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worksafe.vic.gov.au



7 January 2013

Your Ref: 2010 004123
Our Ref: H12/02540

Coroner Stuthridge
Wangaratta Coroners Court
24 Faithfull Street
Wangaratta 3677

Dear Coroner Stuthridge,

Findings and Recommendation in the matter of Eileen McInnes (deceased)

Thank you for providing your findings in relation to the death of Eileen McInnes, which were received by WorkSafe on 16 August 2012. WorkSafe notes the recommendation that it review the contents of the 'Safe use of Tractors with Attachments' handbook to reflect the finding that a safer means of operating a tractor with a bulka bag on board would be to operate the tractor in reverse, and with the rear window open.

WorkSafe has reviewed the 'Safe use of Tractors with Attachments' handbook in the context of this recommendation. The review concluded that in order to prevent like deaths, an approach that provides people on farms with a higher level of protection than that described in the coronial findings, would be to promote the separation of pedestrians from mobile plant on farms. WorkSafe considers this approach to be consistent with the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007*, in particular regulations 3.5.24(2) and 3.5.34(4), and as reflected in its published guidance including the 'Safe use of Tractors with Attachments' handbook.

WorkSafe has, however, undertaken a public awareness program timed to coincide with the commencement of the hay harvest season, highlighting the range of hazards that people can encounter on farms. A media release identifying common safety issues on farms, including the separation of machinery and pedestrians, was circulated to regional media outlets on 23 October 2012. The information in the media release was published in a number of regional news publications, which are enclosed for your information.

As part of its agricultural strategy, WorkSafe will also continue to conduct visits to agricultural workplaces to assess compliance with occupational health and safety legislation, and will attend field days as an exhibitor and provide information and guidance to the farming community to reduce workplace risks.

WorkSafe thanks you for providing your findings and recommendation in relation to the death of Eileen McInnes. As outlined above and consistent with your recommendation, WorkSafe will continue to work to raise awareness in relation to farming workplace safety.

Yours faithfully,


Ian Forsyth
Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director, Health & Safety

LET043/02/01.08

MEDIA RELEASE



23 October 2012

Hay harvest hazards

WorkSafe is calling on all farmers to be proactive and ensure the safety of themselves and their employees during the hay harvest season.

History has shown that hay harvest season is a busy and dangerous time for Victorian farmers.

Only last week a man suffered a serious hand injury while clearing a blockage in a harvest machine near Macarthur in the state's west.

WorkSafe's General Manager of Health and Safety Operations, Lisa Sturzenegger, said this time of the year was one of the most hazardous on Victorian farms.

"With the hay season upon us, the dangers often involved in farming will be magnified, particularly if the weather turns and people rush to get silage cut and stored," she said.

"Taking the time to think through how the job can be done as safely as possible, understanding the hazards at every stage of the harvesting operation and following it with action could make a huge difference."

Common safety issues identified on farms include dangers of machine blockages, fire risks, overhead power lines, working alone, machine guarding and plant being used for its intended purpose.

Ms Sturzenegger said getting on top of farm safety was often challenging because it might not be something farmers thought about every day.

"Farms need to be treated like any other workplace, even if it's a small, family operated business," Ms Sturzenegger said.

"Farmers, workers and contractors have shared obligations when working on farms — they don't have to be dangerous. Farms can be made safer, but it needs a team effort."

"It's about knowing what can go wrong and how to safely fix or assess the issue, even if you done it a thousand times before," she said.

The reminder comes after WorkSafe launched their year-long safety campaign in July to reduce the number of injuries and fatalities occurring on farms.

Throughout the year, inspectors will focus primarily on dairy and beef cattle farms, as well as targeting dangerous machinery and unsafe manual handling across the sector.

MEDIA RELEASE

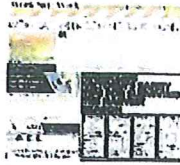


WorkSafe Victoria's safety tips for surviving the harvest season

- Properly maintain plant, particularly brakes, hydraulics, steering, tyre inflation and tread (poorly inflated tyres contribute to tyre rollover), and ensure machinery maintenance is up to date.
- Machinery must only be used for its intended purpose. For example, a front end loader bucket is not the correct implement for lifting large, square or round hay bales or grabbing hay. Terrain can be a killer.
- Even relatively flat country can hide depressions that can cause vehicles to tip.
- Understand the limitations of the machinery and vehicles you're using. Don't overload them and use the right machine for the job.
- If something is blocked or broken, plan the clearance or repair job — shut all machinery down, remove all sources of energy before attempting to clear any blockages, and reinstate all guards before resuming work
- Be aware of where powerlines are and height of machinery — follow No Go Zone rules (found at worksafe.vic.gov.au).
- If working at height (eg on silos and field bins) ensure appropriate fall protection is in place.
- Review how heavy lifting work is to be done - for example stacking bales.
- Ensure it's done so muscle and bone injuries are prevented.
- Contractors must be inducted to the property and consulted about safety issues.
- Plant must only be used by competent and trained persons
- Prevent sun exposure and heat exhaustion. Slip, slop, slap is an old rule but a good one.
- Snakes can be a hazard. Wear appropriate clothing such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts and boots.
- Keep a phone or other means of communication on you so help can be called if necessary.
- Let someone know where you'll be working and when you're due back, and have an emergency communications plan.
- Make sure machinery and vehicles are kept away from pedestrians and that they are operating at a safe speed.
- Children in areas where people and machines are working can be away from machines and areas where work is being carried out.
- Harvesting often requires long hours including early starts and for late finishes so be aware of fatigue and take regular rest breaks, drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration, eat nourishing food.
- Keep the weather forecast in mind. If you're tarping grain, be aware of the potential for high winds.
- Consider your fire prevention needs for the harvest and as the season dries - consider fire risks and how will you respond.

There's a range of resources and guidance that businesses can use to help make workplaces safer, which can be found by visiting worksafe.vic.gov.au

Media inquiries: Danica Harris — 9641 1376 or Rosanna Bonaccorso — 0478 305 640



WORKSAFE VICTORIA'S SAFETY 11PS FOR SURVIVING THE HARVEST SEASON

If something is blocked or broken, plan the clearance or repair job - turn off the equipment and de-energise it or let the pressure off so it does not spring into action when the blockage is removed. Replace guards.

Ensure machinery maintenance, including hydraulics, is up to date.

Keep a phone or other means of communication on you so help can be called if necessary.

Let someone know where

you will be working and when you are due back.

Machinery must only be used for its intended purpose.

Be aware of where powerlines are and height of machinery - follow 'No Go Zone' rules found at www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

Keep children away from machines and areas where work is being carried out.

Make sure traffic is kept away from pedestrians, including children.

Be aware of fatigue - take

regular rest breaks, drink plenty of water, eat nourishing food.

Keep the weather forecast in mind - if you're tarping grain, be aware of the potential for high winds.

If working at height, ensure fall protection is in place.

Review how heavy lifting work is to be done - for example stacking bales; ensure it is done so muscle and bone injuries are prevented.

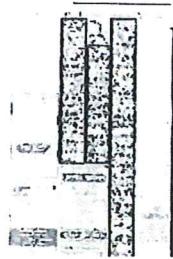
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consulted about safety issues.

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Snakes can be a hazard; wear appropriate clothing such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts and boots.

Harvest Information provided by WorkSafe Health and Safety Operations General Manager, Lisa Stuzzenegger.



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Only last week a man suffered a serious hand injury while clearing a blockage in a harvest machine near Macarthur in the state's west.

WorkSafe's General Manager of Health and Safety Operations, Lisa Sturzenegger, said this time of the year was one of the most hazardous on Victorian farms.

With the hay season upon us, the dangers often involved in farming will be magnified, particularly if the weather turns and people rush to get silage cut and stored," she said.

"Taking the time to think through how the job can be done as safely as possible, understanding the hazards at every stage of the harvesting operation and following it with action could make a huge difference."

Common safety issues identified on farms include dangers of machine blockages, fire risks, overhead power lines, working alone, machine guarding and plant being used for other than its intended purpose.

Ms Sturzenegger said getting on top of farm safety was often chal-

lenging because it might not be something farmers thought about every day.

"Farms need to be treated like any other workplace, even if it's a small, family operated business," Ms Sturzenegger said.

"Farmers, workers and contractors have shared obligations when working on farms - they don't have to be dangerous. Farms can be made safer, but it needs a team effort."

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- Harvesting often requires long hours including early starts and /or late finishes so be aware of fatigue and take regular rest breaks, drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration, eat nourishing food.

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Northern Times, Kerang VIC
26 Oct 2012

General News, page 5 - 138,32 cm²
Regional - circulation 1,991 (-T-F--)

ID 168600264

Staying safe this harvest season

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Common safety issues identified on farms include dangers of machine blockages, fire risks, over-

head power lines, working alone, machine guarding and plant being used for other than its intended purpose.

Ms Sturzenegger said getting on top of farm safety was often challenging because it might not be something farmers thought about every day.

"Farms need to be treated like any other workplace, even if it's a small, family operated business," she said.

"Farmers, workers and contractors have shared obligations when working on farms - they don't have to be dangerous. Farms can be made safer, but it needs a team effort.

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Be safe during hay season

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Farmers encouraged to stay safe during harvest

FARMERS and employees are being urged to remain safe during harvest season.

WorkSafe Victoria issued a warning to farmers to ensure the safety of themselves and their workers during one of the most hazardous times on Victorian farms.

WorkSafe general manager of health and safety operations Liza Sturzenegger said farmers should take the time to think through how the job can be done safely.

"The dangers often involved in farming will be magnified, particularly if the weather turns and people rush to get silage cut and stored," she said.

She said common safety issues on farms include machine blockages, fire risks, overhead power lines, working alone and machine guarding.

"It's about knowing what can go wrong and how to safely fix or assess the issue,

even if you have done it a thousand times before," she said.

WorkSafe tips for harvest season include preventing sun exposure with the use of sunscreen, hat and long-sleeved T-shirts.

They also warn people to be wary of snakes and keep a phone so help can be called if necessary.

The full list of tips is at www.worksafe.vic.gov.au