

AGRICULTURE TODAY

Farm machinery safety on the boomline

Accidents impact profits

Farm and ranch safety affects the bottom line. Employers may or may not have safety plans in place for employees. They may or may not have had a lot of accidents, but when accidents occur it financially affects everyone involved. Premiums on workers' compensa-

tion insurance increase and medical bills and lost time add to the cost of employees. One expense sometimes overlooked is the down time or replacement of damaged equipment. If equipment has been repaired or replaced it will affect the bottom line. Some employers think that safety programs are a waste of employees' time. How many times has it been said, "I'm not paying them to stand around, I'm paying them to work." A talisart safety program or equipment safety check may take fifteen to twenty minutes that may be worth

the money spent, rather than paying \$145,000 for a new tractor after it rolls over. Thousands of highway accidents involving farm machinery occur each year, even when farm equipment is clearly marked with a slow moving vehicle (SMV) emblem. Tractors, swathers, cotton pickers and other equipment used to be equipped with hazard warning lights and head lights to provide advanced warning for other drivers sharing the roadways. In our fast paced world, drivers are often speeding, distracted or impatient and have difficulty anticipating the operational intentions of farm machinery being driven on rural highways. Farmers and ranchers work long hours when they are trying to finish the harvest season. Accidents can occur when fatigue, stress and racing against Mother Nature are part of the end-

of-season rush. Farmers should make sure operators are physically and mentally fit when operating tractors. In addition to fatigue, medication, alcohol and drugs can factor into an unsafe driver. Encourage breaks to refresh the body and mind.

1) When dismounting tractors, turn off the engine and keep the keys and wait for all moving parts to stop. 2) Never attempt to bypass a tractor. It may be in gear and drive over the person in front of the wheel. 3) Do not take passengers. There is only one seat available on the tractor and it is for the driver. 4) Carry out regular inspections of equipment and facilities. Make necessary repairs and keep guards and shielding on. 5) Develop a safety plan tailored to your operation, your family and your employees. Plans can include a lockout/tag-out program for equipment, a fire protection plan, a chemical storage plan, farm safety rules and regulations, emergency field communications and a plan in the event a serious farm injury or death. 6) Review and enforce plans with employees and family members.

First response key in accidents, treatment

What would you do if something happened on your farm, ranch or dairy that caused an injury?

Responses can make a difference in the severity of the injury sometimes. In most cases first aid will suffice in treating the injury, but other times physician's care is required. Small injuries should be cleaned and possibly covered with a band-aid to prevent infection. Larger injuries may need to be checked out by a physician, and what you have in case of consciousness or bleeding. Having a plan in place for injuries or emergencies is important.

If there are supervisors or managers in your operation, make them responsible for emergency plans in their area. Employees should be trained in first aid and should know how to operate a fire extinguisher. First aid kits should be placed in general work areas, along with emergency telephone numbers. In some instances it may be helpful to also list directions as to how reach the farm, ranch, dairy or shop. If you store chemicals on your property, you may want to consider notifying your local fire department as to where they are stored and what you have in case of a fire while you are not present. Emergency plans should also include scenarios of what could possibly happen and what employees and family members should do. An example is if there is a fire in the shop, what would

the employee need to do? The minimum that each farm or ranch should do is to have first aid kit for the employees to use. It suggested to have a large one available in the general work areas, such as shop, parlor or barn. In some areas, it is helpful to have each vehicle or machinery have their own individual first aid kit. A basic kit should include band aids, alcohol wipes, sterile dressings, disposable gloves and first aid cream. Farms and ranches that are distance from emergency responders should consider having one or two employees trained in CPR/First Aid. The American Red Cross, as well as many of the local fire departments can do trainings.



Photo courtesy of Metro Services

Thanks to advancements in science and technology, many different farming techniques are now available to farmers, as well as, the necessity to take many precautions when working on the farm. Accidents can happen quickly so everyone needs to be trained in what to do in case of any type of farm emergency to help save lives.

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Practicing farm safety with kids

(MS) -- As any parent knows, kids can be curious creatures. While such curiosity is a good thing and a character trait most parents encourage, responsible parenting involves recognizing a child's inquisitive nature and taking steps to prevent that curiosity from causing injury.

Perhaps nowhere is that more necessary than in rural regions. In particular on the country's farms. Children often have an abundance of things to sink their curious teeth into. For example, though no parent wants to quell their child's zest for exploration, there are steps today's farmers can take to ensure such curiosity doesn't end with a trip to the emergency room.

Keep certain areas off limits. While a great benefit of living in a rural area is fresh air and open space, giving kids the chance to roam wherever their hearts and minds take them is dangerous. Thanks to tools, machinery and even farm animals, several areas on the farm can be quite dangerous to kids. Make sure you establish a play area for your children, and make it an area that's close to the house. Should kids get hurt and need immediate attention, the close proximity to the house will minimize the chance of serious injury. In addition, if kids are kept close by, you'll be more likely to notice when they wander off.

Perform regular inspections of the farm. Even setting aside designated play areas won't stop kids from eventually making their way around the farm. To minimize the chance of injury for exploration, there are steps today's farmers can take to ensure such curiosity doesn't end with a trip to the emergency room. Keep certain areas off limits. While a great benefit of living in a rural area is fresh air and open space, giving kids the chance to roam wherever their hearts and minds take them is dangerous. Thanks to tools, machinery and even farm animals, several areas on the farm can be quite dangerous to kids. Make sure you establish a play area for your children, and make it an area that's close to the house. Should kids get hurt and need immediate attention, the close proximity to the house will minimize the chance of serious injury. In addition, if kids are kept close by, you'll be more likely to notice when they wander off.

Don't give kids too much to handle. Another great part of living and working on a farm is the chance to take your kids to work with you and teach them your craft. However, giving them too much to do can be dangerous. Kids should be given appropriate tasks that don't put them in any danger. For younger kids, feeding small animals around the farm can be a great way to instill responsibility while teaching them part of what being a farmer is all about. For older kids, keep them away from any machinery that's too big and let them know to tell you if they're experiencing any difficulties with certain tasks. Also, it's important to keep kids working shorter than adults', even in seasons where they don't have school. Kids tire more easily than adults, and need more rest as well. Make sure everything is off at the end of the day. Table saws and other machinery need to be turned off whenever they're not being used. Consider removing plugs from the outlets entirely for machinery that kids can reach, and make sure any hydraulics are turned off, too. Also remove the keys from tractors and other machinery that kids could climb up on. Any tools that can be locked away whether it's in a shed, cabinet or even by locking a garage or barn, should be locked up, especially if your kids are younger.

Keep kids off machinery you're using. While it's fun for kids to go to work with Mom or Dad and possibly sit in their lap for a ride on the tractor or tractors, it's also putting them at a very serious and unnecessary risk. Keep kids, machinery and away from animals at feeding time.

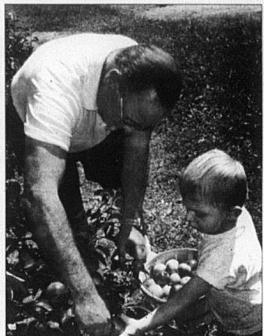


Photo courtesy of Metro Services. Keeping kids safe on the farm often involves maintaining a watchful eye.

Strike out extra riders on tractors, all terrain vehicles

Just like a batter's box is reserved for one person, Add another, and someone's at risk of getting hurt or even killed.

Nolan Ryan, Hall of Fame pitcher and rancher, was a Farm Bureau during Agricultural Safety Awareness Week in 2003. Ryan, an only son and a reminder farm and ranch families and other rural residents to consider the consequences of allowing extra riders on tractors and all terrain vehicles.

There is only one seat on tractors and ATVs," said Ryan. "Number of things can cause an extra rider to be thrown from a vehicle and into its path or into the path of equipment being towed."

The Farm Bureau Safety and Health Network, along with Mr. Ryan, has chosen "Step Up to the Plate for Farm Safety" as the 2007 theme for Agricultural Safety Awareness Week to "call attention to safety as farmers and ranchers prepare for the year ahead."

Reducing pesticides use can save farmers money

The use of pesticides can be harmful in many ways, but the amount suggested by insecticide companies. Farmers should be careful, however, when measuring, as suppliers will not offer reduced rates if the amount of insecticide applied is less than what the supplier recommended and fails to do the job.

Rotate crops. Rotating crops is a farmer's way of potentially damaging insects that typically can only rely on one source of food to survive. Corn pests, for instance, can only survive on corn. When crops are rotated, a field no longer filled with corn, and will not be able to survive.

Check fields for insects. Fields don't necessarily need to be treated for insects each year. Since pests will never be eliminated, it's important to remember the goal of insecticides is to manage your pests. By checking your fields for pests before acting, you can determine if you need to apply insecticides or if the problem is minimal enough that you can skip a season and save yourself some money.

All too often, extra riders are children sitting in the driver's lap or elsewhere on the tractor or the tractor or equipment. Out of the 8,313 deaths caused by ATVs between 1982 and 2003, one third of the riders who were killed or injured were younger than 16. A good rule for all farm equipment is to extra passengers.

"You usually don't get three strikes when a tragedy occurs and you often don't have time to even think, much less act to prevent it," Ryan said. "Safety can help you turn a potential tragedy into triumph."

For more information, contact Marsha Purcell, American Farm Bureau Federation by emailing to marshap@fb.org or visit www.AGSAFETY.org for more news releases, PSA's and safety information.

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