February 2014

EC1029 What Nebraska Homemakers are Doing about Farm and Home Safety

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ACCIDENTS -- The Problem

To each of us, home stands for security. You feel safe in your home. When that home is a part of the farm or the ranch we feel at ease any place on the premises. This feeling about the safety of the home and its surroundings is as old as life itself. Is that confidence justified? Well, the truth is that, judged by the number of home accidents which occur in our country, home is far from safe and our farms and ranches are no better.

Best available estimates indicate that about 15,500 farm people are killed each year in accidents and that about 1,300,000 are injured. Estimated costs of these accidents are 177 million dollars.

Now let's take a look at the accident toll here in Nebraska. There were 889 Nebraskans who died last year as the result of accidents. Here are the causes:

- 239 falls
- 61 burns
- 62 drownings
- 27 poisonings
- 13 electrocutions
- 25 careless use of firearms
- 33 farm accidents
- 355 highway accidents

WHAT MAKES THE FARM ACCIDENT PROGRAM DIFFERENT?

Each farm family is an individual unit. It is lord over its own domain. No law, no police officer, no public regulations govern safety on the farm. It is an individual responsibility. Therefore it is important that each individual on the farm and in the home be reached with the most enlightening information about accidents and where and how they are most likely to occur.
IS AGRICULTURE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER INDUSTRIES AS TO PREVENTABLE ACCIDENTS?

Yes! This is true partly because of livestock and their unpredictable behavior, and partly because manufacturers and factories usually have very strict safety rules that must be observed by their workers. Some industries have been so successful in preventing accidents that their safety officials declare: "Accidents don't happen; they are committed."

ARE RURAL PEOPLE MORE CARELESS THAN OTHER GROUPS?

No! But they have always been the forerunners of civilization, forced to battle the hazards of pioneering. Through long inheritance, daring has become pretty well fixed as a habit. They are notably fearless and courageous—two fine qualities. In farm operations, however, the habit of daring often leads to serious accidents. It is wise to curb this habit in the daily routine to the extent of exercising every caution in safeguarding against mishaps. Safety education has not kept abreast with the change of pony transportation and horsepower to the automobile and tractor power.

CAN FARM AND HOME ACCIDENTS BE PREVENTED?

Yes! The majority of them can be prevented. But the problem will become more difficult as time goes on, because the chances are that more machinery and appliances will be used. As we accept these new methods we must accept the responsibility to use them safely. We must always strive to make the farm and home safer, to prevent sorrow and suffering and loss of life. Life is a divine gift, and we should protect and safeguard it. The noblest thing anyone can do is to save and conserve life.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THIS PROBLEM?

The problem of preventing and reducing the number of accidents must be squarely faced. Here is what some counties, communities and individuals are doing about it:

A COUNTY PROGRAM

York County people have set the pace for a co-ordinated farm and home safety program. County Agent, Alvah Hecht, was the driving force behind a County Farm and Home Safety Committee made up of representatives of all York County groups interested in safety. Represented among others were the county highway department, home extension clubs, vocational agriculture, 4-H Clubs and Future Farmers, Junior Chamber of Commerce, and business concerns in the county. A year's plan of work was outlined that included the following activities:

Elimination of 50 blind corners.

On-the-scene investigations of severe and fatal farm accidents in the county to determine how the accidents could have been prevented.

A county-wide safety meeting during National Farm Safety week in July, as well as five community meetings in various parts of the county. Describe definite ways.

A safety poster contest.

Discussions, films and demonstrations on various phases of safety.

Definite safety program.
At the first annual meeting awards were given 4-H and FFA clubs for eliminating blind corners. County Commissioners and individual farmers were given citations for their efforts in eliminating blind corners. Prizes were given home extension clubs for first, second and third places in the safety poster contest. A safety talk was given by a county 4-H speech winner. The new method of artificial respiration was demonstrated by a boy scout troop and an industrial safety team, and a safety patrolman spoke and answered questions on highway safety. The County Agent pointed out that four York County youths died last year in preventable accidents involving tractors. Three were highway accidents, and one involved a tractor in a shed.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Mrs. Elmer Carpenter of Neligh reported her community safety program as follows:

"We had a lesson on safety on our farm when my husband got his hand caught in a cornpicker several years ago. Since then we are all more cautious both in the home and around machinery.

Our county extension clubs are organizing a rural safety program to be started in September. We have a patrolman and an electrical advisor who have consented to go out and give talks, show slides and movies to the youngsters at school or at meetings of PTA, etc. We intend to try to get a game warden and someone connected with machinery to give a varied choice to those wishing talks.

All farm magazines have such good articles and pictures on the various phases of farm safety, that if they are read by the adults and shown and explained to the youngsters, accidents on the farm should be greatly reduced."

Mrs. Elmer Erickson of Tekamah has this to say about a safety program:

"Safety has become a very important word to our family. When I was a child, my older brother was badly burned while fueling a tractor with the motor running. The many weeks he lay in the hospital and the suffering he endured made a lasting impression on me. With two children of my own, 13 and 15 years of age, the great responsibility of impressing on them the importance of safety at all times is ever uppermost in our minds.

One of the greatest causes of accidents is our terrific hurry. We do not take time for a few necessary precautions. What more rude awakening do we need than to look around our neighborhood and see the fellow with the empty coat sleeve, the result of cleaning out the cornpicker without shutting it off; the mother with the scarred cheek because she tried to light the kitchen range with fuel from a five-gallon can and the fatherless family of a man who burned to death in his truck cab because of a highway tragedy. These are but a few of the accidents of the past months in our own community.

Do you realize that more than 6,000 farm people are killed each year in their homes and on their farms? Wouldn't it be wonderful if every farm family would organize a private safety program? If each member would be familiar with the correct operation of electrical equipment and machinery, be prepared to meet emergencies that may arise and thus much disaster could be avoided. A homemaker is in a position to eliminate most household hazards. "A place for everything and everything in its place," can serve as her goal, but that place must be safe. Stairways must be kept free of obstacles, all medicines and poisons clearly labelled and kept out of the reach of children."
Our County Home Extension Council, of which I am chairman at the present time, has 'Safety' as one of its goals for this year. We are having a state patrolman speak at our July meeting and hope to do other things along this line. Most 4-H Clubs have 'Safety' included in their year's program with some members taking it as a special project. So let us all be ever alert to encourage all safety whenever possible and remember, 'A minute lost could be a lifetime earned.'

INDIVIDUAL SAFETY PROGRAMS

Mrs. Clifford Boehmer of DuBois has some thoughts about how parents and children can work together in a safety program:

'No matter how much care we take to assure safety in all respects, accidents do happen. Let's start the good work by teaching and living safety rules. Our two children are learning about accident prevention as they ride their bicycles, shop in town, and walk to school. They know it's wise to look both ways when crossing the street. They know on which side of the road to ride and walk. When driving in the city, Daddy is warned by even the smaller one to stop when the light is red.

Poisonous drugs and matches are kept out of reach of small hands. Drugs are plainly labelled so Daddy and Mommy won't forget to read the label.

Not long ago an accident was barely averted by the man of our house. He was digging post holes with his tractor digger when his jacket became wrapped in the digger. The sleeve was ripped completely out. Luckily the jacket gave or an arm might have been missing. If we could convince the men that it's wiser to stop power machinery before adjusting it, we would be saving many a mangled hand.

Hired men at our farm have been cautioned to stop the tractor when adjusting machinery. Warning is also placed on speed.

As in the case of making any law, it's easier to make a safety rule than to enforce it. Let's make it easy as pie by TEACHING our children safety rules as we as parents PRACTICE them.'

Mrs. Harold Stejskal of Loretto, Nebraska had the following to say in the NEBRASKA FARMER:

'Farm safety in our home is just one of the every-day tasks as is any other chore or duty on any farm. We believe that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The extra time we take to correct things that might cause accidents is doubly paid for in so far as we haven't had a farm accident in 15 years.

All farm equipment is kept in good repair and all caution signs on new equipment are read and believed. We know they are on there as a safety measure. Our high school has a training class and a student driver car for the young people learning to drive. This is especially good training in safe driving.

Our FFA, 4-H Clubs and Extension Clubs observe Farm Safety Week and have special study lessons on farm safety. We usually have a safety booth at the county fair.

I believe a light lunch in mid-afternoon saves many accidents. It gets the farmer off the tractor and rests him, making him alert. Accidents happen so often when farmers have been on the same piece of machinery and steady grind of work that their work becomes monotonous and dull.
Learn to live and work more slowly and think for safety for yourself and the other person, too."

Miss Frances Davison of Big Springs, Nebraska tells how they practice safety at their house:

"We always tell our hired men never to leave the tractor or truck when a bad storm is coming as it is some protection against hail and wind. Also, do not take chances around ditches with any vehicle, always have power take-off covered, never stick hands through belt or chains when the machine is in operation, never work on machines when in operation or motion, and keep trash and junk burned and away from buildings.

Some men in the neighborhood have lost a hand in cornpickers, trying to get something loose while the machine is in motion.

In the house, we try to keep all bottles labelled, and have scatter rugs fixed so they won't slide on floors. Good lighting also prevents accidents. Don't run with an arm load. Keep scissors pointed down when carrying. Don't set things on cellar steps where they will cause someone to fall.

We have a lot of cattle with which we always take chances, but not unnecessary chances. We teach children to stay away from them and explain why, as children always have to know the reason. We never keep a mean or cranky bull. We don't sell them to another breeder, but send them to market."

Mrs. Hobart Beavers of Bennet, Nebraska also has some good suggestions:

"With so much mechanical equipment on the farm and in the home today, cautions against accidents cannot be over emphasized.

In the home the wringer-type washing machine has injured many little hands. Youngsters like to play in the water and become interested in the wringer. A good habit is to shut off the machine while hanging out the clothes or complete the washing before hanging them out.

We have made it a practice to keep medicines in a top unit of the cabinet, thus avoiding dangerous mistakes. It also requires the kitchen stool ladder in reaching them.

Our children were taught the use of matches when quite small. They were allowed to light a burner or oven only when their father or mother was present to help them. This seemed to satisfy their wanting to play with them, realizing the danger from a match.

Electrical appliances can be very dangerous. Never attempt to pull out or plug in with wet hands.

Well-lighted stairs are a good investment.

Machinery today is equipped with protective shields. When in operation, it is very essential to keep these in place and avoid mangled bodies.

When using the electric welder, leather gloves with long gauntlets avoid many burns."
A considerable loss in cattle each year is caused by hardware eaten. The nails, staples, and wires along fences should be picked up quite frequently. Also lead poisoning from paint is very dangerous to them. Guard against licking on newly painted fences or buildings. It is careless to leave old paint buckets lying around the barnyard.

I wonder how many people realize that a car in your control has power equivalent of that of 100 spirited horses. The horses under the hood of your engine are all deaf and blind. They cannot read traffic signs. They cannot see the child running out from behind a parked car. But they can follow your instructions. Your car will carry out to the best of its mechanical ability any orders that you give it. It's important, therefore, to keep your car in good condition and to make sure you give it the proper orders.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROMOTE SAFETY IN YOUR HOME, ON YOUR FARM, AND IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Here are some suggestions:

1. Have the 4-H clubs, FFA chapter, or Boy Scouts conduct surveys and collect information on farm and farm home accidents in your community.

2. Provide educational materials for all organizations who will help spread the "gospel" of safety.

3. Encourage all rural organizations to make safety a definite part of their programs.

4. Arrange for demonstrations and exhibits on farm safety. This is where 4-H, FFA, and Extension Clubs will shine.

5. Encourage the careful checking of farms and farm homes for hazards and the elimination of the same, as far as possible.

6. Provide suitable awards and recognition for outstanding farm safety achievements.

7. Cooperate with the Safety Patrol in extending traffic safety to rural areas.

8. Cooperate with the National Safety Council in promoting "National Farm Safety Week."
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A great many people have made substantial contributions to the material in this bulletin. Acknowledgments are due Mr. Alvah R. Hecht, York County Agricultural Agent; Miss Clara Houtz, Thayer County Home Agent; Mrs. Helen Kreymborg, Holt County Home Agent; and Miss Bernetha Hinthorn, Dawes County Home Agent for their helpful criticism and contributions. Acknowledgments are also due Mr. Tom Leadley, Chairman of the Nebraska Farm Safety Committee and Editor of *The Nebraska Farmer* for his permission to use the letters of Mrs. Elmer Carpenter of Neligh, Mrs. Elmer Erickson of Tekamah, Mrs. Clifford Boehmer of DuBois, Mrs. Harold Stejskal of Loretto, Miss Frances Davison of Big Springs, and Mrs. Hobart Beavers of Bennet. Their experiences in promoting safety are good examples of what homemakers and communities can do to eliminate the loss of life and limb through accidents on the farm and in the home.