Points of Interest

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Got Something Special? Showcase it at Manure Expo Aug. 22

Manure Expo is the commercial manure application industry's annual field demonstration, technology and education event. Expo rotates around the upper Midwest, and is hosted by PNAAW in Wisconsin every 4-6 years. A number of your fellow members are planning on demonstrating or showing their own innovations, including:

* In-lagoon dredge barges and agitation boats
* A truck-mounted 150' aerial agitation boom
* A "dragline overpass" approved for running line OVER a state highway
* Smartphone apps for monitoring and controlling dragline and lagoon pumps remotely

This is in addition to the expected 50 equipment and technology vendors from across the US and Canada bringing their equipment to the Expo in Sauk City.

For more information or to find out more about demonstrating or showing off your equipment, visit the www.manureexpo.com website or contact Ted Bay at 608.723.2125.

Vendors are asked to register by June 22 to get equipment listed in pre-event promotional materials.

Pre-Expo Events: Mark your Calendars

The day prior (Aug. 21) to Manure Expo will feature two events of interest. The first is an afternoon tour of the Dane County Community Digester. Attendance is open to anyone who wants to attend.

The second is a private manure applicator/industry dinner. Pre-registration is required, and only vendors and commercial applicators are invited to this event. For more information on either one, contact Kevin Erb at 920.391.4652.
A message from UWEX Farm Safety Specialist Cheryl Skjolaas:

To all-

I read of this incident while out in DC for a meeting at the USDA NIFA on agricultural safety. We had been discussing research needs related to confined spaces, primarily grain storage but some waste storage. The need for updating ASAE (ASABE) EP 470 Manure Storage Safety was discussed. The next day the article on the loss of these family members brought the situation into focus.

We will never have full details of the situation and I’ve been hesitant to comment without knowing some additional information. Yesterday, I had a discussion with Robb Meinen and we considered a few possible factors. Robb was going to see if someone more local could contact the sheriff’s department on the scene.

A few items for consideration:

- From an OSHA perspective, this is a contract employer situation. Maryland is a state OSHA and I haven’t had time to see if any differences that may impact agriculture standards. The farm would be the host employer. Not sure on employee numbers and whether OSHA has jurisdiction. However, if they do have jurisdiction, both the contractor and host would have responsibility for employee safety. Since machinery is involved, they would look for maintenance records and whether there was some existing hazard that should have been repaired according to the equipment OMM.

- While the custom haulers are a family business, the 14 year old on the worksite brings into the discussion the Hazardous Occupation Order for Agriculture. Reminder, jobs in confined spaces are not provided an exemption through the Wisconsin Safe Operation of Tractor and Machinery Certification Course. Farms concerned about OSHA compliance may consider restricting youth employees on their worksite.

- Custom haulers should have conversations with the host employers regarding safety when on the site. Even if you’ve worked on that site previously, before your crew starts working, discuss the required safety on both parts and review with your employees. Employees should be able to stop work if they feel at risk and have a means to communicate the situation to a supervisor or an employer.

- If you are a professional out on site while work is in progress, review safety requirements with the farm manager or supervisor. Make yourself visible to operators with hi-vis vests. State employees, while not covered by OSHA, WI adopted the OSHA standards so our requirement on confined space entry would be the same.
From ASABE EP 470 Manure Storage Safety

7.1 The user of the manure storage shall be provided with appropriate safety information. The information in ANSI/ASABE S607, Ventilating Manure Storages to Reduce Entry Risks, should be referenced along with Section 8 Safety equipment, warning signs, management suggestions, should be used as a basis for safety instruction to be included in the operator’s manual and on signs. These should be provided when the manure storage is constructed.

8.2 Rescue equipment such as harnesses, ropes, respirators, and block and tackle should be located near the manure storage area. The location should be clearly marked. Gas detection equipment such as detector tubes and/or instruments designed to detect combustible gases and hydrogen sulfide should be available and located in a warm, dry area. Detector tubes and sensors in gas detection instruments have expiration dates. Checks should be made periodically to be sure that the equipment is operational and properly calibrated and within expiration date. The phone numbers of the local fire department/rescue squad should be posted in a box mounted on a pole near the outside storage or on a wall in the inside storage building. These numbers should be posted near all the telephones on the farm. ANSI/ASABE S607, Ventilating Manure Storages to Reduce Entry Risks, should be referenced for further information on ventilation needs for confined space entry.

8.5.3 Earthen storages. Warning sign(s) should be located on the fence near entry gate that prohibit entry to the storage should be posted. Examples include but are not limited to “Do Not Enter” or “Drowning Hazard.”

8.5.3.1 Post warning sign(s) that say “Danger Manure Storage” or “Danger Keep Out,” or “Danger Keep Away.”

8.5.3.2 Dairy and beef manure may crust over and even have growing vegetation in bottom loaded storages, but the surface will not support the weight of humans, animals or equipment.

8.5.3.3 Keep all safety guards and shields in place on pumps, pump hoppers, tank wagons, power units, etc. Do not allow children or irresponsible people near any operating equipment. Do not enter tank wagons. Use caution when working on the agitation pump spout to change its direction in order to prevent falls.

While no OSHA standard, these are some of the consensus standard items that would be considered to show a known industry hazard and actions for employee safety that could be used with a 5.a.1 citation or General Duty Clause.

I had a discussion with Dr Dennis Murphy, Penn State Extension Safety Specialist related item 8.2 and the history of the recommendation. Initial recommendation for a farm pond that got picked up when these storages were smaller in size and considered “manure ponds.” Not sure the best recommendation for today’s designs but that’s another conversation.

Understand this is a small piece of information related to safety. I’d be interested in any thoughts or questions from this group as standards are reviewed or to help improve your safety programs.

It is a busy time of the year but you would expect this line from me “Please, be safe out there!”

Cheryl