

Farming Can Be Hazardous To Your Health

UNIVERSITY PARK — Farming is a risky business. Statistics indicate it is second only to mining

as the most hazardous occupation in the country. From 1980 through 1984, 128 Pennsylvania farm-

workers were killed in tractor-related accidents, and 34 died in accidents involving other farm

machinery. Another 91 farm deaths were attributed to drownings, accidents with farm animals, and various other farm-related incidents.

"Many factors play into the high injury and death rates besides the obvious risks involved in operating farm equipment," says Dennis Murphy, extension safety specialist at The Pennsylvania State University. "Long work hours during planting and harvesting can make a person less alert and less careful. We also find more children and older farmers suffering major injuries because many farms are family-operated and, unlike other industries, unregulated by retirement or minimum age requirements."

Within the past several years, efforts have been made to decrease farming risks. Murphy helped develop an emergency rescue program designed for rural volunteer rescue personnel. In addition, he travels throughout the state, putting on farm safety workshops through county extension offices. Called "First on the Scene," the program is tailored to the needs of agricultural employers, farmworkers and farm families.

For the past year Murphy also has worked through county extension offices to offer a program

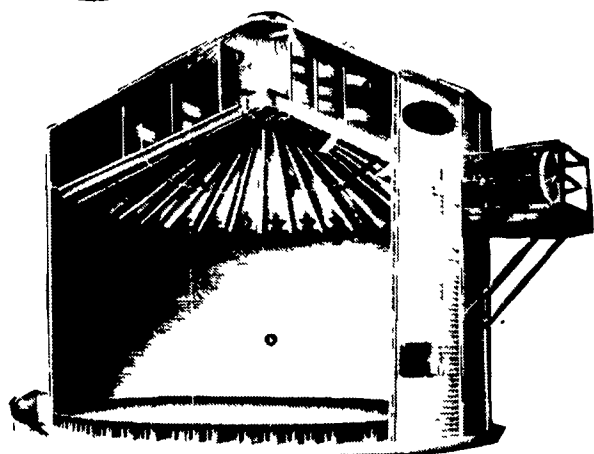
dealing with respiratory hazards. He includes an equipment demonstration of personal protection equipment that is designed for respiratory protection in agriculture.

Murphy also heads the Pennsylvania Agricultural Safety Council, the only statewide organization dedicated solely to the prevention of rural-farm accidents. PASC develops and coordinates rural and farm safety programs and provides an annual directory of farm safety resources to each of its members.

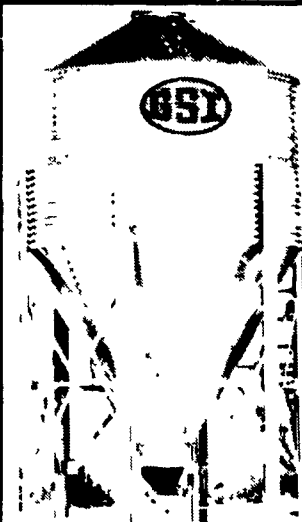
PASC's members include farmers, agricultural organizations and government agencies, farm equipment and implement dealers, agricultural suppliers and insurance companies. "I would encourage anyone who works in agriculture or rural areas to join the organization," says Murphy. "For a very small membership fee, we provide the most comprehensive package of safety resources in the state."

More information is available on the PASC and extension safety programs through county extension offices and Penn State's Department of Agricultural Engineering at University Park. A series of farm safety fact sheets developed by Murphy is also available through both offices.

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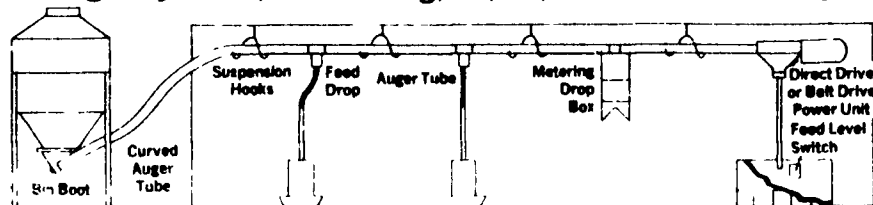


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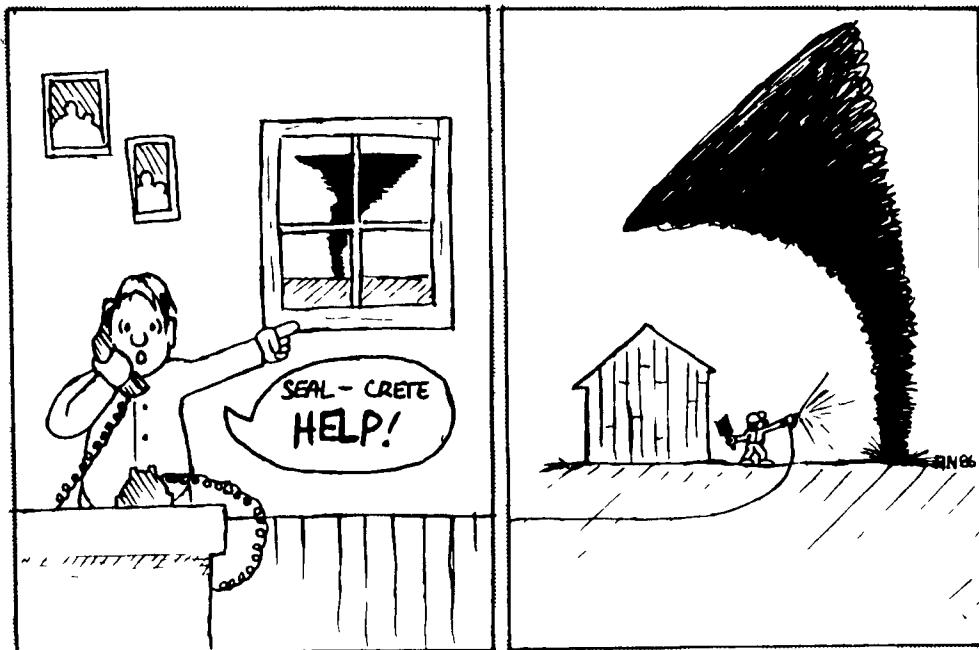
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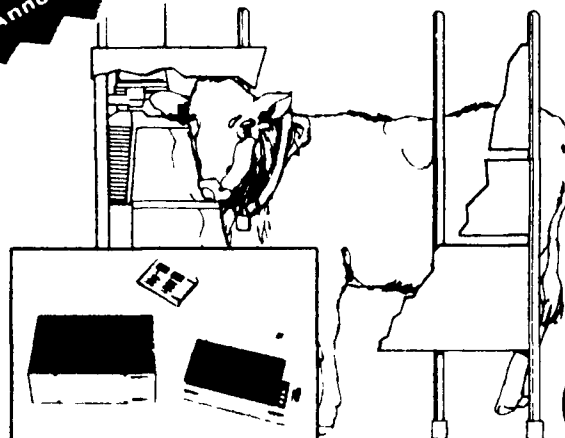
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