

Take note of farm hazards during Farm Safety Week

BY SUZANNE KEENE

LANCASTER — Keeping family members safe and healthy is always a challenge, but the task is especially difficult for farm families who are exposed to more dangers than the average household.

Farm Safety Week, which begins tomorrow, is a good time to reflect on the dangers confronting farm families and to devise ways to avoid these hazards.

A nearly invisible but frequent hazard, dust is easily overlooked when making a list of dangers to be avoided. According to Lancaster Lung Association Program Director Nellie Blake, it is important for farmers to become aware of the dangers in the air and to avoid them.

In an effort to increase awareness of the health problems dust can cause, the Lung Association is planning a program titled "Dangers in the Air," for March.

Blake said she believes that offering such programs will help prevent "the terrible crippling diseases that result from ignorance of the facts on farm safety."

Part of the seminar will focus on just what lung diseases can be contracted from the air and how they can be prevented.

Dr. Harshadkumar Patel, director of the Department of Pulmonary Diseases at Lancaster General Hospital, cites two lung diseases that plague farmers in particular.

The first of these diseases is Silo Fillers Lung, a condition that is caused by inhaling the gas produced when wet silage is placed in storage. Silo gas, Patel says, "is a pungent smelling, brown gas," that often permeates a silo three or four days after it has been filled with wet silage.

The combination of the moisture and silage forms nitrous and nitric acid which can burn the airways

and lungs when inhaled, resulting in shortness of breath and sometimes bleeding. The symptoms, Patel says, may appear immediately or may be delayed for up to 24 hours.

Silo Fillers Lung is treatable, but more importantly, it is also preventable. A farmer should make sure a silo is well vented before he enters, and if upon entering he notices the pungent smell of the gas, he should exit immediately. "Because the gas stinks people can know when it's there," Patel said.

Patel said that over the past eight years he has seen the number of cases of Silo Fillers disease decrease. He credits better education for limiting the number of those stricken with this ailment.

Farmer's Lung is another disease that frequently plagues farmers. This disease, Patel explained, is an allergic condition caused by inhaling fungal spores that form on moldy hay. Farmers are most often exposed to these spores when feeding livestock moldy hay, "throwing clouds of dust and clouds of fungi."

The disease is marked by a shortness of breath, increased coughing, discomfort in the lungs, a tightness in the chest and a fever. Sometimes the allergic reaction comes later, "so he (the farmer) cannot relate it exactly to working with the hay," Patel explained.

In the chronic form of the disease, Patel said, a chest x-ray will show signs of scar tissue or fibrosis, an indication of permanent damage to the lung and a loss of lung capacity.

"The important thing is to discover the disease in its early stages and treat it," he stressed.

Because the symptoms of Farmer's Lung resemble a number of other lung diseases, it is often misdiagnosed, Patel noted. A person experiencing these symp-



toms should see a doctor immediately and should tell him if there is a chance that he has been exposed to the spores created by moldy hay.

Medication can help the symptoms of this disease, but can't prevent them if the farmer continues to be exposed to hay mold. The main cure is to stay totally away from hay mold spores, Patel said.

A number of other farm situations also hold dangers from the air for farmers. According to information provided by Ron Jester, a Delaware extension farm safety specialist, typical chicken houses and swine operations generate a considerable amount of dust.

The typical broiler grower, he notes, inhales more than 77,000 cubic feet of air, weighing 6,244

pounds at zero degrees centigrade each year. If the air is dusty, the farmer is inhaling a considerable amount of dust.

A recent study by the Ontario Pork Producers Marketing Board, Jester said, found that hog feeding - especially scatter feeding - created the most dust of all the jobs studied.

All dust, Jester said, causes lung irritation which results in fibrosis. And, the more dust inhaled, the greater the risk. To reduce the amount of dust inhaled, he recommends wearing a particulate respirator.

Setting aside a Farm Safety Week can make farmers more aware of the hazards that confront them daily, but only farmers themselves can take the necessary steps to assure that farms, do in fact, become safer places to work.

BACK HOME



By Michelle S. Rodgers

Lancaster Extension
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Each Day— A New Account

As my husband and I waved goodbye to our family on Labor Day I lamented, "What happened to this summer?" To me, summer seemed more like three weeks than three months. And I'll admit that I ran out of time to complete some summer projects like sanding and coating the picnic table and painting the porch. And at this writing, I have not "put up" my applesauce.

My unfinished summer chore lists has prodded me to re-think my time management. My first instinct and plan is to get up earlier. I've decided I'm a morning person and I get more accomplished before noon than I do the entire rest of the day. (Maybe this is leftover from my farm background where much work was accomplished before breakfast!)

Managing time is similar to managing bank accounts. This little story makes a good analogy.

Each Day Is A New Account

If you had a bank that credited your account each morning with \$86,000 — That carried over no balance from day to day — Allowed you to keep no cash in your account — And every morning cancelled whatever part of that amount you had failed to use during that day — What would you do?

Draw out every cent every day, of course, and use it to your advantage! Well, you have such a bank — and its name is "TIME."

Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it rules off as lost whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purposes.

It carries over no balances. It allows no overdrafts. Each day, it opens a new account with you. Each night, it burns the records of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against the "Tomorrow."

If you, too, are looking to get the most of your "time account" consider these time tools.

Plan each day's activities the preceding evening so that you can get started early in the morning. Making a list helps give you a concrete idea of your day's plan. Activities can be arranged for efficiency. Personally, I like to make a list of "chores" for the week and then each evening cross off completed jobs and star the ones to be completed the next day. This keeps my list manageable as I can start a new list each week instead of a never-ending list!

All jobs have three parts: getting ready, the job itself, and cleaning up. Try combining the clean up of one job with the getting ready of another. For example, set the table as you put the dishes away.

Keep a list of 5, 10, and 30 minute tasks that you like to do. Become a "wait watcher" — carry a paperback book to read, correspondence or needlework for those times you find yourself waiting.

Plan some time for yourself. Fatigue is a big time waster. Set aside some time to do at least one thing you enjoy. I have a favorite magazine that I look forward to reading one article/day for relaxation. Counted cross stitch, baking, and reading the paper provide relaxation for me.

Separate your activities into A, B, and C priorities: "A" for those most important, "B" for those of secondary importance and "C" for those of little importance. Ask yourself if you really need to concern yourself with the "C's."

Time management is a skill I hope to improve on. I still plan to get that applesauce canned! And really, it's up to each of us to invest this precious fund of hours, minutes and seconds in order to get the utmost in health, happiness and success for our families.

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Safety precautions are important when using microwave

NEWARK, Del. — Used properly, microwave ovens are fast, cool, safe and efficient. But sometimes the use and care manuals forget to mention the burned fingers, melted dishes and other hazards of careless use, says University of Delaware extension home economist Sally Foulke.

Although a microwave oven is not likely to cause a serious fire, some items can get hot enough to char, smoke, or even burst into flames, she says. Here are some precautions you can take:

- Use only approved microwave-safe cookware. Some plastics can melt or change shape in a microwave oven.

- Don't use towels made from recycled paper. (The label will tell you.) Bacon grease on recycled paper towels sets up the potential for a fire.

- Do not use twist-ties to fasten items you put into a microwave. Instead use string or plastic. If you use a cooking bag, cut a tie strip from the the open end to serve as a fastener.

- When drying herbs or freshening crackers, place a cup of water in the corner of the oven to absorb excess microwave energy.

- To prevent burned fingers, use potholders when removing food from a microwave oven. Though microwaves don't heat containers, heat from food can be transferred to a container. Food continues to heat for some time even after removal from the oven, so handle containers carefully.

Use extreme caution when heating infant formula in a microwave oven, Foulke warns. Although a container may feel cool to the touch, the formula may be scalding. It's very important to let the formula stand at room temperature after removing it from

the oven. There have been reports of esophageal burns to infants from formula heated in microwave ovens. Overheating also causes nutrient loss.

Use only dishwasher-safe plastic or glass bottles for a baby. Some bottle liners can melt in a microwave oven. However, several manufacturers of bottles with plastic liners provide microwave heating instructions. In that case, follow their instructions to the letter, Foulke says. If melting occurs, put in a claim with the manufacturer.

To heat a baby bottle in a microwave oven, microwave the open bottle of formula at the full power setting until just warm. Attach the nipple and cap, and

shake the bottle to redistribute the heat. Let stand several minutes before checking temperature. Always sprinkle several drops of formula on your inner wrist before giving the bottle to the baby.

Steam can cause a nasty burn, so be careful when removing any type of covering or lid from microwaved foods. Tilt the lid or plastic wrap away from you. Be sure to pierce plastic pouches or sacks to prevent steam build-up.

Always stir liquids before microwaving, especially water. Gas bubbles invisible to the naked eye may erupt when pressure is applied. Foulke says there have been several reports of burns from dropping a tea bag into a cup of microwaved boiling water.

Family living leader receives award

NEW YORK, NY — Diane V. Brown, extension family living program leader for the Southeast Region of the Penn State Extension Service, has received a Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of Extension Home Economists. She was honored at the association's 50th anniversary meeting held in New York City, Sept. 10 to 14.

As regional program leader, Brown works closely with extension home economists in 16 counties. She has helped several of them develop strong advisory committees, which she sees as essential in developing effective programming that meets local needs.

A native of Maryland, Brown holds a bachelor's degree in home economics education from Bridgewater College, Virginia, and a master's degree in family management and community



Diane Brown

development from the University of Maryland. She is currently pursuing a doctorate in adult education at the Pennsylvania State University.