

The personal involvement of both conference were: Michael and op Couples Conference.

Ag jobs dangerous, according to report

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MISSISSIPPI STATE—In 1988 more than 1,500 deaths occurred in the United States as a result of agricultural work accidents.

During this same time 11 Mississippians died from tractor-related deaths, and several others died from the improper use of farm equipment, electrocutions and falls.

Already this year, at least four state residents have died from tractor-related injuries, and several other farm-related deaths have been reported. The real tragedy is that the majority of these deaths didn't have to happen.

"The tractor-related deaths were primarily rollovers and extra-rider deaths that were preventable had roll-over protective structures and seatbelts been in place and extra riders not allowed," said Herb Willcutt, an agricultural engineer with the Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service.

"One Mississippi resident was killed recently while trying to jump start a tractor," Willcutt said. "The man shorted across the starter switch with the tractor in gear. The tractor started, moved forward and ran over him."

Willcutt also said a young woman was killed in the state this year when a trailer came loose from a truck and struck her car. Safety chains were not used to secure the trailer to the truck.

"Farmers, wood haulers and recreational vehicle and boat owners need to install and use safety chains. It's the law," Willcutt said.

"Fatality numbers do not include the serious maiming and mutilations or near misses and property losses that also occur each year," he added.

Agriculture's accidental death and injury rates are now among the highest of all major industries, and estimates place the national economic losses at \$5 billion.

According to the Chicago-based National Safety Council, the accidental death rate in 1988 for agriculture was 48 per 100,000 workers. The composite rate for all industries was nine per 100,000.

Several thousand farmers and farm workers also suffered work-related illnesses caused by excessive exposure to toxic gases, chemicals, dust, sun, noise and other farm hazards.

Believing that most of these deaths and injuries are preventable and that education and taking the necessary precautions can reduce the tragic statistics, President George Bush has

proclaimed Sept. 17-23 as National Farm Safety Week.

This year's farm safety week theme, SAFEing the Farm and Ranch, approaches safety in a positive manner, said Jack Burke, agricultural safety specialist for the National Safety Council.

"Safeing" means to preact rather than react—to do the necessary things ahead of time that can reduce or even eliminate risk of accidental injury, property damage and work-related illness.

"Put another way, don't wait until the horse has gotten out to lock the barn door," Burke said.

Burke said in most other occupations trained people are responsible for the safety and health of workers.

"In farming, however, safety and health management falls on farmers themselves, and they may not always be trained for the challenge," Burke said.

Willcutt said many agriculture-related businesses and agencies are actively involved in farm safety education.

"Farm equipment dealers, insurance companies, educational agencies such as MCES and private organizations provide educational seminars, pamphlets, videos and films," Willcutt said.

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