

Staying Safe Around the PTO

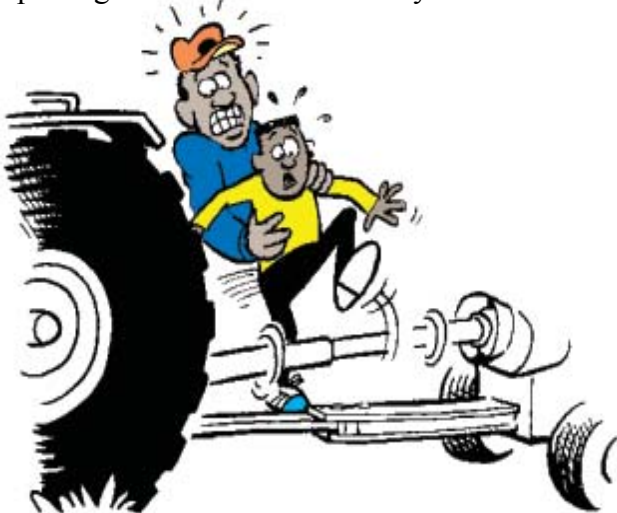
The power take off (PTO) is a powerful and commonly used item on today's farm. This system has helped revolutionize agriculture since the '30s, but it has also taken its toll. Like many farm machines, a PTO can be a useful tool. Used in the right way, a PTO transfers power from a tractor to other implements and can safely generate power for augers, mowers, choppers and other implements. Used in the wrong way, it can maim or kill. PTOs operate by turning at speeds of 9 or 16 rotations per second. This speed makes the PTO very dangerous. A PTO entanglement is scary because you are caught before you can react. Machine shields or guards covering these moving parts prevent entanglements, but can be damaged during agricultural work or removed for maintenance.

Entanglements in PTO drivelines are responsible for about 10 deaths annually. In Minnesota alone, PTOs have killed more than a dozen people and maimed hundreds of others in the past ten years. According to a study by Dr. Frederick Rivara, completed in 1997 from national data collected in 1990-1993, 34.1 percent of the fatal farm injuries to children 0-19 were due to machinery. The Rivara study also stated that children ages 5-9 were affected in 46 percent of total machine-related injuries and are the most likely to die in machine-related incidents.

A few simple rules could help prevent you or you or your family members from being hurt by a PTO.

- Wear close fitting clothing, avoid wearing sweatshirts with draw strings and baggy or torn clothes. Tie back long hair.
- Be sure PTO shields are in place and in good condition.
- Start and stop the PTO only when you're sitting in the tractor seat.
- Walk around the tractor, never stepping over a rotating PTO.

Young children can be extremely curious and have little fear in situations where caution should be used. The spinning of an unshielded PTO may attract children's attention. It is important that they be kept at a safe distance.



Older youth are often asked to help out around the farm. Parents play an important role on the farm as supervisors of novice machine operators. As youth become independent and accept new duties, it is the responsibility of parents to provide proper training and positive reinforcement. And remember, youth often follow the work habits of adults, whether they be positive or negative.

Don't let the PTO harm you or someone you love because it was improperly maintained or used incorrectly.

Farm Safety



Just Kids