



Drowning Hazard

The forecast heavy run-off this spring will increase the ever-present risk posed by water bodies on Saskatchewan farms.

Drowning deaths continue to occur. From 1990 to 1999, fourteen people lost their lives in dugouts, sewage lagoons or cisterns. All age groups are affected. Four of the victims were children aged fourteen or younger, six were between the ages of fifteen and fifty-nine and the remaining four were aged sixty or older. All were male.

Water bodies on farms are mostly small. That and their everyday familiarity make them seem relatively harmless. Recognizing them as a hazard is the first step. Here are other steps you can take to prevent a drowning on your farm:

- Fence dugouts and sewage lagoons.
- Use caution when operating tractors and other implements on slopes near water bodies.
- Beware of unstable ice. Aeration fans on dugouts and lagoons increase the risk.
- Supervise toddlers and preschoolers. A fenced outdoor play area can free up busy parents.
- Insist on a life jacket for recreational use of farm water bodies. Be a role model by wearing a life jacket yourself.
- Encourage everyone in the family to acquire water safety and swimming skills. The Canadian Red Cross has programs for infants, toddlers, children, teens and adults.

Canadian Agricultural Safety Week

March 9 - 15, 2005



A safe farm is a successful farm!

Moved? Retired? Not Farming?

To remove your name from our mailing list, please complete and send to the Editor.

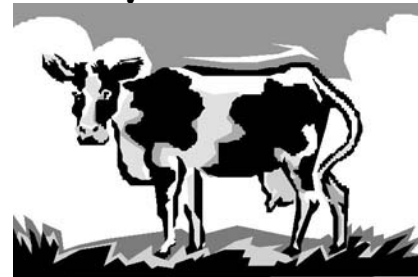
Name _____

Address _____

Town _____ P.C. _____

R.M. _____ R.M. # _____

Luxury Edition Cow



A farmer had been taken several times by the local car dealer. One day the dealer informed the farmer that he was coming over to buy a cow. The farmer priced his unit as follows:

Basic cow	\$499.95
Shipping and handling	35.75
Extra stomach	79.25
Two-tone exterior	142.10
Produce storage compartment	126.50
Heavy duty straw chopper	189.60
4-spigot/high output drain system	149.25
Automatic fly swatter	88.50
Genuine cowhide upholstery	179.85
Deluxe dual horns	59.25
Automatic fertilizer attachment	339.35
4 X 4 traction drive assembly	884.16
Pre-delivery wash and comb	69.85
FARMER'S SUGGESTED PRICE	\$2,843.36
Additional dealer adjustments	<u>300.00</u>
TOTAL LIST PRICE (w. options)	\$3,143.36

From the Editor

We welcome your comments and submissions. For a copy of this issue in French, contact:

The Editor, Network News,
Ag Health and Safety Network, I.A.R.E.H
Box 120 RUH, 103 Hospital Drive
Saskatoon, SK S7N 0W8
Phone: (306) 966-6647
Email: julie.bidwell@usask.ca

Prescription Medications and Increased Injury Risk

Many producers take prescription medications to provide relief from an assortment of ailments. Some of these drugs have the potential to affect the ability to do the job safely. As one ages, some physical and mental abilities decline. These changes, combined with drug use for a medical condition, put older producers at greater risk of injury. It is important to be aware of these factors to reduce risk.

Older farmers at risk

The Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program reports that producers aged 60 and older account for over one-third of work-related farm deaths and more than a quarter of work-related injuries that require hospitalization. Their rates of injury and death at work are up to six times the rate of the 50 to 59 year age group.

Farm Work-Related Causes of Injuries in 60+ Age Group

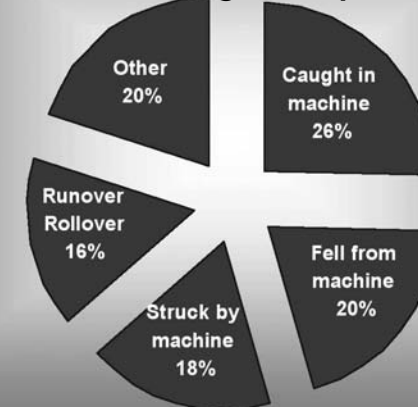


Figure 1 (Source: Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program, 1990 - 2000)

Figure 1 shows the most common causes of these injuries. While working with machinery is the number one cause of injuries in the 60 and older age group, falls are another major way older farmers are injured. Though farmers aged 60 and older made up just 13 per cent of the total farm population in 1996, they suffered 29 per cent of all injuries due to falls. In the 2001 Census of Agriculture, the proportion of farmers aged 55 and older had increased since 1996 and this trend is likely continuing.

Falls result in injury more often than death. Figure 2 shows where and how older farmers fall. Unlike children and younger adults, falls on the same level (slip, trip, stumbling) are one major cause of hospitalized injury.

Medications linked to injury risk

Many medications taken to treat chronic illnesses and disease have been shown to put people at risk of injury. Side effects from medications produce varying individual responses. Sedation, or sleepiness, and low blood pressure are common

Types of Falls for Farmers Aged 60+

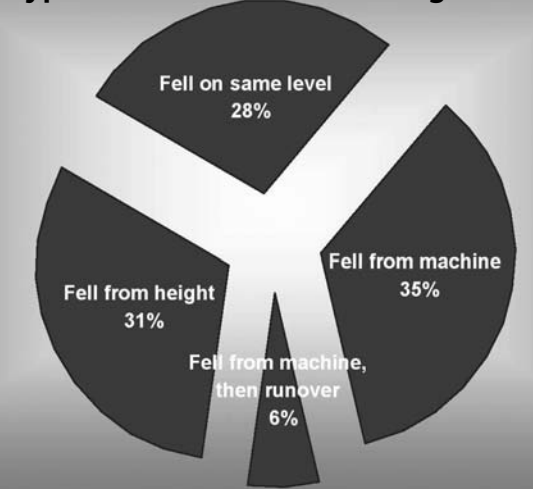


Figure 2 (Source: Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program, 1990 - 2000)

side effects that can cause impairment and increase the risk of being injured in a fall, automobile collision, working in the yard or while operating machinery.

The following drug categories and specific medications have been linked to an increase in injury risk among older persons. See Table 1 for specific unintended effects linked to each medication. Be aware that unintended side effects of a medication may be due to increased sensitivity to that drug or to an interaction with another medication. Trade names listed are examples only.

- Heart and blood pressure medications including nitroglycerin tablet/patch/spray, captopril (Capoten™), enalapril (Vasotec™), digoxin (Lanoxin™), propranolol (Inderal™), metoprolol (Lopressor™), amiodarone (Cordarone™), nifedipine (Adalat™), verapamil (Isoptin™)
- Sedatives (to treat insomnia and anxiety) including lorazepam (Ativan™), diazepam (Valium™), flurazepam (Dalmane™), triazolam (Halcion™).
- Antidepressants (to treat depression) including amitriptyline (Elavil™), doxepin (Adapin™), paroxetine hydrochloride (Paxil™)
- Stomach remedies (to treat heartburn and ulcers) including cimetidine (Tagamet™), famotidine (Pepcid™), misoprostol (Cytotec™), sucralfate (Sulcrate™)
- Painkillers (to relieve moderate to severe pain) including ibuprofen (Advil™), diclofenac (Voltaren™), Tylenol #3™
- Tranquilizers (to prevent or treat impairment in thoughts and perceptions of reality) including thioridazine (Mellaril™), risperidone (Risperdal™).
- Anti-epileptics (to prevent epileptic seizures) including clonazepam (Rivotril™), carbamazepine (Tegretol™).

Age-related physical changes

Many machine and fall-related injuries may, in part, be caused by age-related physical changes that include:

- A decrease in strength and flexibility which are needed to safely lift and carry objects, care for livestock, mount and dismount machinery and climb ladders and stairs.
- Changes in vision, with the result that objects must be closer and more light is needed to see detail. Farmers often work in fields at dusk or at night, or in barns or sheds which do not have adequate light.
- Age-related hearing changes, along with preventable hearing loss caused by noise from machinery, tools and animals. Hearing loss makes it difficult to hear approaching hazards and communicate with co-workers.
- Chronic conditions such as back pain, arthritis, heart disease, cancer and obesity may put farmers at risk when they attempt physically demanding tasks they were able to perform safely in the past. Depression can increase risk by distracting farmers from the task at hand.

Strategies to reduce injury risk

It has been shown that older farmers are at greater risk of injury at work than their younger counterparts. Older farmers can, however, continue to be safe and productive members of farm operations.

- What can be done to prevent an injury or death?
- When starting a new medication with the potential to cause dizziness or sleepiness, take the first dose in a safe situation in order to see how it affects you before driving or operating machinery.
- Don't stop taking a medication if it causes unpleasant side effects; these may be temporary. If concerned, see your doctor. Usually, an alternative is available.
- Take only the prescribed or recommended dosage of any medication.
- Be aware that many over-the-counter (OTC) and herbal remedies may also increase your risk of injury. For example, taking a drug to clear a stuffy head or nose (Chlor-Tripolon™ or Sudafed™) or to relieve pain (Robaxacet™, Tylenol with codeine™) may make you feel weak, dizzy and sluggish.
- Check with your doctor if you experience any of the unintended side effects in Table 1 or are concerned about

Table 1: Medication Side Effects that Predispose Injury

	Low Blood Pressure	Drowsiness	Dizziness	Fatigue	Slowed Reaction Time	Headache	Weakness	Confusion
Ativan™, Valium™, Dalmane™, Rivotril™, Halcion™		X	X	X	X	X		X
Tegretol™		X	X					
Elavil™								
Adapin™	X	X	X					X
Paxil™	X	X	X				X	X
Tagamet™			X					
Pepcid™			Mild			Mild		
Cytotec™			X			X		
Sulcrate™		X	X					
Nitroglycerin	X		X			X	X	
Capoten™	Rare - After 1st dose							
Vasotec™								
Lanoxin™			X	X		X	X	
Inderal™	X	Due to decreased pulse rate	Due to decreased pulse rate	X				
Lopressor™								
Cordarone™		X		X			X	
Isoptin™	X		X	X		X		
Adalat™								
Mellaril™	X	X	X		Slowed voluntary movements, tremors		X	
Risperdal™								
Advil™			X			X		
Voltaren™		X	X					
Tylenol #3™		X	X					

OTC or herbal remedies.

- Recognize age-related changes and be willing to modify expectations and jobs accordingly.
- Take regular work breaks, stop when you are tired, drink water and don't forget to eat. Your health is very important.
- Prevent falls by providing adequate lighting in work areas and walkways; repairing broken steps and handrails on ladders and stairs; keeping floors dry; removing clutter from work areas; using non-slip flooring on rungs, steps or floor; covering cables that cross walkways; waiting to get up until you are not dizzy.
- Have your hearing checked and wear your hearing aid(s). Make a habit of wearing earplugs and ear muffs for loud jobs – even for a short period of time.

Further information

Further information is available from your physician, your pharmacist or from the Saskatchewan Drug Information Service. This program is not an emergency service but it is available to:

- Provide objective and unbiased information on drug therapy problems
- Provide information about prescription, non-prescription and herbal products
- Research questions on side effects, drug interactions, the availability of new products, safety of drug use during pregnancy and while breastfeeding, and on the administration and storage of drugs.

Call SDIS at no charge: 1-800-665-3784, Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Walk Your Way to Safety

It's an attractive idea - a gadget costing under thirty dollars that can get you off the couch, reduce your risk of injury and disease and help you shed pounds.

Too good to be true? Maybe not. The gadget is a pedometer, a small battery-operated device you clip on your belt that records your total steps - how far you walked, ran or jogged - in a day.

So how much activity does it take to reduce your risk of injury and disease? Studies suggest that walking 10,000 steps a day is a healthy goal for most people. In the course of normal events, most people take between nine hundred and three thousand steps a day, and not much more.

Sharon Clark, workplace health and safety consultant at the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations, says the pedometer is one of the most powerful motivators she has ever encountered. "A 10,000 steps walking program recognizes that the normal things you do every day are part of your exercise program. You don't have to spend a lot of time or money to be fit."

Clark goes on to say, "For years we've been saying, "Park your car farther away. Take the stairs instead of the elevator," but there was no immediate reward. Now you can check your pedometer and see that small things do make a difference. It's like a pat on the back."

Seniors may reap the biggest rewards from a walking program. By improving strength and balance, walking can dramatically reduce the risk of falls. On farms, falling from a machine and falling from a height are two of the top five causes of hospitalization in producers aged sixty and older.



If you plan to start a walking program, here are tips to help avoid injury and stay motivated:

- Discuss your exercise plans with your physician if you have been particularly inactive or if you are being treated for a condition that exercise could aggravate.
- Get yourself a good pair of runners with plenty of cushion.
- Start out by wearing your pedometer every day for a week without changing your normal routine. Log the number of steps you take each day.
- Make the highest total steps in one day your daily goal for the next two weeks.
- As you adapt, increase your goal by 500 steps, maintaining the new goal for two weeks or until you reach a comfort level.
- Continue until you reach the goal of 10,000 steps a day. Remember to take it slow and report any pain to your doctor. You don't want a pulled muscle to throw a wrench into your plans.
- Remember, it takes about six months to "lock in" a new behaviour. Be prepared to dedicate yourself to a daily walking goal for a minimum of six months.

Pedometers are widely available from fitness stores, sports retailers and Canadian Tire. One on-line supplier, www.factorydirectsales.ca, lists prices as low as \$9.95.

So tie one on - a pedometer, that is! When you feel it on your waistband, it's a reminder to get moving.

Where do you FIT in?



Currently, over one half of Saskatchewan adults (52%) and over two thirds of Saskatchewan youth aged thirteen to nineteen (68%) are not sufficiently active for optimal health benefits, according to national health guidelines.

In 2003, the province's In Motion program surveyed 3,500 Saskatchewan residents about their activities during the previous week in order to come up with that statistic. (See table 1) The survey also showed that:

- The top three physical activities performed by adults are walking (42%), jogging (15%) and shovelling snow (13%).
- The top three activities performed by youth aged thirteen to nineteen are walking (25%), ice hockey and skating (17%) and jogging (16%).
- Women are more likely to be physically inactive (59%) than men (44%). The same pattern occurs in youth with inactive girls age thirteen to nineteen (83%) more common than inactive boys in that age group (57%).
- Physical inactivity increases with age. Adults aged sixty-five years and older are the least active, with more than two thirds not receiving health benefits as a result of their activity levels.

2003 In Motion Survey

Saskatchewan Zone	Inactive adults	Inactive Youth
South East	49%	81%
City of Regina	53%	71%
South West	55%	53%
East Central	53%	65%
Central	50%	64%
City of Saskatoon	45%	72%
North West	56%	61%
North East	49%	68%
Northern SK	65%	56%

Table 1: Note: In Motion survey figures have a margin of error of plus or minus 3.7 points for cities and plus or minus 8 points for other zones.

Thank you!

For support in publishing Network News, the Agricultural Health and Safety Network thanks:

