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THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR –

Dee Jepsen – State Agricultural Safety and Health Leader

Looking for a thoughtful gift for your sweetheart this month? Maybe something a bit different from mainstream Valentine’s Day ideas? Consider one of these ideas to say you care:

- Vehicle care kit with jumper cables (perfect for drivers of any age)
- Fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors
- Fall protection harness kit (recommended for use in grain bins)
- First aid kits (small car kits, camping size, wall mount unit for garage or shop)
- Variety of Personal Protection Equipment (ear plugs, safety glasses, work gloves, N-95 respirators, chainsaw chaps, etc.)
- New bicycle helmet for upcoming spring outdoor activities, or a motorized helmet for snowmobiling, ATV, and motorcycle adventures

I know these ideas may seem a little different, but they show that you care. I recently purchased a fall protection kit for $85 and gave it to my husband on his birthday. As he unwrapped it, he simply said, “Well this certainly isn’t something I would have bought for myself, but I was thinking I may need one of these at the grain facility. I honestly didn’t know where to get one.” I smiled back, and hoped that he remembers he has it when he climbs bins this winter. I have a summer birthday; if I receive a portable kitchen fire extinguisher I won’t ask any questions of whether he thinks I need it! I will just know that he cares.

MONTHLY SAFETY SNICKER –

It’s just in case she gets any ideas.
ANNOUNCEMENTS – Keeping the Next Generation Safe

As we begin a new year, we are welcoming a new approach for teaching youth agricultural safety and health education. The OSUE Ag Safety and Health group has many resources available for your use during educational programming for youth and their parents. These resources can be adapted to current programming or be used to create a new programming opportunity in your community. A few examples of where these resources can be included are safety days, health fairs, county fair, school programming, farmer breakfast events, Farm Bureau events, FFA events, etc.

Youth Ag, Safety and Health Resources

Safety Focused Lesson Plans:
- Whoa (Livestock Safety)
- Ouch (Action/Reaction Time)
- Oops (Tractor Safety)
- Yuk (Pretty Poisons)
- Grain Entrapment
- ATV Resources include: ATV Action, ATV Gear Scramble, and Riding Under the Influence

Safety Curriculum Packages:
- Farm S.O.S (Strategies of Safety)
- OSHA for the Classroom
- Farm Safety Lesson Plans for Amish children
- Hearing Protection
- Tractor Certification

When using these resources, we ask that a short evaluation be completed to provide us with information about the audience. This information is used helpful in measuring impact and for enhancing future resources.

To request any of the information above, please contact Kathy Mann, mann.167@osu.edu or 614-292-0622.

Machinery Maintenance – Minimizing Slips, Trips, and Falls When Working Around Machinery

Dewey Mann - Research Associate for Agricultural Safety and Health

Ice, snow, and the other elements rarely deter daily farm chores. If Mother Nature decides to bring ¼-inch of ice or 6-inches of snow, the cows will still need fed and getting the blade on the tractor would be nice for snow removal. Think of all the different walking and working surfaces workers might encounter throughout the day. Agricultural producers and those that work outdoors are at greater risk of injury from a slip, trip, or fall because of the variety of surfaces they may encounter, compounded by the fact they are regularly out in the elements.

Nearly all slips or falls have one or more of these factors as the root cause: (1) Substandard walking surfaces, (2) Surface contaminants, (3) Poor footwear, (4) Walking style of the person.
Some general guidelines to minimize slips, trips, and falls when working on or around agricultural machinery includes:

- In wet or icy conditions, take smaller steps in order to ensure your torso stays balanced over your feet
- Keep walking paths free of ice and snow
- ALWAYS use three points of contact when mounting or dismounting equipment (1 hand and 2 feet, OR 2 hands and 1 foot): Use handrails or grab bars for contact points
- Keeps steps and operator’s platform (cab area) free of snow build up, chains, aerosol-cans and other debris that can become a tripping hazard
- Wear adequate footwear for the conditions: Adding stretch-type cleats to flat soul and treaded footwear is inexpensive and can greatly increase traction
- Slow down and allow more time for tasks during winter weather

Dewey Mann, research associate for agricultural safety and health, and lecturer for agricultural systems management, can be reached at (614) 292-1952 or mann.309@osu.edu.


INJURY PREVENTION – February is Heart Disease Awareness Month – Take Time to Schedule Maintenance for your Heart as you do Maintenance on Equipment

Andy Bauer – Ohio AgrAbility Educational Program Coordinator

February is American Heart Disease awareness month and also a time for cold weather and snow. During cold weather, work must be done around the farm, such as feeding livestock, breaking ice in the water trough, cutting wood or loading stored grain. It is also a time for getting equipment ready for spring tillage and planting the new crop.

Farming can be a consistently stressful occupation with farmers experiencing stresses associated with most occupations such as high demand, time pressures, and increased workload; however, farmers have added pressures associated with their job, such as uncontrollable weather, machinery breakdowns, variable crop prices, or even economic survival. Farming consistently has one of the highest rates of death due to stress-related conditions like hypertension and heart or artery disease.

Managing stress is an important part of preventing heart disease. Stress makes the heart beat faster to get ready for action and people who are stressed all the time secrete a hormone that raises blood pressure causing the body to retain more fluids placing excessive stress on the heart.

- With weather being one of the uncontrollable stress factors for farmers dress in layers and take breaks to warm up when working outside or in unheated buildings, you cannot control the weather but you can control how you prepare for it.
- Marketing grain is another area of uncontrollable stress area for the farmer, know your input costs, planting and harvesting costs and control what you can.
Knowing these costs will help to make marketing a little easier in knowing what your break even point is and at what level to market your crop.

- Doing winter maintenance on equipment is also important to reduce breakdowns and reduce stress in the spring, don’t overwork yourself in the cold weather though.

   The biggest maintenance item you need to take care of is yourself, get into your doctor and get a check-up. Get the condition of your heart and body checked and make sure YOU are ready for spring, after all you are your most important and valuable piece of equipment. If you go down for a time due to health issues work will not get done on a timely basis.

For more information contact Ohio AgrAbility at agrability.osu.edu or Andy Bauer at bauer.528@osu.edu or (614) 247-7681.

**Emergency Management – Preventing Barn Fires**

*Kent McGuire – OSU CFAES Safety and Health Coordinator*

Barn fires can be a farmer’s worst nightmare. The majority of barn fires end with tragic, costly, or even heartbreaking outcomes. These losses can include loss of human life, livestock, or valuable equipment and in many cases loss of the barn structure itself. The majority of barn fires end up being a result of lack of fire safety knowledge and even carelessness. Many barn fires could be prevented by: good barn layout, a usable fire plan and clear policies about how the barn and equipment should be maintained.

One of the most important prevention steps is to create a fire plan. Post fire and emergency contact numbers in prominent locations in the barn. Make an evacuation plan with at least two exit routes. Plan an emergency exit route for livestock that leads to a fenced area away from the barn, also consider how to prevent livestock from trying to re-enter the barn, while it is on fire. Finally, teach family or employees the fire plan and walk through it at least annually.

Additional barn fire prevention tips that can be used to minimized risk of a fire include:
- No smoking should be allowed in or near the barn. Post signs!
- Maintain good housekeeping by removing combustible materials such as feed bags, oily rags, hay debris, excessive dust, or stored fuels.
- If flammables such as fuels must be stored in the barn, isolated them in a safe area away from ignition sources and consider using a flammable storage cabinet.
- Make sure electrical wiring is in good condition and in conduit. All breaker panels and electrical boxes should have the proper covers in place.
- Use industrial grade extension cords, keeping them out of reach or travel path of livestock to prevent them from stepping on or chewing the cords. Also, do not connect several cords together; use a longer cord for longer distances.
- Place fire extinguishers strategically in barn near electrical panels or potential ignition sources. Check the extinguishers regularly.
- Follow the manufacture’s guidelines when using water heaters, heat tape or portable space heaters. Check heaters often and unplug them when not in use.
- Store hay and other feed properly to prevent spontaneous combustion.

For more information about the OSU Ag Safety visit [http://www.agsafety.osu.edu](http://www.agsafety.osu.edu) or contact Kent McGuire, OSU Agricultural Safety & Health, at mcguire.225@osu.edu or 614-292-0588.

**Agricultural Rescue: Grain Bin Safety Week!**  
Michelle King, Ag Rescue Program Coordinator Intern

February 22 – 28 is the National Grain Bin Safety Week, organized by Nationwide. This week is all about spreading awareness of grain bin safety on family farms and commercial grain-handling facilities. The focus is to educate the agricultural communities on safe work practices when handling or storing grain. The goal is to ultimately increase the awareness and decrease the number of injuries or deaths associated with grain handling and storage. This year’s theme for Grain Bin Safety Week is Rescue Tubes and Training. Training firefighters and first responders on grain rescue and awareness is very vital to the safety of someone who becomes engulfed in flowing grain. Unfortunately, many fire departments do not have access to these specialized tools or not trained on the proper way to have a successful rescue. This year Nationwide is holding a contest called, Nominate Your Fire Department Contest. The winners of this contest will receive grain bin rescue tubes and specialized training. To learn more about nominating your local fire department go to [http://www.grainbinsafetyweek.com/participate-with-us/nominate-your-fire-dept](http://www.grainbinsafetyweek.com/participate-with-us/nominate-your-fire-dept).

Here at OSU, within the Ag Safety and Health Office, we offer similar services to rural community members and farmers. With use of the Grain CART, we can provide a visual presentation of grain safety and awareness. We also coordinate with the Ohio Fire Academy to collaborate grain awareness programs and grain rescue training for firefighters and first responders. To learn more about what we can offer you and your community, go to [http://agsafety.osu.edu/](http://agsafety.osu.edu/) or call 614-292-9455. Have a safe and happy Grain Bin Safety Week!