



PASS it on

Newsletter of Proactive Agricultural Safety & Support Inc

CONTENTS

Chairman's Word	1
Farmer Work Groups	1
Electric Shocks	2
Farm Safety for Kids	2
Getting A ...Head	3
Dial Before You Dig	3
Be Sunsmart	4

REMEMBER

There are **NO** safe places under power lines and **NO** second chances

A Word from the Chairman by Anne Taylor

Is safety a "bore" ----- Is safety threatening? Don't know where to start? Don't know what aspect to address first/next?

Learning how to manage safety is vital for sustained profitability. Implementing efficient safety management systems is a challenge. The "blitz" by Workplace Standards Tasmania Inspectors in 2006 was stressful for those who experienced it. How can we avoid this stress?

Making a start is the first step. Question: "How do you eat an elephant?" Answer: "One bite at a time". PASS Inc will provide the marinade!!

Currently PASS Inc is developing 2 initiatives to assist and support all persons working in agricultural businesses with achieving efficient management of safety:

1. Free practical self-help group workshops, facilitated by a CGU Risk Manager. Achieve step by step, one bite at a time.

The first of these workshops will commence in March 2008, first in Northern Midlands Municipality, and then spreading to other municipalities. Further information below.

2. A website, with a grant awarded by the Tasmanian Community Fund. We anticipate the website will be operative by 30th April 2008.

All businesses have their challenges. Primary industry businesses face a diverse range of challenges ranging from the weather, markets, environment and human, including staff and visitors (both professional and social). Protecting the most important assets of the business from damage, and efficient management of all challenges is crucial to the business remaining viable and profitable.

It can be stimulating to see what others have achieved, but also daunting at what each of us has yet to do. Remember no one is perfect; we all have something to learn and something to share. We wish to help prevent the stress of an accident, and a threat to your most important asset, people. "Prevention is better than cure."

We trust all agricultural businesses have achieved a successful harvest of all their commodities without any injuries, incidents, near misses or threats to their viability.

Farmer Work Groups: "Continuous Improvement with Safety" (Together everyone achieves more and its more fun)

Facilitator:

Dennis Turner,
Risk Manager, CGU Safety & Risk Services

Dennis has a wealth of knowledge and experience in the safety industry, as well as owning and managing a small farm near Hobart. He has a relaxed friendly manner.

Expected outcome:

- Improved safety performance, both practical and documented
- Increase your awareness of safety issues and safety management systems

How?

Start with 4 sessions within a maximum of 8 weeks: Continue as the group wishes.

- Receive information and tools for performing a Safety Audit
- Learn what can be done, and how to do it one step at a time
- Share your tips and tricks
- Perform as a group, an audit of some aspects of the host farm (We anticipate this could be the workshop and/or shearing shed and/or machinery shed and/or chemical storage)

- Together or in pairs audit each other's farm, harnessing the "new fresh eyes" approach (We are sometimes too familiar with our own spaces and become oblivious to the dangers)
- Discuss the findings, changes made and future plans

Group size:

Between 6 and 10 businesses, with 1 or 2 persons from each business

If you would like to attend these workshops please contact: Anne Taylor on 6398 6212 or Kathy Henry on 6398 5122

STAY AWAY STAY ALIVE

Did you know that not only are fallen power lines extremely dangerous
BUT the ground around them is “live” too – KEEP CLEAR!

Electric Shocks – what you can do

Electric shocks are not always immediately fatal. They may stop the heart, cause burns, force muscles to contract and paralyse breathing. Often shock victims cannot let go of the appliance that is passing the current through the body.

If you witness an electric shock:

- If possible and if there is no danger of you also being electrocuted, switch off the power and pull out the plug
- Ring 000 and Electricity Company (Aurora 132 004)
- If you cannot turn the current off, do not touch the victim or you too will be exposed to the electrical current
- You can get a shock even if you don't directly come into contact with conductors – keep well away

- Protect yourself and any bystanders from the possibility of further shocks
- Do not touch the shock victim's skin until the current is turned off
- Seek immediate medical assistance for the victim

If you are trained in resuscitation techniques, you should attempt to resuscitate the victim as soon as they are no longer in contact with the electrical current.

Points to remember:

- If wires are alive and on the ground then the ground is also alive and possibly the fences as well
- Fences and wooden poles can conduct electricity

- All pipes should be treated as conductors, even polypipe may provide a path for electricity
- If live wires contact plant or vehicles they can become live too – it is much safer to stay inside the vehicle until help arrives
- If wires are down, stay AT LEAST 6 metres away until Aurora says OK
- Watch out for dangers – falling poles, hardware etc
- If in doubt - stay away until Aurora says OK

In an emergency contact Aurora on 13 2004 or dial 000.

The above information was taken from the presentation delivered by Aurora Energy at recent PASS Electricity Forums. For more information please ring 1300 132 003 or visit the website www.auroraenergy.com.au

REMEMBER

Electricity Will Always Choose The Easiest Path To The Ground - Stay Well Away!

Farm Safety For Kids

They are our most precious resource.

Kids who live on farms are more likely to get hurt than city kids.

Playing on a farm should be both fun and safe. Having fun and exploring is their priority.

There are many interactive websites for kids which are fun and informative, including www.energex.com.au and www.fs4jk.org. Or just google *farm safety for kids* – well worth the time spent. The following tips were sourced from these web sites:

- Always turn off farm machinery if you are leaving it, and remove the keys
- Leave safety equipment in place eg brakes and guards
- All chemicals should be locked away in a purpose-built shed
- Make sure water areas eg dams, swimming pools are securely fenced off
- Leave ladders locked up or lying flat on the ground
- Keep protective glasses, earmuffs, helmets, gloves in easy to reach places
- Keep kids off tractors, as tractor roll-overs are one of the biggest (preventable) causes of farm kids and adults being killed
- Put away portable machinery, eg lawn mowers, so they are out of reach of children
- Protect children's ears from loud noises – they should wear ear-muffs too
- Keep kids away from playing in and around silos, or anywhere grain is stored – suffocation from grain is a real risk
- Children should **always** wear helmets when riding bicycles, motor bikes, horses and ATV's
- Keep kids away from potentially dangerous livestock eg bulls, rams
- Have a designated playing area for kids away from machinery, livestock and chemicals
- Have designated “no-go” zones for kids

Getting A...Head – one farmer's story

Feeding hay to cattle is normally straight forward and a good opportunity to get a close look at the mob.

Early one morning, when just getting light, a farmer who was a solo owner/operator was feeding out. He had three big square bales on his ute to feed a mob of 280 steers, mainly yearlings plus a few two year olds. Two bales were on the tray, and one on the ute. The cattle were hungry and milled around, often a bit too close, as the not so perfect panels on the ute doors indicate.

As normal he set the ute to go in the lowest gear and climbed onto the lower bales to throw out the top bale first. Usually when the strings are cut, the ends of the bale tend to spring out. In order to stop a large amount falling off he bent down to begin a controlled distribution. Just at that moment the front wheels went over a slight ridge where an underground drain was positioned.

That was enough to unbalance him and over the back he fell, not so gracefully, onto the head of a steer. Now, in the mob there were only three cattle with horns. One had sharp "spikies", another short stumpies and the one under him had real handle bars. Fortunately on this steer they had been "tipped" in preparation for sale to a feedlot but he had not been sent. The cattle jumped back with surprise and the farmer was in agony! One horn gave him a "dead leg" to the left thigh and the other horn caught him about 2 inches below and out from the left nipple. A certain effort was required to catch the ute and turn the key off, before sitting down on the doorsill to get his breath back.

The outcome was a sore leg and two broken ribs.

Over 40 years of feeding cattle this farmer had also experienced the ute go partially through a fence and also into a stump.

Not bad you might say, only one mishap every 13 years on average! Even for someone who considers himself careful, carrying out simple everyday tasks can be potentially dangerous and of course, more serious accidents could have occurred.

This is a true story and a relatively common method of feeding cattle when alone.

Can you Answer these Questions?

How could this have been avoided?

What other accidents can happen when feeding livestock?

What causes us to become complacent with everyday jobs, and lose concentration?

How could feeding livestock be made safer?

Should farmers be jumping in and out of moving vehicles?

Dial Before You Dig

An essential service for avoiding trouble. The penalties for severing a telephone cable or underground powerline can be severe. Telstra cables are buried in many farmers' paddocks, especially in Tasmania where the winding roads are narrow and the grass verges even narrower.

Not so long ago this was a free, efficient service, where the cable would be located and marked within 24 hours of the farmer's phone call. Now it can take 2 or 3 weeks.

It would seem reasonable to assume that Telstra pays for location of *their* cables which occupy *your* land rent-free. However this is not always the case. To ensure Telstra pays, it is vital the farmer knows and understands the system.

One landowner with 20 km of Telstra cables on his farm has an unfortunate tale to tell. Dial Before You Dig was called. Their website states "...information is, in the vast majority of instances, provided free of charge and is supplied within **2 working days.**" Just before the 48 hour deadline, he received a fuzzy fax of the map showing the location of the cable. The farmer remembered the cable being laid and was certain the map

was incorrect. The 1300 telephone service operator refused to accept this notion.

Two weeks later a 6-page document arrived in the post, with various bits of information. One specifically for Rural Landowners, stipulated only **one** free on-site location service would be supplied regardless of how many cables etc were present.

Finally there is the list of Plant Contractors who are accredited to service the area. The first name on the list was approached and a date in 2 weeks was agreed on. Then 2 days prior to the date, a phone call stating that he is unable to attend for another 10 days due to some unforeseen circumstances, and he suggested the name of another locator, who is also on the accredited list. Herein lies another problem. Although accredited this contractor **unknown** by the farmer was not registered to be paid by Telstra.

The job was performed promptly and efficiently and the farmer was able to proceed. However the contractor then announced he would be sending a bill. Unfortunately even in the fine print of the Telstra document, there was no indication of this scenario!!

However

Before digging or cultivating it is worth taking the time to dial 1100 or go to the website www.dialbeforeyoudig.com.au

Why?

To save money and embarrassment, or even a life!

Not knowing exact locations of power lines can:

- Cause death or serious injury to anyone in proximity
- Cause disruption to electricity, gas, water and communication lines
- Cut off emergency services
- Cause large financial losses to business, including your own
- Cause long delays to planned projects, including your own
- Cause you to be prosecuted or forced to pay damages

Be Smart – Be Sunsmart

Global warming? Climate Change? Whether or not you are convinced of the reality of these, there is undisputable evidence to show that the incidence of skin cancer is increasing rapidly.

If you work outside you are at risk.

There are over 1500 deaths each year from sun related skin cancers. Almost all skin cancers are caused by over-exposure to the sun's UV radiation. Most skin cancers can be prevented however, so....

What to look for

Early detection is vital as skin cancers can often be cured if treated early. Check regularly for any new or unusual spots, particularly a mole that has changed in size, shape or colour.

Sun protection measures

As an employer you have a legal responsibility to provide a safe work environment. This means supplying sun protection to your employees if they are working outside. And under the legislation, employees are required to co-operate. It is vital that both you and your employees actively prevent sun exposure where possible. This means wearing sun-protective clothing, using sunscreen, wearing a hat and sunglasses, and seeking shade where possible.

Did you know there is no such thing as windburn – the wind dries the skin but cannot burn it. What is described as windburn is actually sunburn.

Sunglasses

Most people now recognise and understand the dangers of the sun's rays on their skin, but the damage caused to the eyes by exposure to UV radiation is less well known.

Short term complaints such as excessive blinking, swelling and soreness are relatively common after a day in the sun. But long term damage is already occurring.

- Cataracts (cloudiness of the lens)
- Pterygium (an overgrowth of the conjunctiva around the cornea)
- Solar keratopathy (cloudiness of the cornea)

5 Step Sun Protection Program

1. **Slip** on sun protective clothing – long pants and long sleeve shirts with a collar
2. **Slop** on SPF 30+ sunscreen – and remember to reapply every 2 hours
3. **Slap** on a hat – preferably broad brimmed
4. **Seek** shade where possible
5. **Slide** on sunglasses

Can you afford to take time off or have employees take time off

A small amount of time taken each morning to apply sun protection may save you a large amount of time off the farm dealing with the consequences of sun exposure later on.

Remember sunglasses, hats and sunscreen are tax deductible because they are protective clothing – the same as safety boots, hard hats etc - another good reason for protecting yourself, your family and your employees.

Check out the website at www.sunsmart.com.au for these tips and more details on keeping you, your family and your employees safe in the sun.

How sunglasses protect the eye

Sunglasses (which meet the Australian Standard AS1067:1) and a broad brimmed hat can reduce the amount of UV radiation that reaches the eye by 98%. The use of wrap-around, close fitting large sunglasses, helps to reduce reflected UV radiation and glare which passes around the sunglasses and reaches the eye. Protecting our precious eyesight must be given the highest priority.



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