

## **“Best Practices” for Care and Maintenance of Herculite Ag Curtain**

Herculite personnel have talked with hundreds of producers over the past 30 years and visited dozens of sites. Over the years we have learned some simple practices to help extend the life of your curtain. This article highlights some basic and simple “best practices” that can be used to extend the life of your curtain; saving you money and increasing profit.

### **Installation Tips**

#### **Install curtain when the temperature is above 40 degrees Fahrenheit**

While [Herculite Curtain](#) is rated to withstand cold temperatures in excess of -30 degrees Fahrenheit, that does not necessarily mean that it is good to fold, roll, crumple or aggressively handle the material at those cold temperatures. As a best practice, install curtains at above 40 degrees Fahrenheit to prevent premature damage to the material during the installation process.

#### **During installation of the curtain avoid nailing through the stitch of the hem**

We have observed over the years that on a gravity drop curtain it is sometimes the practice to nail the curtain in the up position while either the pipe is being put into the hem and/or the roping system is installed for raising or lowering of the curtain. On a rare occasion a hem has failed because while nailing the material up a nail pierced the thread used to sew the stitch; causing the hem to unravel. Simply keeping the nail above or below the stitch line will prevent this kind of damage from occurring.

#### **Always use rope to prevent the curtain from bellowing out in high winds**

We all understand the power of wind, and without proper rope guards your 200' curtain can gather wind like a sail. To prevent extreme strain on the curtain a rope system like the one in the adjacent photograph should be used. The rope on the exterior of the facility will prevent the curtain from bellowing out and the chicken wire on the inside will prevent the curtain from bellowing into the barn or house.



#### **Secure the ends of the curtain on site with tape, roofing staples or adhesive**

Stitch lines will unravel once the thread has been compromised and also when you cut the curtain to length to break the stitch line. On site, make sure to re-secure the stitch line on either side of the curtain. I have seen several different solutions for securing the edge of the curtain that work nicely. These solutions include simply applying a piece of duct tape around the end of the hem, using a roofing or upholstery staple on the hem stapling over the stitch line or using an adhesive to glue the edge of the hem.

## Cleaning Best Practices

### **Do not use high pressure sprayer systems on your Herculite Curtain**

Herculite Curtain is a fabric not a piece of metal and is designed to be flexible at very low temperatures. I have personally seen high pressure sprayers peel the paint off of aluminum siding and fabric is just not designed to see that level of water pressure.

### **Spray clean with a garden hose type sprayer once a year**

While Herculite product is waterproof and impervious to dirt, this does not mean that it can't grow mildew on its surface. Herculite Fabric is treated to slow or reduce mildew growth, but proper cleaning will improve its life long performance. Simply spraying your curtain down once a year with a standard garden hose sprayer will knock off the majority of the dirt and grime that is inherent to livestock farming.

### **Do not use any cleaning chemicals on your Herculite Curtain**

While we recommend that you make it part of your preventative maintenance practice to wash your curtains with water there is no need to use any chemicals on your curtain. Bleach is Chlorine and Herculite Curtains are made with PVC (Poly Vinyl Chloride). Chloride and Chlorine are in the same family and the chlorine in bleach will break down the fabric; especially after the water has evaporated and the sun heats up the chlorine that remains on the fabric. Herculite Curtain will last for many years with a simple water bath once a year.

## Preventing Rodent Damage

### **Cycle Herculite Curtain once a week during the hot months to avoid rodent nesting**

Just like mom used to tell me, "That Rat is as scared of you as you are of it". Simply said, disturbing the curtains every week will deter rodents from deciding to make your Herculite Curtain their home. Cycling a curtain takes all of a minute or two, so make it a practice to raise and lower your curtain once a week during the hot months. Regular cycling of your curtain can help to avoid water and debris build up like that seen on the adjacent picture.



### **Implement good rodent baiting practices**

Placing bait stations around the barn every 25 feet or so is a great way to keep the rodent population down. While you are out cycling your curtains once a week you can take a look at the bait station to see if you have caught anything.

### **Keep weeds and other debris 18" from barn wall**



In touring several different facilities around the country I have noticed the simple practice of either cutting back the growth of grass or weeds or using round up is a good way to reduce the activity of rodents around your facilities. This makes it easier for you to get around your facility, check bait stations and cycle curtains. Also, keep the area around the barn clear of debris or piles of material like pictured to the left. Debris close to the barn along with weeds growing up the barn wall proved for traffic points for rodent movement.

The cost of replacing curtain is extremely high and can eat into your profits. The curtain is just a fraction of the expense; installation labor costs can easily be two times as much as the cost of the curtain. By following these simple practices for curtain installation and maintenance you can extend the life of your [Herculite Curtain](#) and increase your profits.

Herculite has been supplying Agricultural Curtains for over 30 years. We are unique in the fact that we not only make the curtain, but we manufacture the fabric that is used in the curtain. This allows us to monitor the quality of our curtain from beginning to end, insuring the curtain's strength and long lasting performance in any climate. Herculite product is US made from every yard of finished fabric to every stitch of curtain hem.

Herculite Curtains have a long reputation for lasting years in operation on poultry, swine and dairy facilities around the country, but there are some routine practices that can be done to help your curtain last even longer.

This article was researched and written by Jason Billeb of Herculite Products. Jason serves as Territory Sales Manager for Herculite Products in the Mid-West. Jason has interacted with hundreds of people in the Agricultural Curtain Business for Herculite and visited many locations to help customers with Herculite Ag Curtains over his 12 years of experience.

