

FARMSAFE Seminars Slated For March In New York

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Alarmed by their findings of a high injury and illness rate among farmers, Dr. John May and Dr. David Pratt have organized safety seminars for farm families and others involved in agriculture.

The next series of seminars, dubbed FARMSAFE, will take place in Jamestown, on March 5 and in Batavia, on March 19. The first series, held in Watertown and Utica, N.Y., last November, attracted more than 200 people.

FARMSAFE is being funded in part by Eastern Milk Producers. Other sponsors include the New York State Labor Department and the New York State Grange.

May and Pratt direct the Bassett Farm Safety and Health Project at Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital in Cooperstown. In a study of more than 100 farms in Otsego County, they found a 25 percent injury rate among farm workers.

The family farm, with its image of fresh air and good country living, actually harbors dusts, pollens, molds, fumes, fertilizers, pesticides and silo gas — all of which are potentially damaging to the lungs, and even fatal, according to Pratt.

Their research focused to a large degree on respiratory problems in the farm environment, including

allergic hazards which lead to the very serious Farmer's Lung Disease, and to the temporarily debilitating condition known as Silo Unloader's Syndrome.

The work of the two physicians attracted the attention of the National Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Ga., and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health in Morgantown, W. Va.

In response to their findings, May and Pratt developed seminars aimed at heightening farmers' awareness of the risks and hazards of their occupation — whether they involve respiratory risks or power

equipment hazards.

The first FARMSAFE seminar will run from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Thursday, March 5, at the Holiday Inn in Jamestown. The second seminar will run the same time two weeks later on Thursday, March 19, at the Holiday Inn in Batavia.

Agricultural reporter Chris Kimball will be the moderator for both sessions.

The Jamestown session will feature these speakers.

- John B. Moran, safety research director, National Institute for Occupational Safety, Morgantown, W. Va. He will discuss "Electrocutions and Other Dangers on the Farm" and "Personal Protective Equipment for Farm Workers."

- Dennis J. Murphy, Ph.D., Penn State extension safety specialist, University Park, Pa. His topics are: "Job Safety Analysis for Farmers" and "Job Instruction Training." He also will give a risk-taking demonstration.

- John G. Pollock, agricultural safety specialist, Cornell

University, Ithaca, N.Y. He will talk on "Safety: On the Farm, Off the Job."

The speakers at the Batavia session will include:

- Pratt, who will discuss "Respiratory Hazards."

- William E. Field, Ed.D., extension safety specialist, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Ind. He will talk on "Power Take-Off Injuries" and then give a demonstration outdoors. He also will discuss "Economic Impact of Farm Injuries."

- William Heffernan, Ph.D., professor of rural sociology, and Judith Heffernan, M.S., research associate, Department of Rural Sociology, Columbia, Mo. Their topic is: "Family Stress: Dealing with It in the Changing Climate of Agriculture."

More information about FARMSAFE may be obtained by contacting Janet Ivory, FARMSAFE coordinator, at Bassett Hospital, Cooperstown, N.Y. 13326. Those wishing to register for either seminar may call her collect at 607-547-3971.

Lightweight Chainsaws Useful, But Dangerous

FLEMINGTON, N.J. — Lightweight chain saws have become a common piece of equipment on farms... and around non-farm homes. They are useful for cutting and trimming trees, cutting firewood, clearing storm-damaged trees. They are time-savers, but are they ever dangerous!

The chain moves at 50 feet per second through wood. It cuts a quarter inch path through a log... and will do the same through flesh.

A chain saw laceration is coarse, perhaps best described as ragged, not a clean cut as with a knife.

Annually, an estimated 120,000 people are injured by chain saws seriously enough to require medical attention. Over 90 percent of the injuries are lacerations due to contact with the chain. The most commonly injured parts of the body are the left arm and hand (28 percent), the left leg (27 percent), and the head (25 percent).

Martin Decker, Cooperative

Extension specialist in agricultural engineering at Rutgers, offers a number of suggestions to reduce the hazard in the operation of a chain saw.

- Select a lightweight, yet powerful chain saw. Heavy, underpowered saws cause fatigue and frustration, which lead to accidents. Saw should have safety features: throttle interlock, chain brake, safety tip guard, and low-kickback chains.

- Read the owner's manual. Become familiar with the safe operation and maintenance of the saw.

- Use the proper gasoline and oil. Carry fuel only in a safety can. Refuel on bare ground and when engine is stopped.

- Check chain tension frequently. And, keep the chain sharp. When sharp, it will produce small wood chips, not fine sawdust.

- Consider weather conditions. They are important. Don't cut trees down on a windy day. Rain,

snow and ice lead to slips and falls.

- Protective clothing is important. Clothes should be trim-fitting; wear a safety "hard" hat, leather or safety gloves, safety goggles, and non-slip, steel-toed shoes.

- Use ear plugs or muffs. Continuous exposure to chain saw noise can cause permanent hearing loss. A saw produces about 115 decibels of noise and the ear should not be exposed to noise levels at this rate for more than 15 minutes in a 24-hour day. There should be no doubt... use ear plugs or muffs!

- Know what "kickback" is and respect it. When the chain contacts limbs or logs other than the one you are cutting, the saw may jump back. This is often the cause of face or head lacerations.

Yes, the right saw, properly maintained, is still dangerous. It is a real time-saver, and a highly efficient piece of equipment. So, learn to use it properly and safely.

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