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FARM ACCIDENTS ON THE RISE

Farm accidents have been on the rise in the last two years in Nebraska. From all-terrain vehicle (ATV) accidents to fatalities due to suffocation or being run over, farm accidents can be prevented. With planting in full swing, along with supporting machinery, trucks, trailers and sprayers, take extra caution on our local county roads. Too often folks are in too much of a hurry. The message this time of year is slow down and be on the look out. Check behind, beneath, and around equipment when children are involved. We have to use extra caution when kids are playing outside.

To help prevent further injury in an accident situation and ensure timely emergency help, farmers and others should always alert family members or others where they will be and when they expect to return. Two-way radios can be quite helpful to keep in touch with others. Cell phones have increased our ability to communicate in this county but we still have some dead spots in places.

In the past two years, accidents on ATV's have increased, especially with kids. Usually when buying an ATV, farmers have the option of receiving a rebate for an ATV safety class. The class will be free or they will receive money back for attending. These classes serve well in reminding us about proper ATV attire such as long sleeves, jeans - not shorts, gloves, eye protection and a helmet. Head injuries are the most common with ATV accidents with kids where a helmet could have prevented severe injury. Speed usually kills, especially at poor visibility county road intersections. Unexpected obstacles, including single stranded fence, badger holes and ditches, can be a real problem with speed and ATV's.

Grain bins present special hazards when augers are running. If you must go in a bin by yourself, proper equipment should be used, such as a safety harness and zero distance fall line. Retired safety extension specialist Rolly Schneider talked about a chance to save a life in a grain bin accident situation. If someone became buried in grain by keeping an aeration fan running, it may be just enough oxygen to keep the victim alive until rescue personnel can respond. This happened in Fillmore County and a life was saved back in the 90's.

Weather also can be an indirect cause of accidents and fatalities. We have instant communication of a line of storms headed our way and we rush to get a job done. Or worse yet, we hear about the chance of rain three days before and with long hours and not too many breaks, you can become fatigued leading to accidents.

During this planting season, remember to exercise caution, take plenty of breaks and let someone know your daily schedule. Always be on the look out for those youngsters. You never know when this could really make a difference.

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