

Farmer Falls In Grain Bin, Comes Out Alive

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A Newton man is home safe after accidentally falling into his grain bin on Tuesday morning.

Rick Nearmyer went to unclog his auger when he accidentally fell into a grain bin full of corn. He was able to hang on to a rope and call his friends for help.

"He called and said "I'm stuck in a grain bin" and you could see Rick from here up," said Denny Deakins, one of Nearmyer's friends.

Tanner Nearmyer, Rick's son, said his dad has moved corn countless times in his 40 years of farming and his heart sank when he got the call at work.

"I told my boss "I got to go, dads stuck in a bin" and you never know. Your mind races," said Tanner, Rick's son.

Rick held on as the corn started to pull him in more. His friends tried to pull him out by wrapping a rope around his waist.

"It didn't cave down, but he had a sheet of corn come down on top of him and it was up to his shirt pockets," said Tanner.

"He was holding the rope he tied to the ladder. I couldn't touch the grain because it wanted to collapse and I could just stand next to him, trying to get to a door down low," said Deakins.

More friends and neighbors came to help, but after multiple failed tries, they called 911. Four fire departments from Newton, Monroe, Kellogg and Reasnor assisted Jasper County Sheriff's Office and Life Flight.

They used Kellogg's grain bin rescue unit to relieve the pressure from Rick's chest.

"They had a tube they stuck around him and they put oxygen on him so if he did collapse, he'd have air," said Deakins.

After one hour of trying, they cut three holes in the bin and as the corn spilled out, so did Rick, basically unharmed.

"He was laughing and that's my dad, laughing when he shouldn't be! He's got to make the situation better, which is nice because it makes everyone relax and know that he's OK," said Tanner.

Tanner said Rick sat in the ambulance for a while and then went home, only suffering from high blood pressure. While his dad returned home, everyone else stayed to clean up.

"There are farmers here that were busy trying to get ready for harvest and they dropped what they were doing to come help the neighbors," said Tanner.

Tanner said it won't take long for his dad to be back outside working toward this year's harvest.

"I know him, he'll be out here tomorrow cleaning out other bins doing the same thing," said Tanner. "But I'd rather be cleaning up all the corn off all these bins than have to go bury him in the dirt tomorrow."

Kellogg Fire Department has used their grain rescue unit twice in the last year. Other fire departments around the state have began purchasing rescue units since 2009, when Iowa had one of its most deadliest grain bin death records set.