

Machinery still heads farm accidents

LANCASTER — Part-time safety in any phase of the farm operation invites personal loss and often tragedy. No loss compares with the farm accident which costs the life of a family member. Less tragic, but extremely serious, is loss of an arm or leg, or of health. Crop loss can't compare, as those who have suffered a serious accident can attest.

Common sense is revered by the safety conscious. Most — except some who have experienced tragedy — profess to employ this trait in giant doses. Yet farm accident statistics remain shockingly high, a conclusion based on a just — completed Du Pont Agrichemicals study which reports safety data on 1,216 farm operations. Du Pont findings belie the simple expedient of using only common sense.

Common sense is basic, but safety specialists believe more caution is needed. Preparation, or getting ready for the task at hand, is a priority. For the professional athlete, preparation begins well before the competition. Then comes concentration. No athlete performs well without both. Full-time farm safety requires the same kind of dedication.

The Du Pont study indicates progress is being made, especially in using crop protection chemicals. Chemical mishaps accounted for only 6.8 percent of all farm accidents. Jim Borel, of Du Pont, believes this is encouraging. "We are finding that the emphasis in

recent years on how to use farm chemicals safety is making users aware of the need of prepare and follow with care when mixing and applying."

Borel believes that the farm operator and any family member or employee who know the label have taken the first step in safe use. Preparation is next: having a container of 5 to 10 gallons of water for immediate washing in case of contact with a wearing chemical; wearing clothing which fully covers the body, and wearing goggles and gloves, and, at times, a respirator. Then, Borel says, comes the time for concentration — unhurried mixing and pouring to avoid spills and splashes. Such measures help assure safe use of the chemicals necessary for cost effective crop yields.

In the study, Borel says that only half, or 50.4 percent, of farm operations reported that they always wear gloves when handling chemicals. A need, often as important, is goggles. Less than 20 percent reported always wearing goggles. Half said they sometimes wear goggles while handling chemicals. And less than one in 20 reported using respirators for the most toxic materials. These accessories are relatively inexpensive and Borel believes that family welfare and safety demand greater attention to these precautions.

Less than 40 percent of the more than 1,200 reporting farm

operators know or had their own state Poison Information Center telephone number posted by the telephone. Only 12.8 percent reported storing chemicals in a special, locked storage building.

More farm operators, Borel believes, are checking the label for word signals which define the degree of potential hazard. "These range from 'Danger' for Group 1 chemicals, to 'Warning' for less toxic compounds, to 'Caution' for the least hazardous." For example "Lexone" 4L carries the "Caution" label as a liquid formulation. However, in the dry flowable formulation, "Lexone" DF, the "Warning" signal is used. In any case, all chemicals, he stresses, are toxic and require common sense plus preparation and observing careful handling procedures.

Few farms, the survey showed, contain adequate shop safety features and safeguards. Just more than one-third of the farm operators reporting, 35.9 percent, believe they have adequate farm shops insofar as safety is concerned.

The Du Pont survey pinpoints farm machinery as the major area needing improvement. A total of 44.8 percent of the lost-time accidents and deaths were machinery related. Falls accounted for half as many accidents (Turn to Page D31)

WHAT CAUSES FARM ACCIDENTS?

In a recent survey conducted by DuPont maker of Lexone weed killer machinery-related accidents ranked first as the cause of accidents or injuries causing a loss of time on the farm

MACHINERY-RELATED	44.8%
CAUSED BY A FALL	22%
LIVESTOCK-RELATED	8.4%
CHEMICAL-RELATED	6.8%
AUTOMOTIVE-RELATED	6.0%
OTHERS	12%

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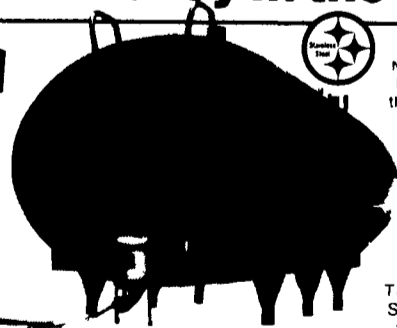
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