

NATIONAL Farm Safety Week

SEPT 16-22

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during those critical first few minutes."

During the coming year, Extension safety programs will be concentrated in two major categories, according to Murphy.

—Methods of teaching safety, and
—Respiratory hazards.

A program is being developed for Extension use on how to teach farm safety, particularly to youths. It involves both a Job Safety Analysis and complementary Job Instruction Training.

"We're learning more about things like 'farmers' lung' and other respiratory problems on the farm," Murphy said.

One of the contributing factors to farm respiratory problems is the continuing increase in confinement operations, Murphy said.

"Respiratory problems are cumulative and build up over a period of time and the increasing exposure in confinement buildings is becoming an important factor," he said.

While modern machinery and operational procedures are the major concern in farm safety, there are hazards that still remain in the traditional categories which have continued since farming began.

Fatalities related to farm animals, while also have been decreasing in recent years, still hang on as a reason for accidental farm deaths. Animal-related deaths have dropped from six a year in 1980 and 1981 to three last year. And the bull still remains the most dangerous where he's found on the farm.

Falls still remain an important accident category to be concerned with.

And at the basic core of many accidents on the farm no matter what category in which they fall are stress and carelessness brought on by crowding too many activities into long hours of work at peak machinery-use seasons, such as harvesting now getting under way.

Stress can cause farm accidents

Life isn't easy for anyone these days, and certainly not for farmers who must face a fluctuating marketplace, production costs, capricious weather and the unquelled threat of pestilence and disease. It is no wonder agriculture is ranked among the top ten percent of 130 high stress occupations by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health.

Farmers say they are suffering from more stress than ever before. Cited as causes were economic pressures, decision-making, high seasonal workloads, weather worries, family conflicts and too many off-farm activities.

Excessive stress is a known contributor to heart disease, cancer, lung and liver ailments and mental illness. Stress can also play a part in suicides, homicides and other violence, including child and spousal abuse, and appears to be an important factor in many accidents.

Stressed people often are less aware of, or responsive to, what is going on around them. Anger,



stress levels from becoming intolerable and causing mishaps is necessary for every farmer and rancher. Although there are many prescriptions for reducing the negative effects of stress, each individual must find those that work best for him/her.

If you have symptoms of stress but nothing is apparent in your life to explain it, see your doctor to find out if there is physical basis for it. Anxiety, short temper, tension, sleeplessness or such can accompany several disorders that require medical attention.

Seek balance in life. If you are overactive, find time to relax and do some things that you enjoy. If you are underactive, seek ways to enrich your days. Exercise, depending on your physical condition, is an effective tension-reliever when the workday fails to involve much use of the muscles but provides a lot of brain strain or aggravations. Even farmers have slack seasons and days when bad weather limits work. This time can

be filled with activities that provide a needed break from the stresses of farming and help restore one's equilibrium.

If something has really "got you down," delay hazardous jobs until you are able to handle them safely — or have someone else do them for you. Avoid unnecessary confrontations and arguments with your family or employees. Try to keep control of your temper and resolve conflicts before they cause real anguish and perhaps an accident. Don't let your problems pull your attention away from the job at hand, as inattention causes many accidents.

Respect your physical needs and limitations by avoiding over-fatigue. Stop for occasional rest or refreshment breaks. Eat nourishing meals. Alcohol and tranquilizing medications may temporarily soothe or relax you, but they won't solve the problems. What they will do is multiply accident risk if used or relied on when you work or drive.



Silo gas can be deadly

Farmers ensiling crops should be especially wary of lethal silo gas, farm safety experts stress.

The situation can be especially bad in drought years because droughty corn tends to be high in nitrates. Thus, the ensiling process produces larger quantities of lethal nitrogen gases.

Silo gas (nitrogen dioxide) appears as yellow or orange vapor during the first three weeks after the silo is filled. Because it's heavier than air, the fumes settle to the lowest level possible.

Inhaling those fumes can be fatal.

Farmers should be especially cautious when ventilating a silo or working near the base of a tower silo during the first few weeks after ensiling.

The most dangerous time for nitrogen dioxide gas in a silo is during the first 12 to 60 hours after filling. Farmers should be especially wary of gas for 10 to 14 days after filling and when opening the silo for feeding.

If you must go in a silo within two weeks of filling, run the blower 15-20 minutes before entering and keep the blower running while inside.



worry, fear, depression, feeling helpless or that things are out of control can occupy us to where we may fail to heed any signs of danger. Trying to deal with seemingly unsolvable problems may distract or dull our normal respect for our safety and caring concern for others.

Extreme stress arising from grief or deep family, financial or health problems could render a sufferer less than fit to drive a tractor or car with any assurance of a safe performance. Yet, many people choose or have no choice but to do so despite intense inner turmoil.

Not all potentially harmful stress is a product of the hard stress of life, such as death of a loved one, divorce, bankruptcy, an all-consuming fire or news that you have cancer. It can arise from the trials and tribulations of daily living, from heavy workloads or family responsibilities, even from boredom and lack of stimulation.

Physical stresses also have an impact on psychological functioning. A farmer often works in the rain, in intense cold or heat and in dust and chemicals. He/she operates noisy, hard-riding equipment for long hours. Bone-weariness can result in mental weariness and lungs full of dust and jarred innards do little to promote good humor.

Farm safety leaders believe that stress, both physical and psychological, is an important factor in many serious farming accidents. Therefore, keeping



Year-round ag safety

Practicing good safety should be of year-round concern on the farm. As the coming year progresses, here are a few suggestions on safety factors to be stressed.

SEPTEMBER — Manage for Better Safety and Health

Develop a safety and health plan tailored to your farm and covering all family members and hired personnel. Keep everyone regularly informed and carry out regular safety inspections.

OCTOBER — Electrical safety

Make sure that wiring in all buildings is adequate and inspect it regularly.

NOVEMBER — Winter sports and hunting safety

Use the proper equipment for winter activity and dress for the weather. Be wary of that ice on the pond; operate snowmobiles and sleds safely; always treat guns as if they're loaded.

DECEMBER — Home heating

Inspect all heating systems before heavy continuous use; wood burning requires special care; adequately ventilate for kerosene heaters.

JANUARY — Safety with shop tools

Use the correct tool for the job; don't wear loose fitting clothing; keep power tools and children separate.

FEBRUARY — Be your brother's keeper

Set a good safety example for others in your family, hired employees, friends and neighbors. Look out for each other's safety welfare.

MARCH — Use ag chemicals safely

Always read and follow directions closely; use eye protection, adequate skin covering and respirator if necessary; store chemicals properly.

APRIL — Operate tractors safely

Make sure all operators are adequately trained; don't permit extra riders; keep shields in place; shut off power before repairs.

MAY — Storm safety

Do you have a good lightning protection system? Keep abreast of weather forecasts and plan accordingly.

JUNE — Use farm wagons safely

Use a sturdy lockpin; no riders; have SVM emblems and operate at safe speeds in keeping with the terrain.

JULY — Play safely

Summer sports on the farm are fun but can be deadly. Small fry should always be accompanied around farm ponds and other potentially dangerous areas.

AUGUST — Prevent respiratory problems

Check the filtering system of tractor and combine cabs; adequately ventilate particularly in confinement buildings; use the proper respirator when needed.