



PASS it on

Newsletter of Proactive Agricultural Safety & Support Inc

CONTENTS

Mobile Phone Issues	1
Tractors	1
Oh My - Aching Back	2
Battery Powered Safety	3
Asthma	3
Electric Moments	3
Chairman's Word	4

REMEMBER
ACCIDENTS HURT SAFETY DOESN'T

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MOBILE PHONE ISSUES: DON'T BE DISTRACTED



Mobile phones and Ipads are part of our daily lives, and are very useful tools. But are they controlling us? They are designed to grab our attention. They do distract us from our tasks and this does put us at risk.

Many people have been severely injured or killed and equipment damaged because the person was using their mobile phone. There are plenty of stories of structures hit and machinery rolled over because the driver was on the phone, had lost focus and was unaware of the dangers around them.

Has your farm had the conversation about times, places and tasks where using the mobile phone is inappropriate or plain dangerous? Does your farm have a policy and procedure stating when it is appropriate and when inappropriate to use the mobile phone? For instance:

It is "NOT OKAY" when:

- Using machinery,
- Driving vehicles,
- Working in the cattle yards,
- Milking in the dairy or
- Walking downstairs or crossing rough terrain.

It is "OKAY" to:

- Use message bank.
- Have "phones off" moments and tasks.
- Use "airplane mode" to switch on/off as it is quicker than using the power button.
- Have designated times and places to return calls or read messages.
- Give appointments when it is convenient for field officers, contractors and others to call.

Mobile phones are vital in emergencies to call for assistance especially when working alone. It is appropriate to develop a system that indicates help is needed but if you receive a call for help you need to make yourself safe before answering by:

- Stopping what you are doing and
- Moving to a safe place to answer the phone.

For more information on the dangers of mobile phones visit:

- www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/distracted_driving/
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3KQmv_flg&sns=em - a dumb way to use a smart phone.
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMW0a5DH08 - is 24 minutes long - about the dangers of mobile phone use on a construction site.
- <http://m.youtube.com/watch?list=WL&v=ROLCmStlw9E> - dangers of mobile phone use when driving.
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7dLU6fk9QY - called "Look Up" - and skip the advert. ■



Tractors are a risk to:

- Farmers running a business.
- Farmers running hobby farms.
- Families owning a 2ha lifestyle block.

Hand brakes are critical to controlling the tractor when pulling loads and when stationary - such as when getting off or on the vehicle, or doing maintenance.

Best Practice includes:

- Make sure tractor loads are not exceeded.
- Any attachments are used solely for the purpose that the manufacturer intended.
- Hand and foot brakes are regularly serviced and maintained.
- Never get off or on a tractor when it is moving, regardless of how slowly it is moving.

Remember: The best maintained tractor in the world will still harm you if you are using it for the wrong purpose or if your systems of work don't ensure safety. ■



OH MY ACHING BACK

A recent report on Low Back Pain (LBP) stated:

- LBP is one of the greatest contributors of disability in Australia.
- Most workers are reluctant to take action or ignore the low back pain until it become debilitating.
- Males aged between 30 and 39 had the highest incidence of back injuries.
- Musculoskeletal injuries represented the largest workplace injury category, with back injuries accounting for almost one third.
- In general back pain is more common in women than in men.
- There is a very strong genetic predisposition for women to get back pain.
- Back pain is the main health reason older Australians prematurely retire.

Professor Chris Maher, back pain specialist and director of the University of Sydney Medical School Musculoskeletal Division said *"There are numerous misconceptions about the causes and treatment of back pain. We know that the worker with back pain, their employer and the clinician managing the worker's back pain may misunderstand back pain, so we really need to think about educational programs targeting each of those groups."*

He went on to say *"Our understanding of how to best manage back pain has changed in the last decade. For example, surgery really has a quite limited role for workers with back pain."*

The Chris Maher Steps people can take to help themselves get better:

1. **Speak with your doctor or physio if the pain is not settling with simple self-care measures.**
2. **During an episode limit bed rest; try to stay active at home or work.**
3. **Use your back wisely.**
4. **Adopt a healthy lifestyle.**
5. **Be physically active and avoid prolonged sitting.**
6. **Don't smoke and moderate alcohol intake.**
7. **Make time to enjoy life (for example, spending time with family or friends).**

The Australian Physiotherapy Association statement on **Acute Low Back Pain** says:

Acute low back pain refers to pain in the lower back that has lasted for less than 12 weeks. Around 70 per cent of Australian adults will experience lower back pain at some point during their life.

What causes back pain?

Acute low back pain can be caused by many factors such as:

- Trauma (fall, car accident, lifting).
- Muscle imbalances (postural issues).
- Existing medical conditions.
- Rheumatological conditions.

Injuries can happen when you do something new, different or strenuous, such as lifting heavy items or playing a new sport. The pain may also occur because of a build-up of stress on the back that gradually turns into an injury.

Although serious causes of back pain are rare, it is important that you have your condition assessed by a physiotherapist.

A local physiotherapist stated *"The back is a complex structure with many different components which can each individually be injured"*.

Apply the "SMART" regime when lifting objects -

Suss out the load.

Move close to the load.

Always bend the knees and hips + keep the spine in its natural curve and alignment.

Raise the load using the legs.

Turn taking steps or pivot – never twist your back when holding or moving a load. (Toes and nose always point in the same direction).

Other Tips:

- **Store heavy objects on a pallet, or on a bench at waist height – not on the ground.**
- **Use equipment or slide the object rather than lift heavy objects yourself.**
- **Know your limits of strength and the safe technique for lifting, carrying and moving heavy objects.**
- **Understand ergonomics:**
 - The design of space,
 - The shape, size and weight of the load to be handled,
 - The sequence of the task steps.
- **Maintain strength of all muscles especially the "core stabilizers" of the low back.**
- **Maintain good flexibility of all muscles and joints.**
- **Learn to bend your hips and knees and not your back.**
- **Do not twist your back, but pivot on your feet.**
- **Use the power of your leg muscles to elevate an object.**



More information:

- **The Konet Market Report**
www.konekt.com.au/marketreport/
which analysed more than 113,000 cases of workers compensation and non-compensable cases over a six year period.
- **Australian Physiotherapy Association:**
www.physiotherapy.asn.au/Search?SearchTerms=Low%20back%20Pain
- **Tradies Health:**
www.tradieshealth.com.au
- **Safe Work Australia: Model Codes of Practice - Hazardous Manual Tasks** www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/hazardous-manual-tasks-cop

SAFETY ALERTS

- **Silo Collapse:** highlights the potential danger of silos collapsing during transfer of grain and/or fertilizer products into or from silo storage. Silo failure or collapse places people working on or in close proximity to the structure at risk of death or serious injury.

More information:

www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/forms-and-publications/forms-and-publications/silo-collapse



- **Bow Ladders:** highlights the dangers of bow ladders when workers reach for and pick fruit from tree canopies.

More information: www.safework.sa.gov.au/uploaded_files/sgBowLadders.pdf

USING BATTERY POWERED ANGLE GRINDERS & CIRCULAR SAWS SAFELY

Over the last few years, farmers have begun to discover the advantages of the wide array of battery-powered tools. These tools have many differences to 240 volt mains powered tools. They

- Provide the freedom to be used in remote locations as well as hard to access areas.
- Are much lighter and more compact, compared to corded units; and
- Are generally less powerful than corded units.
- BUT they are not safer than mains volt powered tools.

Recently there have been reports of serious injuries such as amputations and lacerations to workers while they were using battery-powered tools.

The risks of injury from some battery-powered tools may be greater than mains powered tools because:

- Some may have the blade placed on the left hand side. For right-handed users this is closer to the body, as well as being an unfamiliar configuration for many users.
- They are more prone to jamming.

Because these tools have no cords, there is no restriction preventing the user turning the tool inwards to their torso and limbs.

Risk Controls

Before using the tool operators should:

- Carefully read the manufacturer's operating and safety instructions.
- Be capable of competently handling the saw. Training should include observing a demonstration of the correct use by a competent person.
- Check the saw is safe to use as per operating instructions.
- Understand the procedure to be followed in the event of a 'jam' or malfunction.
- Ensure the work area is clean and safe.
- Wear the appropriate PPE for the task e.g. hearing and eye protection – even face shields. Use "saw horses", stands, and a means of securing the work piece when sawing.

More Information: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/forms-and-publications/forms-and-publications/battery-powered-circular-saws ■

ASTHMA

Early treatment is crucial for asthma events.

Asthma is a condition of the airways. People with asthma have sensitive airways, which react to triggers. Their airways swell and get thick with mucus and the muscles around the airways squeeze tight. This makes it hard to breathe. People with asthma can have a range of symptoms including: breathlessness, wheezing, tight chest, persistent cough – often at night, early in the morning or during/after activity.

Those people who work or live on farms and who have been diagnosed with asthma must:

- Inform their employer/PCBU, farm manager and fellow workers.
- Ensure others on the farm know how to provide appropriate First Aid.
- Work with their farm manger to develop strategies to reduce their exposure to substances which could cause harm.
- Have a personal asthma management plan.
- Regularly see a doctor.
- Know the time and distances to be travelled to receive emergency care.

There are many substances associated with farm activities which can cause both short term and long term respiratory problems – asthma being the most common disorder. The smaller particles of dusts, fumes and gases may be deposited throughout the respiratory tract, causing health problems.

These substances can cause asthma to develop in a previously healthy person or may trigger an asthma attack in people with a history of asthma.

Dust is associated with:

- Harvesting, storage, crushing and handling of crops such as grain.

- Hay and silage handling.
- Animal handling in stockyards and in confined spaces such as piggeries, poultry sheds and dairies.
- Repairs and maintenance, when grinding metal and sawing timber.

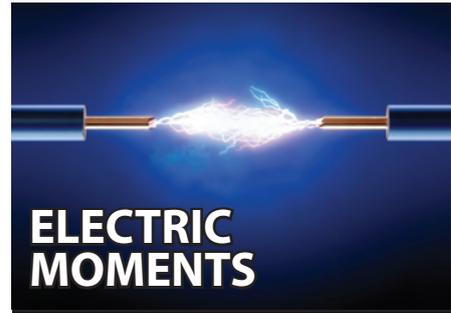
Fumes and smoke as well as gases associated with welding, effluent ponds and vats / tanks also cause respiratory harm.

People who have an increased risk of respiratory problems when working on a farm are

- Those with asthma and rhinitis.
- Smokers.
- People handling damp organic material which may have fungi (woodchips, peastraw, mouldy hay, or mouldy grain).
- People burning stubble or fighting fires.

More Information:

- **Asthma Foundation:** www.asthmaaustralia.org.au/default.aspx
- **Lung Foundation Australia:** www.lungfoundation.com.au ■



ELECTRIC MOMENTS

Frayed cords, damaged switches and electrical appliances being used in and near water commonly cause electric shocks.

It is vital to have residual current devices or safety switches in place to prevent serious injuries.

Events which indicate a serious electrical fault, that need to be immediately reported to TasNetworks on **13 2004** or your licensed electrician are:

- Dimming of lights when appliances are turned on.
- Shocks/tingles from electrical appliances or water pipes.
- Nuisance tripping of circuit breakers.



Seven tips to reduce common dangers associated with electrical items:

1. Check the electricity supply at the socket outlet is switched off before connecting or disconnecting an electrical appliance, tool, power cord or extension cord.
2. Check electrical plugs are fully inserted before turning on the power. Make sure a three-phase connector is fully screwed in.
3. Do not run any part of an electrical cord or extension cable through water.
4. Do not operate electrical appliances or tools in wet environments.
5. Check your hands are dry when handling electrical equipment, appliances and tools.
6. Before using electrical appliances and tools always inspect for physical damage, cracks or an exposed live conductor.
7. Always use a licensed electrician for any electrical work, as unlicensed work is illegal and extremely dangerous. ■



Take control of safety on your farm today - and look forward to tomorrow

CHAIRMAN'S WORD

"If it is possible it will happen, - eventually." – is the catch cry of many OHS consultants. If a hazard can't be eliminated, OHS consultants focus on putting several layers of controls in place to prevent injuries and fatalities. If one control fails, then the next one most likely will not.

Education, training and changing the behaviour of people is one control, but the engineering controls which design out the hazards of equipment and environment are seen as stronger and more fail proof.

National Farm Safety Week: 19-25 July 2015 has the theme: **SAFE FARMS = BETTER PRODUCTIVITY** with the slogan **"Safety doesn't cost. It pays".**

PASS will be holding an educational event "Lead by Example" at "Eastfield" Cressy on Wednesday 22nd July from 10.00 am – 12.30 pm. Watch demonstrations and ask questions about the "Combiclamp", "Safe Injecting of Livestock" and hear Robbie Tole discuss safety features implemented on his farm such as the "New employees/shearer induction". RSVP essential to Anne Taylor on 0414 839 833 by Monday 20 July.

An international study across 19 countries looked at the question of how occupational safety and health is beneficial. It found the strongest effects were: reduced hazards, increased employee hazard awareness, reduced breaches of occupational safety and health regulations, reduced workplace accidents, improved corporate image, improved workplace culture, reduced downtime and reduced disruptions.

Acknowledgment: Report by International Social Security Association, Switzerland.

DID YOU KNOW?

- There have been 98 fatalities in Australia since 2002 and 2012 from horse related incidents. It is estimated that every day in Australia there is one person hospitalized from a horse related incident.
- Two thirds of children killed on farms are under five years of age. The next age bracket of 5-15 years is more likely to end up in emergency departments with non-fatal injuries. Mostly this is due to their leisure activities involving horses and motorbikes.
- Wood smoke is harmful to our health and especially to our lungs. It is made up of tiny particles, smaller than one thousandth of a millimetre. These tiny particles escape the filtering system in our nose and they penetrate deeply into the small bronchial tubes and into the air sacs. Wood smoke contains harmful gases, such as carbon monoxide, and harmful chemicals, like hydrocarbons. In some ways it is very similar to tobacco smoke. Reference: Lung Foundation Newsletter: http://lungfoundation.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/LungNet-News-May-2015_web.pdf

PASS Safety Awards at Agfest

Congratulations to the joint winners and runner up of the **Best New Safety Product or Innovation.** They were



- **LAWN MOWER LIFT** - by Prolift www.lawnmowerlift.com.au A stable, safe and easy to use hoist to raise the cutting deck of lawn mowers for maintenance or to change the cutting blades.



- **REEL-EASY UNCOILER** - created by Southern Wire (Perth WA). It removes the need to lift the coil of wire onto a dispenser or the traditional wire-spinner. As well, it act as a trolley.



- **FIBREGLASS REINFORCED PLASTIC GRATING** Exhibited, designed and manufactured by Grating Tasmania. www.gratingtasmania.com.au

Congratulations to Marine and Safety Tasmania for their **"Be Boat Safe"** display as the winner of **Best Display- Safety Feature / Focus** ■

- The Australian Livestock and Rural Transporters Association (ALRTA) is developing a "Guide for Safe Design of Livestock Loading Ramps and Forcing Yards". The public consultation period closed on the 3rd June 2015. This voluntary guide seeks to promote safer workplaces for people in contact with livestock loading facilities and to improve animal welfare outcomes. For more information visit: www.alrta.org.au/2015/05/07/alrta-invites-comment-on-draft-national-guidelines-for-ramps-and-forcing-guides/



- Although the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the French based arm of the World Health Organization has raised its level of concern for the industrial use of glyphosate, Australian farmers can be assured the APVMA will inform us if they have concerns. Following all safety instructions is the best practice to mitigate the risks. ■

WHAT'S NEW?

- A guidance video to minimize the risks for **all persons handling horses** - produced by WorkCover NSW. **View at:** www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-NbPI9fzls&feature=youtu.be

- The report on the Australian Terrain Vehicle Assessment Program (ATVAP) independent research presented at a traffic safety conference in Sweden on 15 June 2015:

It proposes:

- **Quad Bike: - Star Safety Rating.** This will provide a rapid means of applying a performance benchmark testing protocol. It is expected to significantly reduce the risk of rollovers.

It states:

- **Side by Side Vehicles (SSVs) significantly outperformed Quad bikes in safety.** "The SSVs demonstrated superior static stability ..., superior dynamic handling reflecting a slight understeer characteristic, minimal disturbance of steering in the bump test... and superior rollover crashworthiness, when compared to the Quad bikes"

Read the report at www.farmsafe.org.au/resources



Safe Work Australia comments on this report include:

- It would be very **difficult for any agricultural employer** to argue that they have implemented safety, as far as is reasonably practicable, in light of this current, independent safety research.
- That the use of Operator Protection Devices (OPD) also known as Crush Protection Devices (CPD) is integral to OHS compliance, rather than an optional extra. It would be hard to argue for the absence of an OPD on a quad bike on OHS grounds after this research.

More information:

www.safetyatworkblog.com/2015/06/15/new-research-lays-down-the-challenge-on-quad-bike-safety/

- **Farm Safe You Tube**, accessible from the website: www.farmsafe.org.au/content/farm-safe-youtube-with-videos-titled: **1)** Safety for Cotton Growers, **2)** Keeping Kids Safe on Farm, **3)** Safety for Sheep and Wool Producers starring Tasmania's **Georgie Burbury** and **4)** A Guide to Improving Safety. ■