

CUSTOMNews

Representing Custom Farming in Wisconsin | **SPRING 2019**

On December 3, 1993, a silo collapsed on Nick Schreiner of Ashland. He was rescued in a matter of minutes, but he sustained a severe spinal cord injury. He now uses a wheelchair.

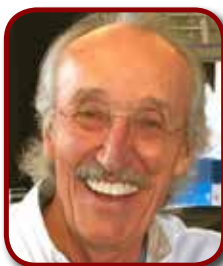
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Safety expert Keith Bolsen delivered a timely and compelling message this past Feb.

Silage handling safety a must on the farm

By Mary Hookham for WCO



Keith Bolsen

Keith Bolsen had two close calls while handling silage at Kansas State University during his teaching and research career there. In one instance, he lost parts of three fingers on his right hand. In the other instance, he nearly overturned a pack tractor. Now he works to educate farmers on safe silage handling techniques in hopes of preventing other accidents.

"Accidents are caused by unsafe behavior or the conditions due to the actions of people," Bolsen said.

At this year's Forage Symposium, held at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells, Bolsen encouraged attendees to create a clear, written silage handling plan. Even the best employee can become frustrated with

malfunctioning equipment or fatigued after working long days and take a risky action.

Workers and bystanders of all ages have been injured or killed during silage harvest and feed out events. Most accidents occur when people step over or simply stand too close to a rotating power take-off, they work too closely to the feed-out face of an overfilled bunker or silage pile, or they move a forage harvester without checking all sides and honking three times, Bolsen said.

The major silage safety hazards include fatigue, complacency, truck or tractor roll overs, being run over by or entangled in machinery or equipment, a fall from an extensive height, silage avalanche burial or silo gas, he said.

Over the years, Bolsen has taken to heart some enlightening quotes from farmers and agribusiness professionals. He believes in the

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UPCOMING DATES:

WCO Scholarships
Applications due May 1

WI Farm Technology Days
July 23-25, Johnson Creek, Wis
Board meeting - July 23

CONTACT WCO:

Membership or Sponsorship:
execdir@wiscustomoperators.org
(608) 577-4345



From the President's Cab

By Bryce O'Leary



Hello and happy Spring! This year's Symposium program was excellent. In addition, the networking with other operators and the many exhibitors and sponsors was valuable. We pair necessary certifications with the conference for your convenience and we

welcomed more than 70 people to our commercial pesticide applicator training. We also offered level 1 nutrient applicator training and pump school as part of the partnership between MFA, WCO, PNAAW and UW-Extension.

WCO welcomed two new board members; Isaac Lemmenes from Braun Electric Inc. (corporate) and Jesse Dvorachek from Dvorachek Farm & Industry LLC (operator). We honored Chuck Rabitz and Bill Arneson, who retired from the board. Make sure to read the articles in this newsletter about our scholarship and Employee of the Year winners, who were also honored at the annual meeting.

Next year the Symposium will be held February 17-19, 2020 at Chula Vista in the Dells, so save the date and plan on attending as the education committee has already begun planning for the event.

A few weeks ago, we offered our bi-annual WCO Safety Certification training on March 13 in Kimberly, co-sponsored by Dairy Business Association. More than 90 people attended the event with topics ranging from manure pump safety, OSHA inspections, local ordinances and managing risk.

By now everyone has repaired equipment and has put plans in place to begin another year of custom work and nutrient application. Make sure those plans include how to handle any emergency. Little things like keeping a copy of the IOH statue in each vehicle, emergency contact info, and even copies of insurance papers in all of the equipment will be a great help in the event of a problem. Make each day a safe one and at sunset, take a moment to enjoy the beauty of it. Knowing that you have survived another day to tackle whatever challenges come your way tomorrow.

In your travels this year, if you meet any operators who are not members ask them to join WCO. The larger our member base the greater the voice we have on any issues that arise affecting our business. Take care and have a safe season. 🇺🇸

-Bryce

Welcome new members!

The following list represents individuals/sponsors who joined WCO from November 2018 - March 2019. 🇺🇸

Scott Thompson
Matt Wavrunek

Neal Mertens
Andrew Birchen

Bob Freiburger
Blake Walke
Cory Holerud
Tyler Cross
Jared Renz

Willie Dejardin
Jordan Derganz
Lee Kielpikowski
Andy Fletcher
Andrew Floto
Kyle Lacrosse
George Kafer
Arnold Gaertig
Sarah Johnson
Jeremy Heim
Luke Fair
Megan Hoff
Leif Erickson
Mike Krepline
Stephanie Jens
Chad Snapp
Leon Hills
Keith Schroeder
Jerod Schmidt
Tracey Leeder
Tom Schneider
Jeremy Moehn
Kelly Dallmann
Charles Rabitz
Jacob Maly
Clint Seefeldt
Bryce Robaidek
Rob Hoida
Ryan Folkman
Will Schmidt
Monica Osterhaus
Greg Stodola
Kevin Tasch
Matt Tokarski
Ricky Mickle
James Wilburn

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Countyline Ag
Creekside Custom Ag, LLC
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Dinamica Generale US
Dejardin Trucking, LLC
Derganz Custom Farms
Eaton Transport Inc
Fletcher AG Service
Floto Farms
Forage Storage Solutions
Foxland Harvestore
Gaertig Farms LLC
GEA Farm Technologies, Inc.
Heim Brothers Custom LLC
Hoewisch Homestead Dairy, LLC
Hoff Farms
HUB Farm & Ag
Krepline Farms LLC
Lallemand Animal Nutrition
Midwest Injection
Milk-N-More Harvesting
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Norm-E-Lane
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Phil's Pumping and Fab Inc
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Rabitz Century Acres
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Royal Flush Pit Pumping
Russell Robaidek, Inc.
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Ryan's Farm Services LLC
Schmidt Ag Services LLC
Silver Streak Ag Services
Stodola Ag Transport
Tasch's Custom
Tokarski Baling

Silage safety (continued from p. 1)

power of contemplating these quotes and likes to share them at his speaking events in hopes of opening the eyes of farmers working with silage in their own operations.

"We have nothing to lose by practicing safety, but we have everything to lose by not practicing it," said Dennis Murphy, extension safety specialist with Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pennsylvania.

"Countless victims have learned the hard way that there is no such thing as a safe bunker silo or silage pile," said Doug DeGroat, dairy nutritionist in Tulare, California.

"Every serious injury or fatality silage-related accident could have been prevented," said an anonymous attendee at the U.S. Custom Harvesters, Inc. annual convention a few years ago

Bolsen said the key to silage safety is to have a clear, written plan with guidelines and protocols, communicate it to all farm employees, post warning signs and issue personal protective equipment. Enforce the rules by using a zero-tolerance policy and reward safety compliance and accident-free time periods.

In order to prevent avalanche tragedies, Bolsen recommended avoiding overfilling bunker silos and building drive-over piles to an excessive height, avoid working or standing too close to a feed-out face, avoid becoming complacent, and always be aware of the surroundings.

"Avalanches can happen to anyone," he said.

Bolsen, professor emeritus at the Animal Sciences Department at Kansas State, grew up on his parents' grain and livestock farm near Bement, Illinois and began a 32-year career

at Kansas State University in 1971. His priority these days is to use to his foundation, the Keith Bolsen Silage Safety Foundation, to promote safe silage management practices for bunker silos and silage piles. 🐾

“

Even the best employee can become frustrated with malfunctioning equipment or fatigued after working long days and take a risky action.

”

- Keith Bolsen

John Shutske from UW-Extension focused on manure during the co-presented safety session. Photo by Mary Hookham.



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Positive attitude, commitment to customers earns Kowitz top employee award

By WCO

WCO recently honored a Norwalk man for his hard work and dedication to a custom farming business.

WCO's 2019 Employee of the Year award was given to Norm Kowitz, an employee of Sullivan Custom Farming in Sparta on Feb. 20 during the organization's annual meeting at the Forage Symposium at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells, Wis.

Nowitz has worked for Sullivan Custom Farming for several years and is described as a gifted mechanic and an all-around great person.

"Norm strives to provide customers with exceptional service," said Brian Sullivan, who nominated Kowitz. "He treats each customer as if they are the most important by being present in communication and by being respectful of their land and farm."

WCO created the Employee of the Year award to honor an exemplary employee who demonstrates excellence in the areas of safety, efficiency, customer service, environmental stewardship and profitability of a custom farming or custom harvest operation. Community service is a new category that was added to the award criteria this year.

"Many of our members have had the same crew for several years. These employees are highly skilled and keep our businesses going during the busy season and all year long," said Bryce O'Leary, WCO president, who presented the award. "Their commitment to safety, the environment and our clients is outstanding – and this award is our opportunity to honor them."

In addition to his excellent customer service skills, Sullivan says Kowitz's positive attitude and willingness to help others improves morale during busy and stressful times. Outside of work, Kowitz is active in his community and volunteers with the Lions Club, his local snowmobile club and countless community fundraisers and events.

"Norm has a smile on his face from the time he arrives until he leaves every day. He is a complete team player," said Sullivan during the award presentation.

Applications are collected for WCO's Employee of the Year in the fall and the winner is announced at the group's annual meeting in February. Members are encouraged to nominate those employees who set a positive example for their entire crew. 🇺🇸

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L to R: Bryce O'Leary, WCO president, Norm Kowitz and Brian Sullivan of Sullivan Custom Farming.

March safety training emphasizes manure pump safety

WCO recently co-hosted our annual safety training and certification meeting with Dairy Business Association on March 13 at Liberty Hall in Kimberly.

More than 90 people from all sectors of custom farming came together for the event.

This training qualified as continuing education towards the WCO Safety Certification program, now in its fifth year.

The purpose of WCO's safety certificate program is to train WCO members and their employees in occupational safety and health in order to reduce incident rates. Participants have the opportunity to earn a certificate upon completion. Trainings like the WCO Safety Certification program have been shown to reduce incidents, which is why insurance companies

support these efforts and may offer discounts to members who complete the program.

"WCO chose to co-host our safety training this year because it's a chance to leverage our talents and time and to reduce duplication," said Bryce O'Leary, WCO President. "Agriculture needs more willing partners and our organizations have membership cross-over."

Manure, manure regulations and associated risks were highlighted as part of the program, although the content was applicable to forage harvesting and related cropping operators.

In the coming issues of the *Custom News* we will feature articles on topics presented at the event. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Dave



Isaac Lemmenes from Braun Electric Inc. spoke on manure pump safety.

Anderson and the team at Vincent Urban Walker and Associates for sponsoring this event.

The full album of photos is available on our Facebook page at facebook.com/WisconsinCustomOperators

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Symposium offers education, fun

By Mary Hookham for WCO

A new planting season is just around the corner, which means WCO members are gearing up and getting ready to get in the fields. Brushing up on the latest hot topics, safety equipment and new technology is a must before climbing into their tractors.

The 2019 Forage Symposium provided many educational and fun opportunities. Keith Bolsen of the Silage Safety Foundation and John Shutske from University of Wisconsin-Madison encouraged attendees to heed warnings about silage and manure avalanches.

Bolsen said the key to silage safety is to have a clear, written plan with guidelines and protocols, communicate it to all farm employees, post warning signs and issue personal protective equipment. Enforce the rules by using a zero-tolerance policy and

reward safety compliance and accident-free time periods.

"We have nothing to lose by practicing safety; but we have everything to lose by not practicing it," Bolsen said.

David Krekeler of Krekeler Strother, S.C., provided attendees with information and tips on how to collect on past due accounts as well as a copy of a credit application to use as a guideline in their own businesses. The first step in collecting payment from clients is to gather as much information as possible. This information should be in the form of the basics such as name, address, phone number and social security number and then go to the next level with copies of personal and business financial statements, completed credit applications, a list of assets and

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Josh and Kimberly Parker from Parker Forage LLC, spoke about their lives travelling the country with their 4+ children.



Continued on next page

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liens on the client's property and bank account information.

Documentation is the next step and can be in the form of contracts, guarantees and liens. Written contracts are the safest options for both parties, Krekeler said. Other things to consider include charging interest and getting liens on crops.

"The expectations of you and your customer should be identical," Krekeler said.

Taking action to collect payment requires sound, timely invoicing, clear and frequent communication between both parties, and top-notch accounts receivable management. The actual payment collection is typically obtained from wages or bank accounts.

Jeff Laufenberg of Syngenta and Damon Smith, researcher with University of Wisconsin-Madison, provided a recap of corn diseases in 2018 and what to expect and how to manage in 2019. Tar spot on corn crops all across the state threatened yields in 2018. This is a fungus that causes small, black, tar-like spots on the surface of corn leaves. These fungal structures can attack both healthy and dead tissue, and are often surrounded by a narrow, tan circle. Many fields appear to dry down and turn completely brown before the usual harvest time. The fungus has a 20 percent survivability rate and left no hybrid untouched last year.

"Applying fungicide can help lessen the symptoms," Smith said. "But the timing of application is crucial."

Favorable weather conditions for the growth of tar spot disease include cool nights between 60 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit and days with humidity averaging above 75 percent, said Smith. Last summer's excessive rain increased the average humidity levels.

Randy Benson from Krone North America explained several features of their forage harvesters. Krone just

During the 2018 growing season, much of Wisconsin's corn crop suffered from tar spot, a small tar-like fungus. Photo from UW-Center for IPM.



released the BiG X 680 - 1180, which has a V8 engine with high torque and high-quality engine components among other changes.

Mark Scuffham explained how the Claas ACTISILER 37 allows for the use of organic concentrates through an insulated inoculant tank for reduced quantity and a higher concentration.

Aaron Ostrander from John Deere highlighted the HarvestLab™ 3000, which uses NIR technology to measure moisture and constituents in fresh and ensiled crops.

Josh Harkenrider from New Holland discussed changes to their forage harvesters including a new engine and several new options including DuraCracker™.

Josh and Kimberly Parker and their young family shared insights into their large-scale custom harvest operation, Parker Forage, LLC. The business is based in Osakis, Minnesota but the Parkers have equipment and clients spread across the country.

Challenges in the custom harvesting business include obtaining financing for the equipment and business start-up needs at their young ages, finding and retaining quality employees,

acquiring and maintaining clients and bookkeeping, said Josh Parker.

"And there is a fine line between having the kids around all the equipment and keeping them safe," he said.

Michelle Der Bedrosian of Vita Plus gave an overview of Near-Infrared Reflectance (NIR). This technology is used to test moisture, nutrient and digestibility levels in feed samples and maintain quality control. Custom operators can utilize this technology at harvest time to obtain the highest quality feed with the least amount of dry matter loss as possible. Farmers can take advantage of this when they feed their livestock to see how much the moisture of the feed has changed, which can potentially harm milk production.

Der Bedrosian's colleague, Bergen Nelson of John Deere, also showcased how NIR technology is always useful to both customer operators and farmers. It accurately analyzes forage at a high material flow speed while preserving it completely. It can also be used to determine the nutrient value of manure by testing total nitrogen, ammonia nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, dry matter and volume, he said. 🇺🇸

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SUPPORTING EDUCATION



Rachel O'Leary



Dane Trustem

WCO announces scholarship winners; 2019 applications due May 1

The Wisconsin Custom Operators, Inc. (WCO) recently awarded three scholarships to students pursuing further education. These students were selected based on leadership, civic engagement, academics and volunteer activities related to agriculture. Students also submitted essays detailing their educational and vocational plans for the future. Scholarship winners are required to have ties to the WCO – either as a member, relative of a member or employee of a member. Students received a \$1000 scholarship.

“WCO understands that the foundation for the continued success of Wisconsin’s agricultural economy depends on a well-educated workforce,” says Dr. Kevin Shinnars, chairman of the WCO Scholarship Committee and professor of biological systems engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

“We also recognize that the high-cost of additional education can impact this need.”

Winners of the 2018 WCO

scholarships include: Rachel O’Leary, Janesville; Dane Trustem, Evansville; Colin Wussow, Cecil.

Applications for the 2019 WCO scholarship are currently being accepted and are due May 1. Interested students should visit <https://wiscustomoperators.org/about/scholarships.php> for more information including eligibility, criteria and application. Again this year, WCO will offer three (3) \$1,000 scholarships.

Meet the winners:

Rachel O’Leary of Janesville is a fourth-year vet student at the UW School of Veterinary Medicine (SVM). In vet school, students study everything from “goldfish to giraffes”. In order to remain connected to food animal medicine, Rachel serves as co-president for both the bovine and pig clubs. She also had the chance to represent the UW SVM in Washington D.C. to lobby legislators on the importance of the Higher Education Act and the Veterinary Medical Loan Repayment Program Enhancement

Act. She is the daughter of WCO member O’Leary Brothers Chopping Service.

Dane Trustem of Evansville is a first year student in the Farm and Industry Short Course program at UW-Madison. Dane aspires to be the 6th generation on his family’s dairy farm as the crops and maintenance manager. He is also interested in more efficient manure management to positively impact the environment. He is the son of WCO member Larson Acres.

Colin Wussow of Cecil is a freshman at UW-River Falls studying ag business and minoring in dairy science and coaching. In addition to furthering his education, Colin is a student-athlete on the football team. After graduation, he plans to work in the ag industry for several year and hopes to return to the family dairy farm as the fifth generation and continue the harvesting business. Colin is the son of WCO member Milk-n-More Harvesting.

Please congratulate these outstanding young professionals! 🍷



Colin Wussow



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survived another day to tackle whatever
challenges come your way tomorrow. ”**

-Bryce O’Leary, WCO president

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