

Play it safe in the broiler house

NEWARK, Del. — The more modern a poultry house, the more mechanized it becomes. And with increased mechanization, the potential for accidents goes up.

After a tragedy, it's too late — at least for the victim. A more positive approach is preventive action, says University of Delaware Extension poultry specialist George Chaloupka. He says poultry producers can take a number of precautions to lessen chances of an accident.

All houses now have mechanical feeding equipment which may move without warning. Do not let small children play around this equipment. Keep drive belt and auger shields in place. And before you work on the system, turn it off — preferably at the main entrance box.

Have all electrical systems well grounded and make connections properly. Keep covers in place on switch panels and junction boxes. Ideally they should be sealed from moisture and dust to help prevent shock on contact and also to lessen the possibility of arcing and fire.

Have help when working on an electrical system, in case of an

emergency. Always remove the fuse or circuit breaker when servicing defective equipment, even if it only involves replacing a broken light bulb. "If you're working away from the control panel, leave an obvious sign to let others know what's happening," Chalouka advises.

It's imperative that all overhead wires be high enough for feed trucks, live-haul trucks and loading equipment to pass safely underneath.

Many poultry houses have bulk feed bins with ladders. These ladders and rungs should be secured to the bin, and constructed to permit a good foothold, the specialist says. There should be handholds at the top of the bin and the top cover should be easy to open. Other ladders — either metal or wood — should be in good repair and should be handled properly. Be careful with tall metal ladders around bare power lines, he cautions.

Periodically poultry houses are cleaned out with manure-handling equipment including tractors with front-end loaders, elevators, spreader trucks, manure

spreaders and the like.

"This machinery should be operated only by qualified people who don't allow riders," Chaloupka says. "All power take-off guards and covers should be in place and operators should not wear loose clothing. Do not attempt to repair or unclog equipment while it is running."

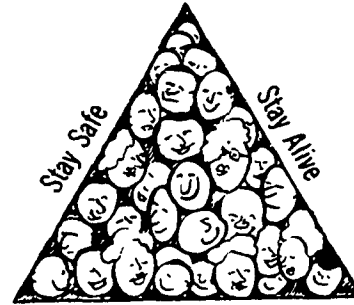
When applying chemicals such as insecticides, disinfectants, herbicides or litter treatments, pay particular attention to directions and cautions on labels. If in doubt, seek help from proper authorities. Don't take charge! Dizziness can lead to death in 10 minutes.

Hands or fingers are occasionally cut badly or completely severed by unguarded ventilation fans. Wire guards should be securely in place at all times — particularly on fans hung in the

center of a broiler house and used for summer ventilation. A momentary loss of balance near an unguarded 36-inch fan could result in tragedy.

"Everyone should accept responsibility for accident prevention," says Chaloupka.

"Poultry growers should be most aware of this, since it's the grower who spends the most time in and around buildings. With help from their growout companies, growers should try to make their facilities and working condition as accident-proof as possible."



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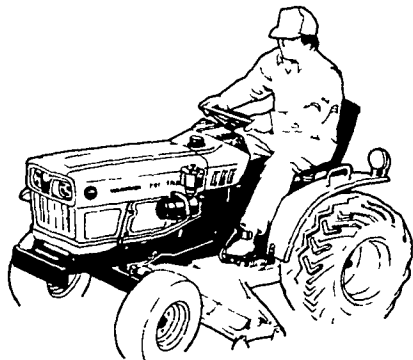
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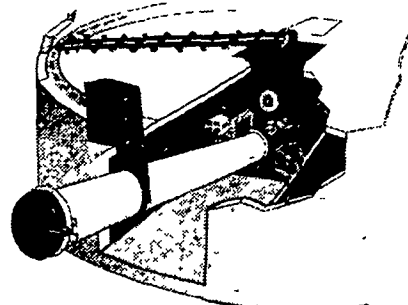
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