



American Society of Safety Engineers News
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Contact: Diane Hurns, 847-768-3413, dhurns@asse.org

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SAFETY ENGINEERS URGES FARMS TO INVEST IN SAFETY PROGRAMS/PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT INJURIES AND ILLNESSES TO WORKERS, CHILDREN

DES PLAINES, IL (March 5, 2012) – Safety needs to be the main ingredient in helping keep farms and ranches safe for farmers, family members including children, and employees, American Society of Safety Engineers' (ASSE) Agriculture Branch Chair said today as the March 4-10 Agriculture Safety Awareness Week begins. As part of the safety week, ASSE members are offering agriculture safety and health tips on-line at <http://www.asse.org/newsroom/safetytips/farmsafetytips.php>.

ASSE Agriculture Branch Chair and President of the Chesapeake Chapter Mike Wolf, CSP, said, "Agriculture is one of the most dangerous industries in the U.S. Farming is the only industry that regularly has young workers and children present and it is critical that everyone working in or around farms is aware of the risks, hazards and ways to avoid injury and illness in these types of settings. Installing rollover protection on tractors and ensuring all farm workers and children are educated on farm safety practices is critical to reducing farm-related fatalities."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2009, approximately 1,783,000 full-time workers were employed in the agriculture industry in the U.S. During the same year, 440 farmers and farm workers died from work-related injuries, resulting in a fatality rate of 24.7 deaths per 100,000 workers. Each day, approximately 243 agricultural workers suffer lost-time injuries, with five percent of these resulting in permanent impairments, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The leading cause of fatal farm injuries was tractor overturns, which accounts for more than 90 deaths annually.

Rollover protection structures (ROPS) are important to reducing risk when it comes to tractor fatalities, noted Wolf. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) supports the theory that ROPS and proper seatbelt use on tractors can help eliminate fatalities by reducing risk of being thrown from the tractor, or crushed in a rollover incident. ROPS can be retrofitted onto older tractors to increase safety of such machines. Many companies provide engineer-certified ROPS for purchase and installation.

Most farms do not fall under the auspices of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) rules and regulations. Hence, ASSE urges farmers to train workers, including young farmers, in all aspects of farming risks and safety. Machinery, motor vehicles and drowning were the causes of most of the fatal incidents involving children on U.S. farms and ranches. In 2009, an estimated 16,100 children and adolescents were injured on farms, with 3,400 of these injuries due to farm work. On average, 113 youth less than 20 years of age die annually from farm-related injuries, with most of these deaths occurring among youth 16-19 years of age.

A major agriculture safety risk, according to OSHA, is grain handling. Workers can be exposed to risks such as fires and explosions, suffocate from engulfment and entrapment in grain bins, falls from heights, and crushing or amputation injuries from grain handling equipment. In 2010, 51 workers were engulfed by grain storage in bins and 26 of those trapped lost their lives. This type of tragedy can occur when workers walk on moving

grain, which acts like quicksand according to OSHA, or when they attempt to clear grain bins. Moving grain can bury a worker in seconds. Grain dust explosions are also a high-risk element of working with grain as it is combustible and will burn or explode if exposed to an ignition source.

Electrical safety is another major hazard on farms, noted Wolf. Regular electrical inspections are necessary to prevent accidents due to malfunctioning or old electrical equipment. Harvest season is the best time to inspect all machinery and electrical equipment, including clearing outlets, lighting, electrical panels and equipment from obstructions or debris. One should check to make sure wires have not been affected by mice or other animals and carefully examine all connections.

To learn more about agricultural safety and health and to view ASSE's farm safety facts for rural areas, farm safety and health tips and farm safety tips for young workers, visit www.asse.org/newsroom. For more information about ASSE's Practice Specialty Agricultural Branch, visit www.asse.org/practicespecialties/ag-safety.

Also, the ASSE Chesapeake Chapter will be participating in an 'Ag Safety Day' this March 24 to be held from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. at the Carroll County AG Center in Westminster, MD. Some of the activities will include a grain bin rescue demo; Roll over Protective Structure Simulator (ROPS); and, trailer safety. The chapter is also holding its professional development conference Wednesday, March 7, at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory in Laurel, MD. For more information please go to <http://www.chesapeakeasse.org/events/event/2012-march-pdc/> or <http://www.chesapeakeasse.org/>.

Founded in 1911, the Des Plaines, IL-based ASSE is the oldest professional safety society and is committed to protecting people, property and the environment. Its more than 34,000 occupational safety, health and environmental professional members lead, manage, supervise, research and consult on safety, health, transportation and environmental issues in all industries, government, labor, healthcare and education. For more information, please go to www.asse.org/newsroom.