

Animal injuries focus of farm safety week

By **FANNIE SUNSHINE**
The Champion

Even experienced farmers can fall victim to serious injuries and even death from farm-related accidents.

To help educate the public regarding farm safety, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture will celebrate the 29th annual Canadian Agricultural Safety Week March 13 to 20.

This year's theme is 'Livestock handling safety: Put your best foot forward', which examines the leading causes of animal-related injuries and deaths.

The campaign is sponsored by Farm Credit Canada, the Canadian Coalition for Agricultural Safety and Rural Health and Agricultural and Agri-Food Canada.

According to a study completed by the Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program, an average of 118 people are killed and 1,727 seriously injured each year in farm-related incidents in Canada.

From 1990 to 1995, there was an annual average of 215 hospitalizations for injuries caused by animals.

The study also reveals significant patterns in the type of animal-related incidents. Almost half of horse-related injuries happen to women aged 16 to 59 and are caused primarily by falls when riding.

Men aged 16 to 59 are most-frequently injured by cows during the calving season of February to June. Men aged 60 years and over are most-frequently killed by bulls in August, when breeding season

begins.

The majority of fatalities caused by horses are the result of the victims being kicked.

Cecil Patterson, president of Halton Farm Safety, said the danger of falling victim to farm-related accidents is ever-present.

"In my own opinion, as farmers we sometimes get too comfortable with our own machinery. It's common sense to turn the motor off when checking the blade on a lawn mower, but sometimes you have to leave it on to see where the problem is coming from. All it takes is a second to lose a finger. We need to be reminded, at least once a year, to take extra precautions."

Halton

Farm Safety is committed to keeping the farm community informed on all farm-related activities throughout the year around meetings and farm safety camps for chil-



Cecil Patterson

dren.

"The kids will go home and tell their parents what they learned." Mr. Patterson explained. "This way it keeps the parents informed as well."

Bob Friesen, president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, said safety is a choice, not an act of fate.

"Certain activities have predictable consequences and if something is predictable, then it's also preventable. Almost all farm-related tragedies are preventable — that's why we're targeting our efforts at urging farmers to make safety and prevention a priority on their farms."

For more information regarding the safety week, call the Canadian Federation of Agriculture at (613) 236-3633.


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