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College of Agricultural Sciences • Cooperative Extension

AGRICULTURAL SAFETY AND HEALTH NEWS

Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering *Volume 11, Number 3* *May/June 1999*

IN THIS ISSUE

ASHN Launches "Injury Incident Profile"

The first of an on-going series that profiles actual farm injury incidents in Pennsylvania, called "Injury Incident Profile" is printed in this issue. The purpose of this series is to discuss the circumstances leading up to these incidents in hope that readers may learn from the experiences of others.

If you, or someone you know has been involved in a farming injury incident and would like to share your story, please send a description of the incident, along with any photos you may have of the equipment involved, to the address on the back of this newsletter. Also, please include a telephone number so we can contact you if we have any follow-up questions.

"Injury Incident Profile" can be a relevant, vital feature of this newsletter, but we need your input in order for this series to work to help prevent future injuries.

Dennis J. Murphy
Professor of Agricultural and Biological Engineering

ASHN's "Injury Incident Profile"

In November of 1998, Larry Harpster was working on his Huntingdon County farm filling an Ag Bag with high moisture shelled corn. Because the wet corn wasn't flowing out of the gravity wagon very well, Larry climbed into the wagon and pushed the shelled corn out into the bagger.

On the 14th load of corn that day, the wagon began to tip over while he was pushing corn out. Most of the corn was out of the unloading side, but about 50 to 60 bushels were lodged on the opposite side of the wagon.

"I thought the whole wagon was tipping," Harpster said, I didn't want to be pinned under it so I tried to jump at an angle." ***(continued on pg 4.)***

*Inspect all older equipment for signs of wear and potential hazards **before** an accident sends you, or your loved ones, to the emergency room.*

Planning Guide

MAY

Theme:

Tractor Safety

Studies show that the farm tractor is involved in a high proportion of farm fatalities and severe injuries. Follow safe management principles and implement a tractor safety program on your farm.

- Develop a "safety first" attitude. Follow safe work practices all the time and set a good example for others.
- Be physically and mentally fit before operating tractors. Fatigue, stress, medication, alcohol and drugs can cause you not to focus on safe tractor operation. Take breaks.
- Equip tractor with a Rollover Protection Structure (ROPS) and wear the seat belt.
- Inspect the tractor for any hazards and correct them before operating.
- Keep bystanders and others away from tractor operation area. Do not allow "extra riders," especially children.
- Shut down equipment, turn off engine, remove key and wait for moving parts to stop before approaching equipment for servicing or clearing.

JUNE

Theme:

Child Safety on the Farm

Thousands of children are injured and hundreds killed each year by hazards found on the farm. Some of these children were working on the farm, while others wander into trouble on their own. Implement injury prevention strategies today to protect agriculture's greatest resource -- our children.

- Design a fenced "safe play area" near the house away from work activities. Do not allow children to roam freely on the farm.
- Inspect your farm regularly for hazards that can injure children wandering on your farm.
- Equip all barns. farm shop, chemical storage area, livestock pens, etc. with latches that can be locked or secured so children cannot enter.
- Children who are physically able to perform farm work should be only assigned age-appropriate tasks that they are fully trained to do. They should only perform these tasks under close adult supervision.
- Do not expose children to hazards. Never carry them on tractors and equipment or invite them into the farm shop, livestock barn, grain bins, etc.

AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians
Disability Awareness Activity

What does a peanut butter sandwich have in common with a farm safety day camp? AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians has provided a disability awareness station at several farm safety day camps throughout the state. At the station, each youth is "assigned" a type of hand or arm amputation and asked to make a peanut butter sandwich while imitating that injury. This activity provides AgrAbility with an opportunity to demonstrate to youth the importance of injury prevention and to teach them about assistive technology.

Over the years, there have been many advances in assistive technology for home and farm tasks. For example, many times it is possible for a farmer with a disability to safely operate a tractor with appropriate assistive technology and safety measures. The tractor should be in good working condition, equipped with a Rollover Protection Structure (ROPS), and the operator should wear the seat belt.

Once the tractor itself has the appropriate safety features, it may be adapted for a person with a disability by adding extra steps, grab bars, or even a tractor lift. There are ways for a person to stay in agricultural production after an injury, but the best approach is to prevent the accident before it happens.

For more information about disability awareness activities for farm safety day camps, or about equipment modifications, please call Linda Fetzer at AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians at (800) 238-4434 {voice/TTY}.

PRACTICE SAFE FARMING EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR!

Tips for a Safe Hay-making Season

By the time this newsletter is released, hay-making season will have begun throughout Pennsylvania. Each year, injury incidents occur to farmers and farm workers who are rushing to get hay put up before the next thunderstorm arrives. Here is a check list of equipment inspection and safe haying practices that can be posted on or near mowers and balers.

⇒**Know your operator's manuals.**
These manuals contain vital information for the safe and efficient operation of each piece of machinery. Every potential operator should familiarize themselves with the manuals.

⇒**Have a form of communication to others.**
It is a good idea to have a cellular phone or CB radio handy. Regular "check-in" times should be established.

⇒**Inspect PTO shafts.**
PTO shaft injury incidents are among the more deadly and disfiguring hazards on the farm. Make sure all shields are intact and in place. Avoid wearing loose-fitting clothing while working around PTO powered equipment.

⇒**Turn off the engine and take the keys with you before clearing or repairing equipment.** A large percentage of injuries occur to people who try to fix or clear equipment "on the run". Shortcuts like this may save a few moments at the time, but the pain of an injury and time lost while healing make taking risks like this unacceptable.

⇒**Load and haul bales correctly.**
Always use bale clamps or forks when loading round bales with a front-end loader. They will prevent the bale from rolling back onto the operator.

⇒**Inspect mirrors, lights and SMV emblems.**
Because hay operations often travel on roadways, make sure you can see and be seen with mirrors, lights and SMV emblems.

⇒**Equip tractors with rollover protection structures.**
Wearing seat belts and installing a ROPS will provide the greatest protection to the operator in case of a tractor rollover,, and may provide protection from large, round bales rolling back on the operator.

⇒**Know your endurance limit.**
Incidents and injuries often occur to people who are physically and mentally "worn-out". When you become tired or drowsy in the field, your mental alertness is compromised, and you may skip safety procedures to save time.

This article originally appeared in the Summer 1997 issue of *Farm Forum* magazine.

YOUTH SAFETY

Farm Safety 4 Just Kids™

The following Teaching Tip appeared in the *Farm Safety 4 Just Kids* January, 1999 newsletter. For more information about becoming *a Farm Safety 4 Just Kids* member, visit their website at www.fs4jk.org or call FS4JK at 1(800) 423-KIDS.

Concept: Chemicals are all around us. On the farm, where chemicals may be present in large amounts, the risk of exposure to children may be great. Children should be taught to stay away from all farm chemicals. This exercise will help children understand the concept of chemical residue that can be invisible to the eye.

Goal: Increase children's awareness of dangers of chemicals that cannot be seen.

Procedure: Sprinkle talc in your hand and on dark colored clothing. Explain that we can see the powder when large amounts are present. Turn on a fan to the high setting and stand in front of the fan, exposing the powder to the wind. Have the children see if they can find any of the powder on them or settled in the room. Explain that the particles are so small that they seem to "disappear" in the air. They are still there, but invisible to our eyes.

Explain that this is what happens when chemicals are sprayed on an open field of crops. It is still there, but invisible to people. Chemicals can be present on shoes, clothing and skin without anyone knowing. It can be carried into the car or house, exposing other family members and pets along the way.

The importance of personal hygiene might better help children understand the concept of chemical residue. The analogy of contracting a cold virus in the winter from touched surfaces will help the students understand the dangers of unseen chemicals. You can get sick from a cold virus or from chemicals.

Washing hands should be stressed.

("Injury Incident Profile", continued from pg 1.)

The edge of the wagon box hit the ground before Harpster could jump clear, catapulting him out of the wagon with unbelievable force. He rolled an additional 15 feet after slamming onto the ground.

"My helpers came running over to help me up, but I couldn't walk without assistance," Harpster said.

Upon further inspection of the wagon, which he had borrowed from a neighbor, he found that the gravity box actually tipped off of the wagon chassis. The two rear brackets holding the gravity box to the chassis were not fastened, and the right front bracket had been cracked, welded, and had broken again. The left front bracket was fastened, but had bent when the wagon went over.

"I had borrowed that bin wagon many times over the last ten years whenever we were short of wagons," Harpster said.

After this incident, Harpster said he changed and repaired the brackets on this wagon and on his own three gravity wagons. He also secured the gravity wagons to the chassis with heavy safety chains.

Luckily, Mr. Harpster was not seriously injured. He suffered a cracked pelvis, and was on crutches for two weeks, but he has since fully recovered. Luckier still was the fact that his 12-year-old son, who had been in the wagon just a short time before, was not injured.

Harpster's accident demonstrates that even though you are familiar with a piece of equipment, and have just recently used it, you should always inspect the equipment for potential hazards and wear.

Wagon brackets are not something that you may automatically think of as potentially hazardous if they fail, but Larry Harpster can tell you otherwise.

AGRICULTURAL SAFETY AND HEALTH NEWS is written and designed by Rob Carson under the direction of Dr. Dennis J. Murphy. Please send any ideas you have for articles in future editions to Dr. Dennis J. Murphy, 246 Agricultural Engineering Building, University Park, PA 16802 or call (814) 865-7685.

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