

Oxford Farm Safety Association president finds work rewarding

Farm safety became an integral part of Norma Howe's life after her husband Fred lost both knee caps when he fell from a ladder while roofing a corn crib on their farm at RR1 Embro.

"Accidents make a change in your life," says Howe who is now president of the Oxford Farm Safety Association. "Because it had such an immediate affect on our lives we became much more aware of what farm safety is about."

For the last eight years, Howe has visited schools and community groups, set up displays at agricultural fairs, help organize events and distribute pamphlets promoting the Farm Safety Association's message.

"Everyone is in such a hurry these days that they are not taking the time out to take precautions," says Howe. "Farm safety is mostly common sense."

"Machinery is dangerous and not anything to be played with. You see so many children riding on lawn mowers, tractors and other farm machinery. It makes you shudder to think that they can be killed by simply falling out," she said.

Howe says that children in early grades are interested in farm safety while older children tend to think that they already know everything.

The Oxford Farm Safety Association holds poster and essay contests for the county schools each year. "It's becoming harder to get into the city schools although those students are just as important," said Howe. "Youngsters may have relatives who live on a farm and even lawn and garden equipment pose hazards at their homes."

The growing popularity of large round bales used by Ontario farmers is forcing the Farm Safety Associa-



NORMA HOWE

tion to emphasize safety procedures in handling these bales during this year's Farm Safety Week campaign.

"If a person is not crippled for life or killed when a large round bale falls on them then they are lucky," says Howe.

She also says that statistics also raise people's awareness of farm safety. "There were 20 farm accidents in Oxford and some of them occurred in the area just south of St. Marys," said Howe.

Although Howe's work as president of the Oxford Farm Safety Association is strictly voluntary she finds her work very rewarding.

"Mostly I talk to people and remind them in a nice way about farm safety," she said. "I have met a lot of people over the past eight years and some of them have become friends for life."



MINI QUEEN Katlyn Schellenburger (left) was crowned by 1990 Fair Queen Christina Tate.



Kristina Tate