, they claim that there are actually significant savings in using an unloader to extract feed as opposed to a tractor, skid steer, or front-end loader. “You can run a 7.5 horsepower motor on an unloader for under a dollar an hour, or you can run a tractor at 10 to 20 dollars an hour”, states ISA President Joe Shefchik. Shefchik goes on to say, “While unloaders may be more expensive than they used to be, the price is comparable or cheaper than the devices used to unload forage in horizontal storage.”

ISA has several Microsoft spreadsheets and literature to support all of the information presented here. If you would like to get more information, you can email them at cropstorage@cs.com or call (630) 258-7206.

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