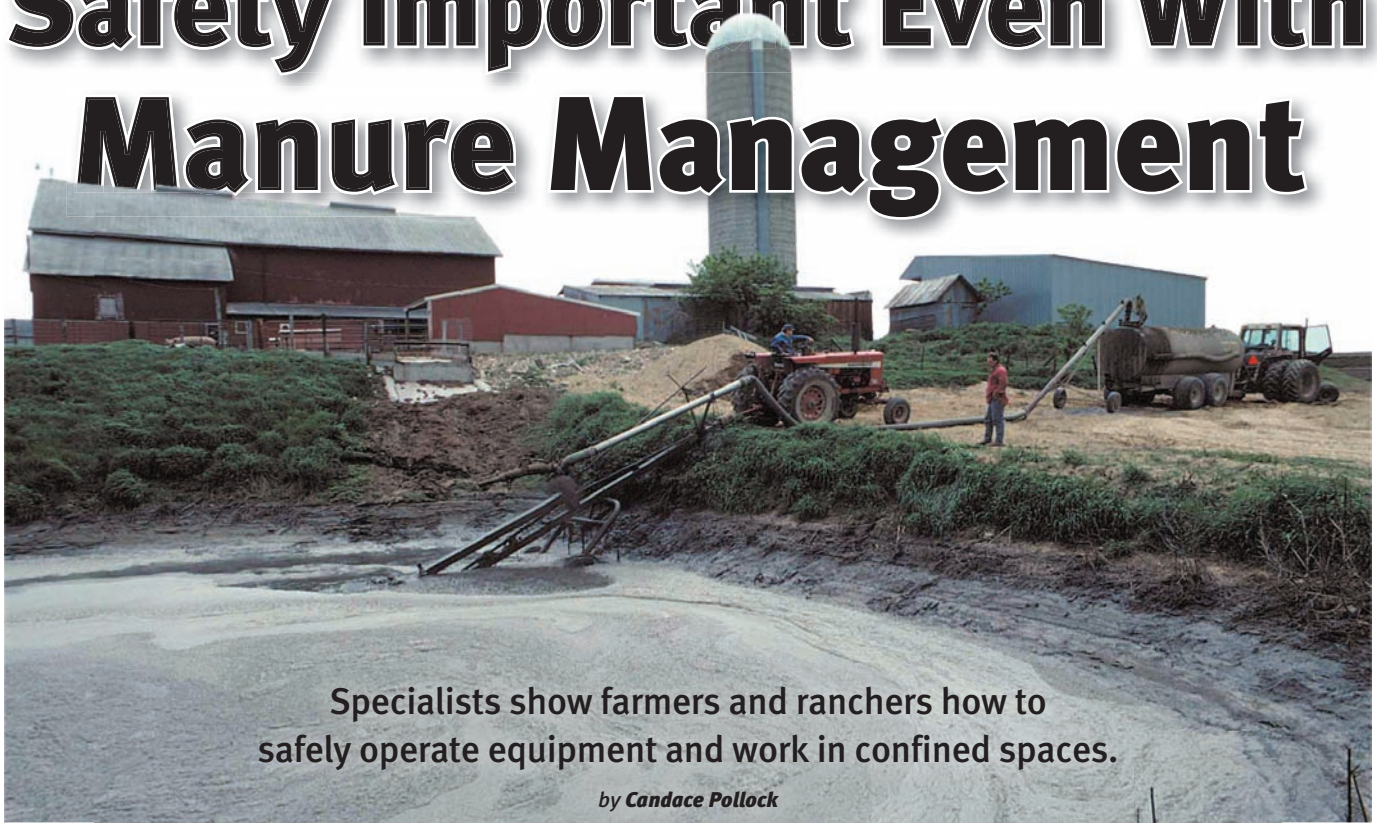
Safety Important Even With Manure Management



Specialists show farmers and ranchers how to safely operate equipment and work in confined spaces.

by ***Candace Pollock***

The routine of agricultural production can become perilous when attention to safety takes a back seat to the ease and efficiency of operating farm machinery.

A team of safety specialists from Ohio State University (OSU) Extension were to demonstrate the hazards of operating farm equipment at the Great Lakes Manure Handling Expo July 9 at the Molly Caren Agricultural Center in London, Ohio. Whether a farmer is driving a tractor or spreading manure on the farm, the message is the same: Safety comes first.

"When you are working with mechanized equipment, you have to respect it for the hazards that are potentially present," says Dee Jepsen, who also holds an appointment with the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC). "Maintenance is important to keeping equipment working properly and to avoid running into injuries associated with faulty equipment or broken parts."

Although each piece of equipment is unique and designed with a specific purpose, all farm machinery shares one common factor — risk points. Risk points are specific places on equipment where the possibility of injury is the greatest, such as gears, chains, cutting edges and revolving shafts.

Jepsen says there are eight specific hazard points of peril associated with farm equipment: cut points, rap points, pinching, crushing, burning, thrown objects, free-wheeling parts and stored-energy hazards, such as those associated with compressed springs.

Eight specific hazard points of peril associated with farm equipment

- cut points;
- rap points;
- pinching;
- crushing;
- burning;
- thrown objects;
- free-wheeling parts; and
- stored-energy hazards, such as those associated with compressed springs.

"Farmers should become familiar with those risk points on all farm machinery, especially the equipment they use routinely," Jepsen says. "The important aspect of equipment safety starts with maintenance. And once equipment has been serviced, all guards should be replaced so there is limited potential for coming into contact with the various hazard points."

Farm equipment contributes to 75% of all agricultural injuries in Ohio, according to statistics reported by OSU's Agricultural Safety and Health Program.

Working with manure in storage

"It's important to remind workers of the gases associated with manure in storage facilities, and the respiratory hazards involved when farmers are in that environment and there is no adequate ventilation," Jepsen says. "Someone can be overcome very easily in that situation."

Jepsen was to share how manure gases affect the body and what types of respiration to wear when handling manure in confined spaces. She will also demonstrate the type of air monitoring devices available for gas detection.

Themed "The Economics of Recycling," the Great Lakes Manure Handling Expo was to include commercial field demonstrations, educational demonstrations, educational sessions and commercial vendor displays. Event sponsors included OSU Extension, the OARDC, Michigan State University, Purdue University, Penn State University and Cornell University. Additional sponsors include Ohio Composting and Manure Management and the Midwest Professional Nutrient Applicators Association.

To learn more, visit *http://ohio-environmental.org*, *http://oema.osu.edu*, or contact Jon Rausch at 614-292-4504 or rausch.7@osu.edu, or Mary Wicks at 330-202-3533 or wicks.14@osu.edu.

Editor's Note: *Candace Pollock is an associate editor with the CommTech news team at OSU Extension, which supplied this article.*