Farm Accidents Claim Lives

ROSEMONT, Ill. — Farming is one of the most dangerous occupations in the U.S. and presents emergency medical workers with some of their greatest challenges.

Farming accidents claimed the lives of 1,400 and left 140,000 with disabling injuries in 1991. Agriculture leads all other industries in occupational fatalities with a rate of 44 deaths per 100,000 workers, compared with 43 deaths per 100,000 workers in mining and quarrying.

Farming injuries frequently involve major trauma, said Robert A. Worsing, MD, editor of "Rural Rescue and Emergency Care," a new publication of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

"Rescue services usually are called only after there have been attempts made to extricate the injured patient," said Worsing.

Most of the accidents involve large, heavy machines which contain sharp cutting and piercing elements, the Overland Park, Kan. orthopaedic surgeon explained.

"Farmers often work in remote locations, so an accident may go unnoticed for several hours. Rescue teams serving agricultural areas may be limited by geographic isolation, extended response time, and long distances from medical facilities."

Since 1971, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons has published "Emergency Care and Transportation of the Sick and Injured," a widely-regarded training textbook for emergency medical technicians. The new publication, "Rural Rescue and Emergency Care," supplements that training. "Rural Rescue and Emergency Care" was developed because agricultural-rural emergencies present unique problems, Worsing said.

"Rural Rescue and Emergency Care" costs $29 and can be purchased by contacting the Academy's customer service department, (800) 626-6726.

Field Tillage Equipment Displayed At Field Day

SUNBURY (Northumberland Co.) — Sixty farmers from Northumberland and surrounding counties attended a high residue tillage equipment field day at the Jeff Pontius farm three miles south of Sunbury recently.

The total turnout with agency and equipment representatives was 81 people. The field day provided an opportunity for farmers to see some of the latest field tillage equipment, which is designed to leave a higher percentage of previous crop residue on the surface after tillage or planting operations.

The field day was sponsored by the Northumberland County Conservation District, USDA Soil Conservation Service (SCS), and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), John Deere farm equipment company and C.B. Hoober & Son, Inc., farm equipment dealer. Mike Fleming, salesman for American Cyanamid, presented a program on weed and insect control in high residue tillage systems.

The 1990 USDA Food and Security Act requires a farmer who receives USDA financial benefits to have an erosion control conservation plan for all Highly Erodible Land (HEL) which he farms. Those conservation plans will need to be implemented by Jan. 1, 1995. Most of the farmers have selected the alternatives of no-till planting or use of minimum tillage (mulch tillage) to meet the erosion control requirements of the conservation plan.

To meet the SCS standards for these reduced tillage systems requires a certain percentage of residue cover on the soil surface after tillage and planting operations. In order to be in compliance with the conservation plan and to be eligible for USDA financial benefits, the farmer's tillage system will need to leave the percent residue cover as specified in his conservation plan and by the year scheduled.

The equipment was demonstrated in a field with an original shredded cornstalk residue cover of 75 to 80 percent. Mike Egert of the John Deere, Des Moines, Iowa factory, and Harold Lenker of Tobias Farm Equipment, Halifax were on hand to explain and demonstrate the John Deere "Mulchmaster" tillage tool which left a 54-percent residue cover, and Jeff Pontius' John Deere no-till drill, which left a 77-percent residue cover after planting.

Charles Hoober, of C.B. Hoober and Son, Inc., Intercourse, and Mel Blunier of the DMI Illinois factory were on hand to explain and demonstrate Krause and DMI equipment. The Krause "Landsman" tillage tool left a 45-percent residue cover, and the Krause no-till drill left 77-percent. The DMI "Ecolo-Tiger" tillage tool left a 40-percent residue cover, and DMI "Ecolo-till," a sub-soiling tillage tool, left 68-percent, but unless planted with a no-till drill, the field would require another tillage operation before planting.

The residue cover left for all the above tillage operations would be adequate to be in compliance with the residue cover requirement of most FSA conservation plans, unless you would have a field with a fairly steep slope.

For more information on high residue tillage systems, contact the Northumberland County Conservation District at (717) 988-4224 or the Soil Conservation Service at (717) 286-4311.