



Practice Farm Safety This Fall

Follow these tips to develop a safety-first mindset on the farm.

09/09/2009

As fall harvest nears, farm families are reminded to be alert to the dangers and practice farm safety this season.

Studies show that a majority of farm-related injuries and fatalities occur from May through October with peaks during planting and harvesting seasons. Most of these accidents are caused from falls and machinery.

"To reduce the likelihood of a mishap, make sure surfaces are free from spilled grain or debris," said Tom Schlenker, executive vice president for Farm Credit Services of Mid-America based out of Louisville, Ky.

"Also check to see that all machinery and equipment are operating properly. Ensure that shields are covering all moving parts on grinder mixers, mowers and other implements. What may seem like minor repairs now could have major implications later."

Some of the most alarming accidents involve power take-off (PTO) units, yet these injuries are also the most preventable. Developing safe work habits is key to reducing the number of PTO-related accidents.

Additionally, farm tractors provide the primary source of power on many farms. Studies show that the farm tractor is involved in a high proportion of farm fatalities and severe injuries. To avoid them, follow safe management principles and implement a tractor safety program on your farm.

"For example, you should make sure your platform is clear of debris and that you have a slow moving vehicle emblem posted properly," said Schlenker. Slow moving vehicle emblems can be purchased as tractor supply companies.

Farm safety checks also should involve children. Talk to children about dangerous areas, and make sure they understand which areas are off limits.

"Remind them of the rules on a regular basis," said Schlenker. "Listing the rules once isn't enough. Devote a day to family safety instruction. It's important that everyone develops a 'safety first' attitude on the farm."

Farm safety is just one component of a risk management plan. "Now is also a great time for farmers to double-check their financial safety," said Amy Jackson, vice president of insurance. "Crop insurance and life insurance coverage are just a few of the tools available to protect you and your family from loss."