

# Farm Safety, more than a good idea

BY DEBBIE KOONTZ

LANCASTER — There is a saying which goes, "If you want to know if someone you meet is a farmer, whisper if he doesn't hear you then he is."

Though this belief is a bit questionable and probably would hold no truth if some sort of poll were taken, it undoubtedly originated from the fact that most farmers suffer a loss of hearing after working with noisy equipment for a few years.

But if you're a farmer and you live your life with loss of hearing being your only handicap, count yourself lucky.

Accidents on farms are taking on higher numbers now than ever before. New machinery, more technical equipment, higher working ages, the rush to get a job done, risk-taking, carelessness, lack of knowledge - these all are contributing factors to the higher accident figures.

One big mistake made by many farmers is not to realize that with age comes a loss in reaction time, balance, energy, vision and hearing. But these are minor losses compared to the loss that could occur if these minor ones are not recognized. Loss of fingers, arms, legs, bodily control and life are among the serious accidents which occur more often today.

Before shrugging off these generalities with a grumble and declaring that you've read this a hundred times already, consider some cold, hard facts.

-Last year there were 53 farm-related fatalities in Pennsylvania.

-Over the course of one year (1980), there was one accident for every 6.6 farms in this state.

-In the country as a whole, tractor overturns account for more deaths on farms than any other type of accident.

-The largest killer in Lancaster County comes from hauling extra riders.

-According to Dennis Murphy, Extension Safety Specialist at the Penn State University, since 1977 a total of 56 children (under age 20) have died from farm accidents in Lancaster County.

Though these may be gruesome statistics, these are, unfortunately, reality.

Twenty-five percent of the farm accidents reported in Pennsylvania occur in the barn. This is not surprising since this state has so many dairy barns in which routine chores are performed every day.

The report also stated that most accidents occur in the fall and the winter (October, November and December). It further explained that this differs from farm accidents in many other states where most accidents occur in summer months. This difference can be explained by the fact that Pennsylvania still has a large number of corn pickers in use in the late fall while farmers in many other states are using corn shellers which are more compatible with cash corn crops.

-Monday was the day found to have the highest amount of accidents and Sunday the least.

-Employees account for nine percent of farm accidents with the husband being injured 40 percent of the time. The wife and children make up the other 51 percent.

-Nearly half the accidents occur when victims are struck by objects or have a serious fall. Other accidents come from breathing pesticides, inhaling gas, over-exertion, contact with fire, etc.

-And just when you think you're safe by avoiding obvious disasters, the report says that farm people are most likely to be involved in an accident while doing routine chores.

So what can you do to make these figures and facts come down and to assure that you're not a statistic next year?

Besides the obvious precautions (be more guarded, quit when tired, don't haul extra passengers and slow down the pace a little) you can do a few things the Extension suggests.

-Wear protective gear. They suggest a hard hat for the head, impact-resistant glasses, goggles or face shield, ear muffs or ear plugs, gloves and creams for the hands and safety shoes for feet. Now who wants to go out to bale hay on a hot July day wearing all this heavy equipment? You're certainly not going into battle. But consider this: carpenters, welders, construction men and heavy

equipment operators wear these safety devices. Aren't you doing a little of each of these jobs?

-The next precaution is, remember that most accidents with machinery are the result of human error. The operator either forgot something, took a short cut or risked or ignored safety rules.

-Remember to be careful around pinch points or wrap points on machinery. Pinch points are found when two rotating objects move together and at least one moves in a circle, i.e. the point at which a belt runs into a pulley. Contact can be made by just brushing against unshielded parts or by falling against them.

Entanglement with a wrap point (any machine which rotates can be a wrap point) can pull you into the machine or your clothing can get so tightly wrapped that you are crushed or suffocated. The machine certainly won't give you time to take off the glove or coat.

According to the Extension, the next area to watch is tractor overturns, the number one killer. To keep you tractor firmly on the ground you must control the two forces responsible for side overturns. One of these is gravity. When setting on level ground a tractor's center of gravity is approximately two feet in front of and ten inches above the rear axle, in the center of the vehicle. With the center of gravity here, the tractor is stable. However, were you to change this position by using certain types of mounted equipment or by driving across steep slopes, the tractor will decrease in stability and the probability of overturning it is higher.

The next force to remember is centrifugal force. This force pushes at you and your tractor from one side as you turn it around or follow a bend in the roadway. This force is reportedly dangerous because the pressure it exerts against a turning tractor multiplies rapidly as the tractor's speed increases. Therefore if you double the tractor's speed, then the centrifugal force will be four times as great. As the pressure gets stronger, short and quicker turns will change the center of gravity and will probably, again, result in a turnover.

Therefore you should try to keep a tractor's center of gravity as close to the ground as possible. Drive with loaders, snow shovels and scoops down.

-Another point to remember is that accidents don't always happen to the other guy nor do they necessarily not occur if you're careful. Your machinery is a piece of equipment for farm use. It wasn't made to haul children for fun or to be used for every chore you can't do manually. And if you have doubts, look at how many seats are on the average tractor. Look how many safety devices are added for protecting people other than the driver.

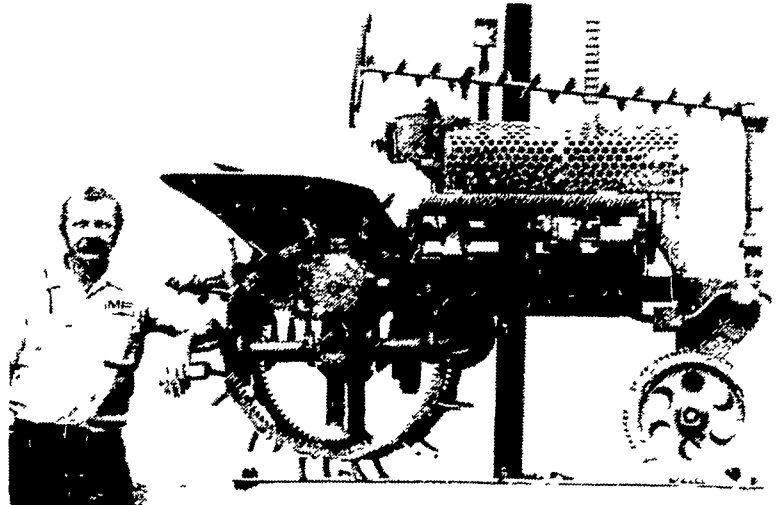
-Last comes a reminder to never, never overestimate the friendliness or slowness of a farm animal or pet. Bulls aren't friendly and cows with new-born calves

aren't slow.

The only suggestion left is to attend any safety seminars available in your area. Learn how to handle equipment the safe way and learn CPR. After all, the saying does go, "the life you save may be your own."

The Pennsylvania Agricultural Safety Council will be holding their fourth annual meeting at State College on March 26. Pre-registration is required. Write to PASC, 204 Agricultural Engineering Building, University Park, PA, by March 17, 1981.

This Thursday night the Lancaster County Farmers' Association is sponsoring a safety night at the Youth for Christ Church off the Danville Pike. This meeting will provide another segment in farm safety for the March 7 issue. Look for it.



## Spare parts become art

GRAND JUNCTION, Iowa — The art world may not yet recognize Willie Frank as an up-and-coming sculptor, but the folks in Grand Junction, Iowa, do.

Frank spent a good share of his spare time last winter sculpting. The material he chose is somewhat unfamiliar to most artists, but it's what Frank knows best — farm machinery parts.

Frank, a service foreman at Rueter & Zenor Implement Co., spends most of his time preparing tractors and combines for fieldwork. But when he had free time

last winter, he was welding junk parts.

As his project began taking shape, fellow employees contributed throw-away parts from old discs, plows and tractor engines. The result was the sculpture of a farm tractor, complete with realistic control knobs.

The unique sculpture now stands in front of the Grand Junction MF dealership. A lot of people stop to look it over, Frank says. You can't help but notice it when you walk up to the building.

### Why Buy SEALSTOR?

— FOR —

- HAYLAGE
- HIGH MOISTURE CORN
- LIQUID MANURE

— SEALSTOR —

- GLASS FUSED TO STEEL
- OXYGEN LIMITING STRUCTURE
- LOW MAINTENANCE COST
- BOTTOM UNLOADER
- BEST PRODUCT AVAILABLE AT A COST YOU CAN AFFORD

**TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR LOWEST PRICE OF THE YEAR WHILE OUR FARM SHOW SPECIAL IS IN EFFECT. OFFER EXPIRES MARCH 15, 1981**

Please Clip & Mail Coupon to

**PENN DUTCH FARM SYSTEMS, INC.** LF 2/28  
1730 Highway 72 North Lebanon Pa 17042

I am interested in

High Moisture Corn Storage	Haylage or Corn Silage Storage
Liquid Manure Storage	Replacing my old or broken bottom unloader with the Laidig

Please add my name to your mailing list

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE (include area code) \_\_\_\_\_

NO OF BEEF \_\_\_\_\_ DAIRY \_\_\_\_\_ HOGS \_\_\_\_\_

**CALL TODAY TO LOCK IN YOUR DEAL...**

**717-273-9324**

**USED 200 AUTOMATIC ROLLER MILL WITH MOTOR \$1100 CASH**

**PENN DUTCH FARM SYSTEMS, Inc.**  
1730 Highway 72 North Lebanon PA 17042

# JOIN 4-H

**ORDER SEED FOR 1981 NOW**

**WHEAT, BARLEY, SEED OATS, AND SOYBEANS**

SEE US AT THE FARM EQUIPMENT SHOW BOOTH 564

**CALL US FOR SEED FOR 1982 EARLY CONTRACT PRICES CONSIDER SOON**

Phone COLLECT OR SEE OUR DEALER FOR ORDERS OR FOR PRICES

**717-546-5981**

**MUNCY CHIEF HYBRIDS**

MUNCY, PA