

MAFES Dawg Tracks



April 14, 2008 **Recognizing Common Farm Hazards**



Working around the various types of farm equipment always presents a potential for hazards to occur. No matter how we train, stay focused, and work conscientiously at our jobs, inherently an accident can happen when we least expect it.

However, if we recognize these hazards and take appropriate steps, we can reduce the potential for accidents. When we are working with farm equipment, accident prevention depends on:

- A working knowledge of the hazards.
- Keeping all guards and shields in place and in good repair.
- Heed all warnings that are spelled out on the decals affixed to the equipment.
- Always disengage the power, shut off the engine, deposit the key in your pocket, and wait for all parts to stop moving before doing any kind of work on the machine.

Recognize Common Equipment Hazards -

As we mentioned earlier, there are many types of equipment that we use on farms. One thing is that most of the hazards that exist are common to all of these types of equipment:

- **Pinch points** – These exist where two parts move together, with at least one of them turning in a circle. Examples include chain drives, belt drives, gear drives, and feeder rolls. You should never reach into the area of a rotating part. Clothing, hair, fingers, hands and other body parts can be severed by a pinch point.
- **Pull in accidents** – These accidents usually occur when a person is attempting to feed material into an operating machine or maybe attempting to unclog a part. Feed rolls and the other components are much too fast and will pull you in and mangle you before you can react and let go.
- **Wrap points** – Wrap points appear wherever there is an exposed rotating shaft. Once material is caught in a shaft, there is no way out. Some examples of wrapping hazards are:
 - ~ Ends of shafts that extend out past the bearings.
 - ~ Square or hex-shaped shafts are most likely to wrap hair and clothing, but smooth shafts can grab and wrap just as well.
 - ~ U-joints, couplings, keys and other fasteners on shafts increase the wrapping hazard.
 - ~ Pickup reels and beaters are also a wrapping threat.
- **Shear points** – These points exist where two components move across each other, like a scissor action.

- **Cutting points** – These are created when an object moves forcefully enough to cut relatively soft material. Shearing and cutting devices are widely used on harvesting equipment. The active parts may rotate (rotary mower) or reciprocate (sickle bar). Cutting and shear points can also exist on devices that do to cut material, like an auger entering a tube or a hinged implement frame.
- **Thrown objects** – Some farm machines can throw objects with a lot of force. Rotary mowers or flail choppers can throw small stones and other types of debris. Combine straw choppers and hammer mills can throw and crop material with a lot of force.
- **Freewheeling** – These parts on farm equipment can continue to rotate for a few minutes after the engine has been shut down or power disengaged. Examples of freewheeling are combine cutter heads, hammer mills, baler flywheels, rotary mowers and blower fans.
- **Crush points** – These points are created when two objects move toward each other, or when one object moves toward a stationary item. A crush point exists between an implement tongue and a tractor drawbar. Other types of potential crush points are jacked-up equipment, raised hydraulic components and overhead garage doors.

Recognition, Avoidance and Prevention -

To prevent farm equipment accidents, we must first learn to recognize the hazards that these machines present. As mentioned earlier, if we develop good safety habits it will help to avoid having contact with operating machinery.

- There are no circumstances that would ever warrant one to reach into an operating machine. We should always disengage the power, shut off the engine, remove the key from the ignition, and wait for all the parts to stop moving before starting to repair or make any adjustments to the machine.
- All guards and shields must be in place and in good condition.
- When hitching equipment, the helper should stand clear until the tractor has backed into position. Always inch the tractor forward (never backward) to make positioning adjustments.
- Keep bystanders clear of the areas where objects could be thrown in their vicinity.

The key line for this is that we should never attempt to do any kind of work on farm equipment with the power engaged. This one line alone will greatly enhance the safety of anyone working on equipment.

**10 FINGERS
10 TOES
IF YOU ARE NOT SAFE.....
WHO KNOWS??**