

# A year-round strategy for managing grain.

As you know, grain-related accidents can happen when you least expect it — and be highly disruptive to your business. That's why being prepared is so important. This document was created to help you with a strategy for how to best manage grain year round, which will help minimize grain-related accidents and help improve your bottom line.

## PRE-HARVEST

Preparation is the first step in effectively managing grain. Set aside time before harvest to plan for the upcoming season and identify areas of your operation that may need attention.

### Address the following areas prior to harvest:

- Check fields to map out and maximize crop readiness
- Identify fields or areas of fields where molds or toxins may develop
- Make all necessary grain bin repairs

### Evaluate the following equipment for needed repairs:

- Aeration fans and exhaust vents
- Bin floors (check for holes, blocked sumps, slide gate operation, etc.)
- Unload augers
- Spreaders, if equipped
- Stirrators, if equipped
- Electrical function
- Roof and side walls (check for leaks or other damage)
- Lubricate bearings



## HARVEST

While weather conditions and other factors can make it challenging, proper grain management during the harvest season can help ensure your grain is in the best condition possible for market.

### Help improve worker safety.

High moisture grain can create problems such as poor grain flow and equipment malfunction that cause workers to enter grain bins. Maintaining high-quality grain can help minimize these issues and improve safety by keeping workers out of grain bins.

### Sample grain

Sampling loads of grain can provide helpful information about your grain's moisture content. Grain moisture content and temperature prior to storage affect its storage life.

Just one load of wet grain can become the source of out-of-condition grain that creates issues like a plugged sump. Have a drying plan in place, if you are equipped with a grain dryer. When in doubt, sell the grain to avoid the issues that may arise from storing it.

### Collect grain samples to assess:

- Moisture level
- Grading
- Fines removal
- Molds or toxins, if there is a potential

Take additional samples if molds or toxins are located. Do not rely on samples from combine equipment only. These results detail moisture content and yield, but typically do not provide enough information regarding foreign matter or visible mold.

If necessary for grain grading, retain samples of grain loads and take them to calibrated equipment and grain graders.

### Track loads of grain.

Be sure to track individual loads of grain so you know what is in each grain bin. This can also assist in identifying areas you should monitor for hot spots during long-term storage.

## POST-HARVEST

Grain management still plays an important role after harvest is complete.

### Core grain bins.

When filling grain bins, fines and foreign matter accumulate in the center of the bin. This reduces aeration flow and can cause grain in the center of the bin to go out-of-condition. To address this problem, grain bins should be cored (grain removed from center of bin) to help improve aeration. The deflection cone should be one-third of the bin diameter. If time allows, this could be done during the harvest season.

### Monitor stored grain.

Use caution and follow industry best practices when entering grain bins to collect samples. Due to the potential of bridging grain, this should not be done after the first load of grain is removed.

Check stored grain on an established frequency (preferably weekly), monitoring temperature cables and using stirrators, if available. Sample grains using the smell test. When necessary, run aeration fans to maintain proper moisture levels and reduce the temperature for long-term storage.

Constant grain monitoring can help you catch issues early on, before they become large problems. This can help reduce financial losses and help improve the safety of your workers.

## HELP US SAVE LIVES.

Learn more about grain management, grain quality and safe-work practices and procedures at [grainbinsafetyweek.com](http://grainbinsafetyweek.com).



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