

# Ag Safety Council out to lower accident rate

**By JOANNE SPAHR**  
**HARRISBURG** — It's something every farmer knows about. It's a fear every farmer's wife lives with. And, yet, nobody thinks it will ever happen to them. But it does.

It's a proven statement that one out of every six farmers in Pennsylvania will have a serious farm accident, and that 87 per cent of all accidents happen to family members, not farm workers. And, unfortunately, over half of all accidents are severe. Surprisingly enough, farm people are most likely to be involved in an accident while doing routine chores.

Why does this happen? "Farmers really know better than to be careless," says Elaine Benner, secretary for a newly formed statewide council whose primary goal is to change those statistics for the better. "They know they shouldn't stick their hands in a corn picker, but they just don't think for that minute." Through education, the Pennsylvania Agricultural Safety Council hopes to get farmers to think for that "one disastrous moment" and in this way save lives and crippled limbs.

"We basically want to make farmers more safety conscious and safety aware," explains Mrs. Benner, "We'll have to constantly drill it in."

At this point Safety Council is a mere fledgling as far as statewide organizations are concerned.

It officially began in March of 1978 when the first annual meeting was held at Penn State University with the Honorable Kent D. Shelhamer, Pennsylvania secretary of agriculture, as guest speaker.

Prior to that conceptualization had come about in November 1977 after Penn State University had hired their first safety specialist, Dennis Murphy. Murphy became aware of safety councils in other states, mostly in the mid-West and New York. After considering their value, Murphy met initially with John Frey, Sperry New Holland, and Marlin Miller, director of field services for PFA, to discuss the idea. After that

these three invited other organizations to decide if such a council was of genuine concern. Upon a decision to the affirmative, by-laws were worked on and plans made for the first meeting. Today, the organization is comprised of 13 individuals and 12 organizations.

At this point, PASC is the only statewide organization for the farm safety practices, and according to J. Robert Peifer, president, the group has set out to be "problem solvers."

A list of projected activities includes publishing and distributing during Farm Safety Week a newspaper on current topics of farm safety. The group also plans to develop or buy posters on farm safety and mail them to schools.

To reach the general public, they have the goal of developing and distributing placemats, napkins, or special pamphlets to such establishments as restaurants.

Safety campaigns are also on the list of activities. These



Elaine Benner

campaigns will deal with particular subject areas such as harvesting, tillage and tractor overturn at specific times during the year. PASC will also sponsor an annual awards program recognizing individuals or groups that contribute to farm safety.

Three other planned activities include developing and distributing decals at certain times or for certain subjects; having campaigns to sell safety items such as smoke detectors, and fire extinguishers, and sponsoring events, activities, and displays at Farm Show and

Ag Progress Days. They will also set up a portable display for county or local events.

President of the Council for the coming year will be J. Robert Peifer, executive vice-president, Pennsylvania Association of Mutual Insurance Companies. Dr. William Williams, assistant professor of agricultural education at Penn State, will serve as vice-president. John Frey, insurance manager, Sperry-New Holland Corporation, has been elected treasurer; and Elaine Benner, past chairperson, State Women's Committee, Pennsylvania Farmers Association, has been elected secretary.

The board of directors are: Robert H. Williams,

editor, The Pennsylvania Farmer; Barry Wanbaugh, district sales manager, Agway, Inc.; Dr. Neil R. Buss, executive deputy secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture; N. Gale Moore, secretary, Pennsylvania State Grange; Marion R. Deppen, assistant director, Cooperative Extension Service; and Dennis J. Murphy, safety specialist, Cooperative Extension Service.

An individual or family membership is available in PASC. Annual membership is \$5 for an individual and \$25 for an organization.

Interested individuals are urged to fill out the accompanying membership application and send it to the directed address.

## PENNSYLVANIA AGRICULTURAL SAFETY COUNCIL

### Membership Application

Complete application, tear off and mail to PASC, c/o 204 Ag. Engineering Building, University Park, PA 16802.

Enclose check in the amount of \$5.00 for Individual or \$25 for Organizational Membership for the current calendar year. Checks should be made payable to PASC.

(PLEASE PRINT)

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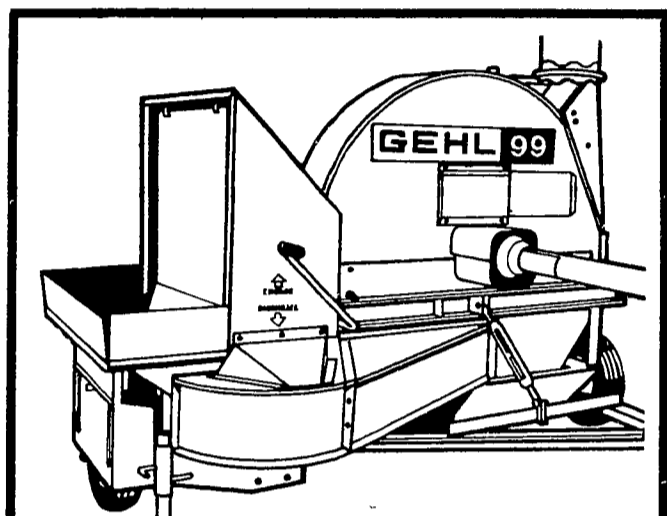


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