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## **Grain Bin Safety Week 2017**

As we launch the fourth annual Grain Bin Safety Week (Feb. 19-25), work still remains to reduce preventable grain entrapments and deaths associated with grain handling and storage. Record crop yields and increased on-farm grain storage occurred in 2016. More grain bins on farms and ranches can mean increased risk of grain entrapment, grain engulfment and other accidents if proper safe-work procedures aren't followed.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) reports that less than 7% of the nearly 770,000 grain bins on America's farms are equipped with a harness and life line to prevent grain engulfment.<sup>1</sup> Continued collaboration with the agricultural community and grain industry leaders will help raise awareness of grain bin safety.

## **Grain bin entrapments – Don't become another statistic!**

A study by Purdue University reported 24 documented grain entrapments in 2015, including 14 fatalities. Grain entrapments were the most common type of confined space incident. Additionally, there were six equipment entanglements resulting in one death, six falls into or from grain storage structures resulting in three deaths and four fatal cases of asphyxiation.<sup>5</sup>

For the first time since 2010, the number of confined space fatalities exceeded non-fatal incidents. The decrease in the total number of incidents is due to a significant drop in non-fatal incidents, which is likely attributed to underreporting of non-fatal grain entrapments. It is estimated that annual documented cases of these injuries and fatalities only represent about 70% of the total occurrences.<sup>5</sup>

It only takes seconds to become entrapped in grain and less than a minute to become completely engulfed. Once grain is above knee-level, it is nearly impossible to get out without assistance. Grain bin accidents are more likely to occur when workers or family members enter a grain bin without following safe grain bin entry procedures.

Grain entrapment and grain engulfment aren't the only risks. Toxic atmospheres, augers, bin collapses, fires and explosions are equally hazardous.

## Dairy Situation and Outlook

February 21, 2017, By Bob Cropp, Professor Emeritus  
University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension

Milk prices ended 2016 at a high for the year. December Class III was \$17.40 compared to a low of \$12.76 back in May. December Class IV was the high for the year at \$14.97. But, milk production continues to increase at a relatively high level and the peak demand for cheese and butter during the holidays is over so some weakening of milk prices is expected for the start of this year. On a positive note dairy exports improved last quarter of the year. Compared to a year ago, December exports were up 3% for nonfat dry milk/skim milk powder, 16% for cheese, 27% for butterfat, 43% for whey products and 3% for lactose. Nonfat dry milk/skim milk powder prices were competitive on the world market all of 2016. As a result, nonfat dry milk/skim milk powder exports for the year were 8% higher than the 2015 and actually 10.6% higher than the previous record set in 2014. Nevertheless, stocks of both butter and cheese grew during December. Compared to a year ago, December 31<sup>st</sup> stocks were 12.8% high for butter and 5.3% higher for cheese.

As expected under these market conditions cheese prices have declined. On the CME 40-pound cheddar blocks were a high of \$1.85 per pound early February, but declined during the month to now \$1.53 per pound. Cheddar barrels were a high of \$1.7075 per pound early February, but also declined during the month and are now \$1.60. Last December available supply of fresh 40-pound cheddar blocks was rather tight resulting in the block price well above the cheddar barrel price. A more normal price relationship between blocks and barrels is about \$0.04 per pound. But, during February 40-pound blocks have fallen more than barrels. The start of February blocks were \$0.1725 higher than barrels, but now barrels are \$0.07 higher than blocks. Offsetting some of the decline in cheese prices is higher dry whey prices. Dry whey was about \$0.44 per pound in January and has improved to about \$0.49 which adds about \$0.30 to the Class III price. The Class III price in February should be about \$16.85. Despite relatively high butter stocks the CME butter price continues well above \$2 per pound averaging thus far in February at \$2.16 per pound. But, the CME nonfat dry milk which was a high of \$0.9625 per pound early February has slipped to \$0.81. So the February Class IV price will decline from January and be about \$15.65.

Milk prices are still expected to stay much more favorable than last year for all of 2017. Domestic sales of butter and cheese are expected to continue to show growth. Milk production in four of the five leading exporters—EU, New Zealand, Australia and Argentina—is expected to continue below year ago levels at least for the first half of the year with only modest increases as a possibility for the last half of the year. U.S. the fifth largest exporter will continue to show relatively strong increases in milk production. Increase demand by China and others is expected pushing up world dairy product prices. With these conditions continued improvement in dairy exports is expected. The level of milk production will be a key factor in how much milk prices improve over 2016.

With relatively low feed prices and improved milk prices we can expect the average number of milk cows to increase in 2017 and further improvement in milk per cow. USDA is forecasting the average number of milk cows to increase 0.4% and milk per cow to increase 1.9% resulting in an increase in total milk production of 2.3%. With this level of milk production good domestic sales and dairy exports will be required to strengthen milk prices. USDA's forecast of a 1.9% increase in milk per cow could be on the high side. The annual increase in milk per cow for the past 5 years has been 1.3%. Adjusted for leap year milk per cow last year increased 1.4%. Last year milk per cow in California averaged 0.8% lower, adjusted for leap year, and rather relatively strong increases in milk per cow in the Northeast and Upper Midwest. This year milk per cow is likely to improve in California with relatively lower increases in the Northeast and Upper Midwest.

USDA's milk production report estimates U.S. milk production for January to be +2.5% higher than last year. The number of milk cows was 56,000 head higher than a year ago or 0.6% and milk per cow was 1.8% higher. California had more milk per cow but 14,000 fewer cows netted 0.6% less total milk production. Idaho's milk production was 1.0% higher. An expansion in cow numbers of 15,000 and 39,000 along with more milk per cow resulted in milk production increases of 15.3% and 19.2% respectively for New Mexico and Texas. Milk production continues relatively strong in the Northeast with increases of 3.5% for Michigan, 3.8% for New York and 2.0% for Pennsylvania. In the Upper Midwest milk production was up 3.8% in Iowa, 1.7% in Minnesota, 1.0% in Wisconsin and 2.8% in South Dakota. In the Southeast Florida experienced a 1.3% decline in milk production. Over all of the 23 reporting states, 10 had fewer milk cows than a year ago, only two had lower milk per cow and six had lower total milk production.

As of now it looks like the Class III price to be in the low \$16's through about May, then increasing to the \$17's with high \$17's and even low \$18's by October or November with an average for the year around \$17.15 compared to \$14.87 last year. The Class IV price may stay in the \$15's first half of the year reaching the \$16's and even the \$17's for the last half of the year and averaging about \$16.30 for the year compared to \$13.77 last year. How dairy exports actually perform over the next couple of months and the level milk production will provide better insight for milk prices during the year.

## How to Conduct Research on Your Farm or Ranch

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This 32-page Ag Innovations Series technical bulletin provides detailed instruction for crop and livestock producers, as well as educators, on how to conduct research at the farm level using practical strategies and peer-reviewed research findings. *How to Conduct Research on Your Farm or Ranch* also includes a comprehensive list of in-depth resources and real-life examples—from a Missouri crop and livestock farmer testing the effect of additional cover cropping on forage available to his animals to a West Virginia organic producer experimenting with an integrated trap crop and pheromone trap system for ecological management of stink bugs—in order to stimulate on-farm research ideas and provide guidance.

## How does health insurance affect farmers and ranchers?

Help influence rural health policy in upcoming survey.

Farmers and ranchers: How does health insurance affect you? Help influence rural health policy by participating in an upcoming USDA funded survey. Your responses will help researchers understand how health-insurance policy affects farmers' and ranchers' decisions to invest, expand, and grow their enterprises.

Selected participants received a letter about the survey in February.

If you did not receive a letter and survey but would like to participate follow this link:

<https://survey.uvm.edu/index.php/132344?lang=en>

This survey is a chance for farmers and ranchers to make their voices heard about their experiences with health insurance and how that affects both their economic development and family's quality of life.

"We're interested in hearing from multi-generation, beginning, and first generation farm and ranch families across all ages and sectors of agriculture. We want to understand what parts of health insurance are working well for farmers and ranchers and what types of policy and program modifications need to be made. Results will be shared with agriculture and health policy makers," said lead researcher, Shoshanah Inwood, rural sociologist and professor at the University of Vermont. All responses will be confidential and only summary statistics will be reported.

"We know from our prior research that farmers identify the cost of health insurance as a key barrier to growing their farms or farming full-time," said Inwood. This study is a joint effort with the NORC Walsh Center for Rural Health Policy, and the four USDA Rural Development Centers. Findings will be used to guide the development of training materials for professionals who work with farmers and ranchers—such as Extension Educators, farm consultants, and tax accountants—so that they can support farmers' and ranchers' ability to make well-informed decisions regarding health insurance.

The survey questions are based on interviews conducted in 2016 with smaller groups of farmers and ranchers in the 10 states being researched. This study is a four-year national project exploring how health insurance options impact the farm and ranch population in the U.S. The project, titled "Health Insurance, Rural Economic Development and Agriculture" (HIREDnAG), is funded by a \$500,000 USDA Rural Communities and Regional Development grant. States included in the study are California, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Utah, Vermont, and Washington.

Project partners include the Northeastern, North Central, Southern and Western Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs); University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies; University of Vermont Extension; Center for Rural Affairs; University of Maryland Extension; and, the Farm Foundation.

For more information, visit the HIREDnAG website: <http://www.hirednag.net/>

Or contact Katlyn Morris, HIREDnAG Project Coordinator at [katlyn.morris@uvm.edu](mailto:katlyn.morris@uvm.edu) or by phone at 802-656-0257.

## **Frost Seeding of Forages**

With the strange freezing and thawing of soils, you might think about keeping an eye on the weather and trying some frost seeding in pastures to improve production this year. Follow this link for a fact sheet from UW Extension on how to best try this practice and have success.

<http://fyi.uwex.edu/forage/files/2017/02/Frost-Seeding-of-Forages.pdf>

**Weekly Emails Online!**

<http://columbia.uwex.edu/ag-calendar-and-deadlines/>

The Ag Reporter “Snapshot” is presented to you each week by George Koepp, Columbia County UW-Extension Agriculture Agent. If you have any questions about these articles or need other ag-related information, please contact George at 608-742-9682 or by email [george.koepp@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:george.koepp@ces.uwex.edu).