



Brockett's Ag Advice

By John E. Brockett
Farm Management Agent
Lewistown Extension Office

Safety starts with you

Are you a responsible person? Most of you will say, "yes, I am." But many of you do not exhibit this responsibility when it comes to operating your farm in as safe a manner as possible.

The accident rate in Pennsylvania is horrible. It is costly in time lost, in human parts lost, in machinery bills, in livestock injured or lost, and in human lives lost.

Danger is part of farm life.

There are people who go over Niagara Falls in a barrel to get the thrill of danger, there are others who become daredevil pilots or race car drivers, and other who climb mountains just to meet danger and defeat it for a thrill.

Shucks, most of them who never dream of spending some time on the farm living the daily existence that many farm families consider routine.

However, even these self

proclaimed daredevils fix everything to "cut" the risk as much as possible. So can you, Mr. and Mrs. Farmer, and so should you. After all, you are not farming because you have any desire to be a daredevil, are you?

Hurry is one of the big culprits in any potential accident. We all get into too much of a hurry at times. There never seems to be enough time to get everything done that we "need" to do.

But sometimes we tilt the balance bar towards this wasteful "hurry" by pushing ourselves beyond reason.

Or we cause our own "hurry" reason because we did not fix something until it broke down in the middle of haying or some other vital task.

Or we do poor planning of our time which finds at the wrong place all the time. Now while time is a bit more relaxed than it was a few weeks ago, why don't you fix that equipment that you will need next week or next month?

Why don't you put the guard back on the PTO shaft or the Drive Chain? Don't take risks with your children—it won't really kill them if they don't get a ride on the tractor while you're mowing, but it may if they are riding and get thrown off.

Keep them away from idling tractors, operating forage wagons, etc. Put the tractor in park (make sure it is all the way in) whenever you get off. Use your emergency brake if you have one. Make sure it will work before using the tractor.

Neglect is culprit number 2. How often have you said, "oh I forgot to shut the gate and the heifers got out." The result could be anything from lost time to mashed crops to heifers who died from over eating lush corn or fertilizer chemicals. Or you forgot to put the safety pin in the clevis bolt and a bump causes the bolt to hop out. Result could be anything from pulling the PTO shaft apart (costing you time to stop and re-hook) to the forage harvester going crashing down the hill and winding up in the road on top of your neighbor's new car.

Inexperience is one area that most farmers and farm labor would deny ever occurs. When was the last time you said that you did not know how to handle a particular piece of equipment? Result is that the first time many pieces are operated is when it is for real.

It is a wonder that there are not more accidents due to not knowing where the shut off valve is or the brake or even first gear. Then we get into the real problem areas such as the center of gravity of a machine or the load bearing capacity of a part or piece of equipment. Sometimes a farmer never learns these things about his equipment.

Farmers should make sure that anyone operating a piece of equipment on their farm, including themselves, spends some time familiarizing themselves with the operation of that item. It is also a good idea to read the operating

manuals several times. Pay particular attention to the safety section to make sure the operator understands the safe limits for the machine. When it is operated the first time, take it easy—don't go all out. So what if it takes longer to get the job done. That extra time now may mean saved time later.

Too much experience can be as dangerous as too little. Too much familiarity can breed contempt and with contempt comes inattention. An example is turning your back on that bull that never before bothered you.

Usually in an accident involving an animal, it was the docile animal that caused the harm. Another area is inattention around machinery such as stepping over the PTO shaft while it is without a guard and is operating. Come on now, how many of you have done this as short of a time ago as last month? You are doing two things bad there.

First you are endangering yourself—supposing your step is a mite low today or you slip or the tractor is on a high spot.

Second you are giving a real bad example for your child or for that matter to any other person in the area. Even if it is not macho to walk around, you must do it for no other reason than to set a good example for others, who you do not want to be hurt.

SAFETY STARTS WITH YOU—DON'T LET IT END WITH YOU.

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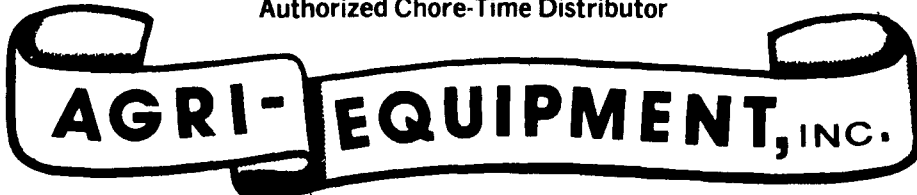
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