

FARMSTEAD HAZARDS

Accidents Waiting to Happen

Farm family members who work around machinery every day know one slip can mean loss of limb—or life.

Still, many overlook subtle hazards on farmsteads. Farm safety specialists who tally the numbers say slips and falls and other mishaps are second only to machinery in causing injuries.

Every family member and farm employee should take a careful look around during daily chores to identify routines and equipment that are potential hazards. It's important to include youngsters who are taught safety principles that help them be aware of hidden hazards.

Slips, falls and other injuries related to permanent farmstead features like bins, manure pits and other installations were actually No. 2 in injury rates. In other farm activities, inhaling grain dust and molds can make farmers sick and even cause permanent lung damage.

Extension agriculture safety specialists offer these suggestions for preventing farmstead accidents:

Keep children away from livestock, particularly in livestock-handling areas.

Most male animals are dangerous. Use special facilities for these animals and practice extreme caution when handling them.

Keep working facilities in good repair. Chutes, stalls and ramps should be maintained regularly.

Be calm and deliberate when working with animals. Always leave yourself an exit when working in close quarters.

Use only ladders that are in good condition; make sure they're solidly anchored, install handrails and loops on bins, and don't try to carry things while climbing.

Clean slippery spilled grain on floors and keep work shops clean and uncluttered.

Lift heavy objects with your legs, not back.

Leave electrical work to experts.

Cover floor openings on upper levels of barns or other buildings so people and children can't fall through.

Keep young children out of work areas.

Look at every job to figure out what could go wrong and how you could prevent it from happening.

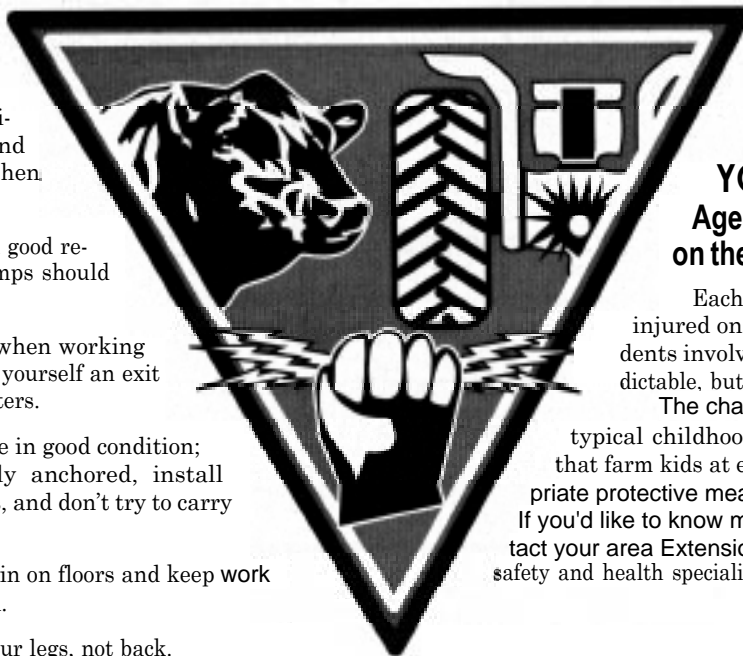
Wear a dust mask or toxic dust respirator when working in dusty environments.

Don't enter pits or silos with inadequate oxygen.

The farming business is becoming safer, but there's still a long way to go. In the 1960s the death rate was about 60 per 100,000 workers; now it's 35, according to the National Safety

Council. But other industries have made greater reductions. Agriculture used to be third in the death rate statistics, behind construction and mining. During the last few years, it has been first.

WATCH YOUR STEP



YOUTH SAFETY Age-Appropriate Tasks on the Farm/Ranch

Each year thousands of children are injured on U.S. farms and ranches. Accidents involving children may seem unpredictable, but almost all can be prevented.

The chart on the next page describes typical childhood developmental stages, risks that farm kids at each stage may take, and appropriate protective measures.

If you'd like to know more about youth ag safety, contact your area Extension agent or state Extension ag safety and health specialist.

CHARACTERISTICS	TYPICAL RISKS	PROTECTIVE MEASURES
<u>Toddler/Preschooler</u>		
Unable to understand cause and effect. Magical thinking	Drinking/eating poison	Careful supervision. Locked cabinets
Fascinated by movement or moving parts	Falling off equipment	Prohibit riding on pickup or farm machinery
May love to climb	Drowning in pond or manure pit	Locks & fences
Curious	Wandering into road	Safe distractions
<u>Early School Age (5-9 years)</u>		
Inconsistent use of logic	Livestock kicks or crushing	Consistent rules
Wishes to appear competent	Entanglement in augers, machinery	Discussion of safe behavior
Wants adult approval		Assignment of simple farm chores with supervision
Not aware of real dangers	Falling off ATV tractor or pickup	Safety training
<u>Older School Age (10-13 years)</u>		
Greater physical & mental skills Physical development may outstrip mental or emotional maturity	Operating machinery designed for adults	Consistent rules
Wants social & peer acceptance	Being struck by vehicle while riding ATV or bike	Helmet, safety courses
Wishes to practice new skills without adult supervision	Falling from hay loft	Planned increases in chores and responsibilities
<u>Adolescent (13-16 years)</u>		
Desire to experiment	Machinery rollover or road accident	Peer education, consistent rules
Strong need for peer acceptance	Hearing loss from exposure to loud machinery	Rewards for safe behavior
Resistance to adult authority	Head & spine injury from ATV or motorcycle	Safety courses 4-H/FFA safety projects
<u>Young Adult (16 to 18 years)</u>		
Increasing sense of adult responsibility & competence	Same as adult risks Respiratory illness	Rewards for acceptance of responsibilities
Desire to be supportive, take on adult share of farm work	Tractor rollover Entanglement, injury, hearing loss	
Need to take risks	Additional risk from experimentation with alcohol or drugs	Clear and consistent rules Opportunity to be role model or teaching younger children about farm safety
Feeling of immortality		

Source: Minnesota Extension Service publication, Is Your Child Protected from Injury on the Farm? by John Shutske. Copies of this publication are available from MES Distribution Center, University of Minnesota, 1420 Eckles Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108-6069.