

## **Don't blow your phosphine in the wind**

Phosphine (Phostoxin) is an extremely effective gas but it must be held within the grain silo to do its job, if not kept at a lethal concentration for at least seven days, insects will survive. These survivors will have been selected for their tolerance to phosphine and their offspring will have the same resistance. Repeat fumigations under the same poor conditions will select stronger insects each time.

In a leaky silo the phosphine will be sucked out by the wind (chimney effect pic) before the job is done. Rubber seals wear out with use and if the sealed silo is more than two years old the rubber strips on the seal plates and hatches may need replacing. For about \$20 investment in rubber strip you can hold the gas in the silo and protect your asset. It's not too late to check the seals before adding the phosphine because most silos have separate external seal plates.

It is recommended to fumigate the silo now and not wait until you 'see' the insects, in fact when they become visible they have reached a population in the order of 1000 – 2000 per tonne! Fumigating now will eliminate any that have got into the silo when it was open and moved in from the surrounds or from grain handling equipment.

Recent batches of phosphine containers have new instructions. Apart from being easier to read and calculate the dose rate, the reference to using in unsealed silos and adding to a grain stream have been removed. Both actions are contrary to good grain storage practice yet have been on the label for more than 40 years!

What it means in practical terms is that phosphine tablets must not be thrown into the silo or the auger and must be placed either on a tray in the headspace or use the more convenient 'Bagchain' system (see pic). Also it is required that the silo be tested for sealability prior to use of the product.

Apply the phosphine tablets at 2 tablets per tonne of silo capacity or 1.5 g / m<sup>3</sup> - remember you are fumigating the airspace and not the amount of grain.

## **Protecting seed grain**

Cypermethrin can now be used on seed grain **provided it is mixed with a dye**. This will give you control of your grain insects from harvest to seeding. Ask your seed cleaner to use a grain pickle containing Cypermethrin.

*For more information contact Chris Newman on 9366 2309 or 0428 934 509*