



Farm Views

Sobering Safety Statistics

How many people die as a result of a farm accident each year in Nebraska? What is the most dangerous piece of equipment on the farm? Have we made any progress in recent years?

I recently received some sobering statistics from Extension Farm Safety Specialist, Dave Morgan. There have been 33 Nebraskans killed in farm related accidents in the 19 months beginning in January 1999 (24 in 1999 and nine so far in 2000). Over the 31 year period of 1969 to July 2000, 1080 Nebraskans have died in farm accidents—an average of 34.8 deaths per year. As one might expect given the number of hours of use, the most dangerous piece of equipment has been the tractor, which accounted for eight deaths in 99-2000. The most frequent circumstance involving tractors has been overturning while using a loader, mowing steep side slopes, or loss of control while pulling heavy loads.

Tied for first in terms of manner of death was suffocation. Most victims were either caught in a moving mass of grain in a bin or trailer and drawn under and suffocated or exposed to noxious gases in confinement feeding buildings.

Coming in a close second are crushing injuries from various causes. Crushing accounted for seven deaths, most of which occurred as the victim was working under a piece of machinery and it fell on them. As one might expect, ATV deaths were next with six people killed in 99-2000. ATV's have killed far more young people than any other cause. Four of the six ATV deaths reported since January 1999 have been people under 20 years of age and three were under 10.

Are farms getting any safer

than they used to be? In terms of average number of fatalities, it would seem we are making some progress. The average number of deaths per year since 1969 is 34.8. In the most recent past, we are averaging in the mid 20's per year. I personally would credit improved safety shielding and ROPS (roll-over protective structures) for the improved numbers.

I believe that even more people could be saved if more tractor operators would wear their safety belt when operating a ROPS equipped tractor so they are not ejected from the tractor in an accident. People need to be aware of the dangers of "drowning" in moving grain. ATV's should be considered tools not toys. Finally, so many times, one reads about passengers, not the driver, being fatally injured in an accident. Tractors, combines, and other equipment are no place for passengers. Many times they are precariously situated and easily dislodged, run over by the tractor, by a pulled implement, or they are thrown from the tractor suffering head and neck injuries. Sometimes the passenger is actually part of the cause of an accident, because they interfere with the driver's ability to react to an emergency.

Harvest will soon be underway and we will be into one of the busiest times of the year. Long hours and dangerous working conditions are accepted as a normal part of the life of a farmer, but no one should become a statistic for the sake of getting done a day or two earlier.

For the rural residents reading this (school kids included), remember to be watchful on county roads. A car going 50 miles per hour coming up behind a farm implement moving at 15 miles per hour closes at a

See **STATISTICS** on page 11

Prepare Grain Bins and Equipment Before Harvest

With harvest rapidly approaching, now is the time to prepare grain bins and harvesting equipment to help ensure that grain going into storage will remain in good condition. Don't wait until the middle of harvest to discover that a bin foundation is severely cracked, or find even later that insects from grain that was left in the combine last fall have severely infested a bin of new grain.

Harvesting Equipment

Remove all traces of old grain from combines, truck beds, grain carts, augers, and any other equipment used for harvesting, transporting, and handling grain. Even small amounts of moldy or insect-infested grain left in equipment can contaminate a bin of new grain.

Bins and Other System Components

Check the bin site and remove any items or debris that would interfere with safe, unobstructed movement around the bin. Remove any spilled grain and mow the site to reduce the chances of insect or rodent

infestation. If necessary, re-grade the site so that water readily drains away from bin foundations.

Inspect bins and foundations for structural problems. Inspect the bin roof and sides, inside and out, for leaks, loose or sheared



bolts, rust, other corrosion, etc. Check the roof vents and access hatch, and caulk any cracks at the roof line. Be sure the access ladder is complete and securely fastened to the bin. Repair or replace any deteriorated components.

Wiring for fans and other electrical components should be inspected for corrosion and cracked, frayed, or broken insulation. Exposed wiring should be run through water-proof, dust-tight conduit. Avoid

kinking the conduit, and make sure all connections are secure.

Check fans, heaters, transitions, and ducts for corrosion and damage. Remove any accumulated dust and dirt that will reduce the operating efficiency. Be sure that all connections are tight.

Ensure that the bins are clean. Remove any old grain with brooms and vacuum cleaners. Never put new grain on top of old. Also, clean bins not being used for storage this year to keep insects from migrating to other bins.

It is generally impossible to thoroughly clean under perforated drying floors. Although by removing the drying fan, and using a grain vacuum, much of the accumulated debris can be removed. The bin should then be fumigated with chloropicrin. (Chloropicrin is a Restricted Use Pesticide and requires gas monitoring devices and respirator protection.)

If long term storage (over 10 months) is anticipated,

See **GRAIN BINS** on page 12

Could Carbon be Your Next Crop?

USDA publication examines the issue

"Growing Carbon: A New Crop That Helps Agricultural Producers and the Climate, Too" has been published to provide information for producers and the general public on the linkage between natural resource conservation and greenhouse gas reduction.

The brochure addresses climate change and the greenhouse effect, what could happen to agriculture in the United States as the climate changes, how agricultural producers reduce greenhouse gas emissions, how producers increase

the storage of carbon on agricultural lands, the multiple environmental and economic benefits of these practices, international climate change agreements and U.S. agriculture, domestic policy, and the potential market for carbon.

Information is also provided on contacts for conservation practices and programs, research on conservation and climate change, USDA global change activities, climate change, and biofuels.

The brochure was sponsored by USDA's Natural Resources

Conservation Service, the USDA National Agroforestry Center, the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS), and Environmental Defense, a national nonprofit organization that links science, economics, and law to create solutions to environmental problems.

Copies are available from state USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service offices, by calling 1-888-LANDCARE, or from the SWCS Web site at <http://www.swcs.org>. (TD)

Are you Looking for the Latest Wheat Variety Test Results?

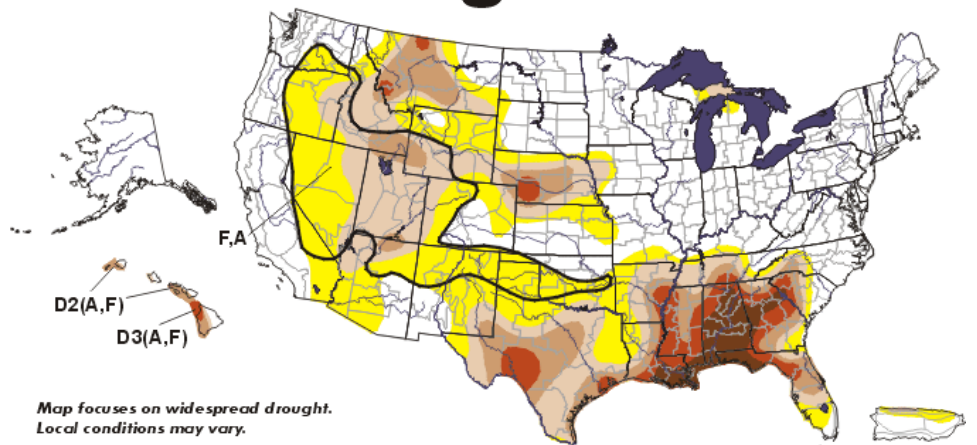
Internet users have access to University of Nebraska variety test results as soon as the data are compiled by accessing the data on the World Wide Web. The Lancaster County Extension web pages provide a convenient link to this information from the Nebraska Production Agriculture pages. Simply access the Ag/Acreage home page at <http://www.lanco.unl.edu/ag/> then click on the blue state of Nebraska icon (Nebraska Production Agriculture). At the welcome screen click on "Crops," then "Small Grains," then on "Nebraska Crop Variety Testing."

The wheat testing sites are listed individually or one can access a map of Nebraska where the wheat variety sites are indicated by a "W." Sites with 2000 data available will be blinking. Click on any available site to receive the latest wheat variety test results. (TD)



August 29, 2000 Valid 8 a.m. EDT

U.S. Drought Monitor



Map focuses on widespread drought. Local conditions may vary.

Legend:
 D0 Abnormally Dry
 D1 Drought-First Stage
 D2 Drought-Severe
 D3 Drought-Extreme
 D4 Drought-Exceptional
 Delineates Overlapping Areas

Drought type: used only when impacts differ
 A = Agriculture
 W = Water
 F = Wildfire danger

See accompanying text summary for forecast statements
<http://ens.unl.edu/monitor/monitor.html>



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