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Safety Alert January 2025

Winch Cable Maintenance – Grainline Swing Away Augers

Hazard Overview

It has been identified that inadequate lubrication of the main winch cable used to raise and lower the auger barrel can result in premature cable failure. The winch cable is a critical component that operates under significant tension and friction. Without proper lubrication, the cable can experience excessive wear, causing the individual wires to fatigue and ultimately leading to breakage.

Identified Risks

- **Cable Breakage:** Insufficient lubrication increases friction, causing the cable to wear prematurely resulting in cable failure.
- **Injury Hazard:** A broken cable can cause sudden and uncontrolled movement of the auger, which could result in serious injury or death.
- **Damage to plant/equipment:** Failure of the winch cable can lead to sudden and uncontrolled movement of the auger, which could result in damage to plant/equipment.

Immediate Actions:

1. Lubricate the cable daily or after operating the winch 5 times to ensure proper function and prevent premature wear.
2. Inspect the cable prior to use for signs of excessive wear, fraying, or corrosion.
3. Operate the winch and listen/look for any abnormal changes in movement or noise during operation, which may indicate an issue.
4. Ensure the cable is correctly spooled on the winch drum. Excessive slack can cause the cable to "bird's nest," leading to potential damage and premature wear if left unaddressed.

Example Images

- Figure 1. Correctly spooled cable on winch drum
- Figure 2. Adequately coated cable using foam type penetrating lube. (Recommended).
- Figure 3. Adequately coated cable using grease lube.

Figure 1.

Figure 2.

Figure 3.