

Extension Notes

Personal Column for September 14, 2010

By Gary Hall, ISU Regional Extension Education Director

### **Farm Safety Week September 19-25**

When meeting someone new it is customary to reach out and shake their hand. This opportunity to meet new people is always a thrill for me since I always enjoy meeting people and hearing about their life in North Iowa. While at an event I extended my right hand to my new acquaintance. He extended his prosthetic device...the result of a farm accident. He explained how lucky he was to have only lost a hand. This gave me pause to consider those who have lost their lives to farm accidents.

Every year our region records at least one death due to farm accidents. During this harvest season we all would do well to remember to be safe around large equipment whether we are simply driving down the country roads or operating one of the harvest machines in the field.

The Iowa and National Farm Safety and Health Week is September 19-25, 2010. The event is coordinated by the National Safety Council and supported by other organizations and groups like ISU Extension which have an interest in agricultural safety.

Agriculture has the highest annual death rates for workers in the nation surpassing all the other industries including mining, construction, and manufacturing. It is important that we use safe farming practices during harvest and throughout the year. With our early harvest, this special week is a good time to reinforce agricultural safety messages. This tradition began with President Franklin D. Roosevelt signing of the first proclamation for farm safety in 1944 because the high injury rate in agriculture impacted the war effort.

Today we all need to make good safety and health decisions this year. You can prepare to prevent serious injuries and death by:

- making smart decisions while operating any agricultural machinery,
- using and maintaining the slow moving vehicle emblem correctly,
- watch for slow moving vehicles on the roadway,
- avoiding flowing grain suffocation hazards while unloading bins and wagons, and
- keeping a watchful eye out for others while operating machinery.

During this time please adopt safe practices and behaviors to avoid farm injuries so when you meet someone you don't have to explain the loss of a hand. Stay safe during this harvest season.

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Contact: Gary Hall, 2023 S Federal Ave, Mason City, IA 50401, 641-423-0844,  
[garyhall@iastate.edu](mailto:garyhall@iastate.edu)