



AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

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HARVEST SEASON SAFETY

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CARM'S COMMENTS: Carmen Schacht

Harvest season is always a concern for me. It seems we hear about more accidents happening with combines than any other piece of machinery. I recently heard that farming is rated second in the number of fatal accidents in the state of Iowa. It is usually "crunch time" to get crops in before the weather gets too cold or starts to snow. This is especially true now since many farmers work an outside job as well. Everyone is in a hurry!

Just remember that nothing is as important as your body parts and your life. Take breaks often and get plenty of rest so you aren't overly tired when pressing to get everything done.

DON'T TAKE ANY CHANCES. TURN THE MACHINERY OFF BEFORE TRYING TO CLEAR THE ROLLERS,

CHAINS, OR ANYTHING ELSE. You cannot replace fingers, arms, legs, or lives.

PLEASE TAKE IT EASY, AND PRACTICE SAFETY AT EVERY TURN! (CS)

TONY'S TRIUMPH: Tara Nielsen

Tony Wernimont learned the hard way about safety on the farm. He has come to appreciate the value of taking precautions and taking his time.

Tony was no different from most Iowa kids who grew up on a farm. It was his responsibility to help his dad during the harvest season. One harvest, however, was anything but typical.

On November 16, 1997, in his senior year of high school, Tony was working on his family farm west of Sac City when he got too close to roller mill rollers. He had done this job many times, but this time his arm and hand got trapped in the 15 horsepower motor on the mill.

After yelling for help, his father came and ran the rollers back. He was rushed to the hospital, then flown by Life Flight to Sioux City. Tony spent one night in the hospital and was transferred to Bergen Mercy Hospital in Omaha, Nebraska where the best hand surgeons in the area are located. After

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three surgeries his hand was amputated and he went home. Tony was sent home with no resources and no information on how to adjust to his new life. His mom decided to get out the phone book and found AgrAbility through Easter Seals. Chuck Larson helped Tony and his family realize there is life after an injury. Tony took Chuck's advice to heart and got right back out on the basketball court; he even managed to **improve** his golf game in the spring! He then went on to earn degrees from Iowa Lakes Community College and Northwest Missouri State University in Ag Business and Agronomy.

After coping with his injury Tony was asked to speak at a farm safety class through AgrAbility. The great response he received from the kids was inspiring. This led him into his career with Easter Seals and AgrAbility.

In our interview, Tony said people are often working at a fast pace this time of year. His message to all farmers is to not be overconfident, that's when trouble will arise – and to take your time!

TAKE THE STRESS OUT OF THE HARVEST SEASON: Steve Freeman, ISU Farm Safety Specialist

The harvest season is upon us. Harvesting equipment and conditions will vary greatly depending on the region and the crop. However, there are two things that all harvesting operations have in common: harvesting represents the culmination of an entire season or year of work, and harvesting is also a time when many farmers push themselves to their limits both physically and mentally trying to get the crop in on time. These factors can also make the harvest season a very stressful time.

Stress has been used interchangeably to mean not only the way our body responds to

unusual demands placed upon it, but also to mean the source or cause of these demands. Not all stress is inherently bad. Too little stress can lead to boredom and depression. However, "stress" has come to be associated with the negative aspects that result from the way we respond to too many demands, both physical and emotional, in our lives.

Farmers face the same stresses as the general population and may respond in a similar manner, such as overeating or turning to alcohol. Farmers also have stress associated with the many aspects of farming that are beyond their control, such as the weather, government regulations, interest rates, market prices, etc. Coupled with the additional stress of harvest time, farmers may often take unnecessary risks and make unsafe choices that they wouldn't ordinarily make. This is often because they are pre-occupied with the result (i.e. getting the crop harvested) and not paying as much attention to the specific task at hand. These mental mistakes and hasty decisions often result in injuries.

Farmers will reduce the likelihood of injuries (as well as their physical and mental health), if they learn to recognize and respond to the early warning signs of stress. Farmers can turn to a spouse or friend, or seek professional help from a clergyman or counselor. There are individuals and organizations in every community to help farmers deal with stress-related problems. The key is to keep the lines of communication open.

Below are some simple steps to reduce stress during the harvest season:

- Share your concerns or troubles with a trusted friend or professional.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Eat nutritionally balanced meals.
- Take a 15 minute break every two to three hours.

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- Substitute nutritious snacks for soft drinks and candy bars. Caffeine and sugar provide a short boost, but will also increase fatigue and slow reaction time as the effect wears off.
- Establish realistic goals for yourself, your family members, your equipment, and your operation.
- Minimize harvest downtime – prepare your equipment for harvest by doing repairs and maintenance prior to the harvest season.
- Set priorities – do important tasks first and let some tasks wait until you have time to get to them.
- Set aside time to spend with your family.
- Get involved in activities off the farm through church or community organizations.
- Arrange after school daycare for young children. This not only keeps them out of dangerous situations, but also reduces distractions for equipment operators.
- Make sound economic decisions. Financial problems are a leading cause of stress among farm families.
- Seek professional help when problems become overwhelming.

RESOURCES – Tara Nielsen

Drought Causes Decline in Crop Quality:

A shortage of rainfall throughout most of the state has dried up pastures, corn, soybeans, and reduced hay production. Learn things farmers can do now so fields will respond better next spring:

www.ag.iastate.edu/aginfo/news/2003releases/drought.html

ISU researchers say the effects of this year's drought will be greater on soybeans than on corn. For details see:

www.extension.iastate.edu/newsrel/2003/sep03/sep0310.html

Robocow: A web-site for kids - and adults too. Robocow is an animated character that has been developed to illustrate water quality importance. Ground-scan radar vision is used by Robocow to detect potential chemical, pesticide runoff or stream contamination problems. Visit the website at:

www.agr.gc.ca/pfra/flash/robocow/en/robocow_e.htm

Living With Hogs in Iowa: The Impact of Livestock Facilities on Rural Residential Property Values. Information from the Iowa State University Center for Agricultural and Rural Development can be found at:

www.card.iastate.edu

The Effects of Soy: Soy is the focus of recent research, especially its role on decreasing heart disease. For more information:

www.extension.iastate.edu/newsrel/2003/aug03/aug0319.html

Research on Color of Mulch: The USDA has conducted a study on how the color of plastic mulch affects food plants. For more information:

www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/sep03/mulch0903.htm

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Oct. 4: FREEWHEELERS Friends and Family, 1pm, Conrad, IA, Pizza Ranch
Tracy Keninger will be our guest and we hope to have a few more guests. Everyone pays own lunch cost. Join us!

Oct.4: S E Region Friends and Family
1pm, Tipton, IA, Pizza Hut

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IOWA AGRABILITY - A joint effort of ISU Extension and the Rural Solutions Program of Easter Seals Iowa. The program can help farm family members with a disability stay in farming.

This newsletter from the Iowa AgrAbility Project will be sent monthly to AgrAbility families and other interested individuals. Please send comments and suggestions to:

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Phone: ISU Answerline at 1-800-262-3804

TDD: 1-800-854-1658.

Web site: www.extension.iastate.edu/agrability/

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