

MANAGING STORED GRAIN DURING FLUCTUATING TEMPERATURES IN THE LATE FALL AND WINTER

Managing grain quality over late fall and winter is an ongoing management chore that can be even more challenging when temperatures are fluctuating up and down on a daily basis. To avoid grain quality loss, growers should follow these important steps.



Figure 1. Grain Bin in Winter

- Be aware of the major daily temperature fluctuations in your area. It's typical during the fall and winter to have cooler, moist morning with temperatures in the 30°F that rise to sometimes in the 50's, 60's and even 70's °F during the afternoon hours. There are parts of the country that are experiencing this on a regular basis. The disadvantages of running the fans continuously during this type of temperature variation are over drying or rewetting the grain from the fluctuations in temperature and dewpoint.
- A controlled and automated grain management system constantly measures and assesses these conditions and only pushes air in the bin during the periods of the day when the air is at its desirable period: not too moist and not too dry. This is a very difficult task to perform without having automated systems that can result in substantial grain damage if done manually. As a result, you may notice your automated system may run the fans for a few hours in the morning and again in the late afternoon. This avoids the cost of over-drying and rewetting that would take place if fans were running all day.
- Another important thing to consider is that automated systems can also help manage grain if you just need to cool it. Some growers may have their grain come in at optimal moisture but need to cool it in order to increase storage life. Warm and dry air may not be the optimal fix, but an automated system can help run through cool air at certain times of the day to cool the grain down to the desired temperature and maintain moisture content.

Safety

- The dangers of grain handling cannot be stressed heavily enough. NEVER enter a bin when the grain is flowing and be extremely cautious around all grain handling structures and equipment. Be sure to have safety precautions and emergency plans in place and make them known to all workers and bystanders on the farm.

Legal Statement

ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW PESTICIDE LABEL DIRECTIONS. Performance may vary, from location to location and from year to year, as local growing, soil and weather conditions may vary. Growers should evaluate data from multiple locations and years whenever possible and should consider the impacts of these conditions on the grower's fields.

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