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Silo collapses; Manning plant supt. killed

MANNING — Ken Weets, 41, superintendent of the AGRI Industries soybean processing plant near Manning, was killed Monday afternoon when a silo filled with 800 tons of soybean meal collapsed.

The silo apparently ruptured when the meal "bridged," according to Maurice Van Nostrand, AGRI's director of marketing research. "In hot, humid weather like we've been having, air pockets can form inside a silo," Van Nostrand said. "It appears the meal suddenly dropped down, creating the power of an explosion."

Listed in stable condition at Manning General Hospital was employee Dave Wurr, 24, of Manning, who sustained injuries to his eardrum, shoulder and hand.

Witnesses said the silo twisted as it fell, landing mainly on the production office. The rest of the large building was a mass of twisted beams and rubble.

Weets' body was discovered nearly four hours after the silo collapsed. Manning Fire Department members were able to retrieve the body 1½ hours later.