

A Reminder

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HEAD OFFICE Dept. "Q" WINNIPEG

About the Farm

Shrinkage of Grain in Storage
By Earle William Gage

Farm products stored after harvest are usually subject to variation in weight, which generally manifests itself in a loss, or shrinkage. The principal factors bearing upon the extent of this variation are the moisture conditions of the atmosphere, the degree of maturity at which the crop was harvested, and the method of storing. The question of shrinkage is always important to the farmer because it has a direct bearing upon the marketing of his products and his financial returns. An estimate on how much may be realized from a quantity of grain or hay after storing for a certain time always necessitates a consideration of the shrinkage, for otherwise losses may result where profits were at first expected. Storing farm products, however, does not always entail a decrease in weight; but on the contrary sometimes results in a marked increase. Investigations regarding this subject have been made in various parts of the country.

The reported observations on wheat in Michigan included studies on the variation in weight during storage and on the relation of the degree of ripeness to the weight of the grain. As early as 1879, Dr. R. C. Kedzie showed farmers that wheat when allowed to become overripe, or dead ripe, as it is generally known, weighs less than when harvested at the period of complete ripeness. It was found also that the amount and quality of the flour, as well as the germinating power of the grain are reduced when the crop is allowed to stand after complete



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ripeness has been reached. The greatest loss, however, due to overripeness, is caused by the shelling of the grain. Certain varieties of wheat have less tendency to shell than others, and by giving these the preference and harvesting at the proper stage of maturity, loss from this source may be reduced to a minimum. In 1898 the shrinkage of White Clawson, a soft, white wheat, and Buda-Pesth, a hard, red variety, was determined. At the time of threshing the grain was dry and in good condition, and after having been stored for three hundred and twenty-two days, the White Clawson had lost less than one-half of one per cent, and the Buda-Pesth less than one-tenth of one per cent.

It will also be interesting to note the loss in weight by shrinkage of grains while stored in grain elevators. Such observation was made in Detroit not long since, where fifteen hundred bushels of wheat in a hard and dry condition were stored immediately after threshing. After ten days a shrinkage of a little over thirty bushels, or a loss of about two per cent, had occurred. On another occasion nine hundred bushels put into the same elevator, while still slightly damp, lost three and one-third per cent in weight during four months. This loss represented a shrinkage of about thirty bushels. These facts led to the conclusion that the variation in weight of well-cured wheat in that state does not amount to more than five per cent on the average for all storage.

In New York State small quantities of wheat were placed in netting bags, at the Experiment Station, which were suspended from the ceiling of the laboratory. On July 18, when the grain was threshed, it contained twenty-seven and two-tenths per cent of water. The lowest water content while the samples were exposed to the natural air of the room was reached

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