

# The

# NETWORK News

Fall 2001



the  
centre  
for Agricultural Medicine  
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Brought to farming families by their Rural Municipal Council and the Agricultural Health and Safety Network

## OffGuard Photographic Exhibition

A remarkable photographic exhibition, **OffGuard**, opened in Saskatoon at the University of Saskatchewan's Kenderdine Art Gallery on July 20. The exhibition features photographs of twenty individuals who have survived farm machinery incidents.

Subjects are represented by a portrait and one or more pictures taken in a work environment. The photographs were taken in kitchens, apartments, barns, farm yards and living rooms all over the province and the resulting tableau makes it obvious that these incidents do not spare men, women or children. Accompanying the images are text panels with a statement by the survivor, a description of the incident and a relevant Saskatchewan agricultural injury statistic. Together, the images and text stand as evidence, a "mirror with a memory" reflecting a cautionary tale. On average every year in Saskatchewan, twenty-one deaths occur and more than three hundred people are hospitalized as the result of a farming accident. Nearly half these deaths and injuries involve farm machinery.

A 48-page exhibition catalogue includes a portrait of each survivor and information about his or her incident. The Centre for Agricultural Medicine plans to make the publication available as an educational resource for the prevention of farm machinery deaths and injuries. Partners cooperating to produce the exhibition include the Kenderdine Art Gallery, the Centre for Agricultural Medicine, the Saskatchewan Abilities Council's Farmers with Disabilities Program, the Department of Art and Art History at the U of S, the Saskatchewan Farm Injury Surveillance Program and The Photographers' Gallery of Saskatoon. Funding for the exhibition and catalogue was provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Canadian Agriculture Safety Program and by a Cyril Capling Trust Fund grant from the U of S College of Agriculture.

The exhibition will tour rural Saskatchewan on behalf of the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils during 2002-03. A schedule of venues and dates will be published in a forthcoming issue of *Network News*.

The show at the Kenderdine Gallery, which runs until September 2, is open to the public free of charge. The gallery is located on the second level of the U of S Agriculture Building. Hours of operation are 11:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday and 12:30 to 5:00 pm, Sunday.

For further information about the *OffGuard* exhibition or catalogue, please contact the Centre for Agricultural Medicine, Tel: (306) 966-6647, E-mail: [bidwellj@sask.usask.ca](mailto:bidwellj@sask.usask.ca) or the Kenderdine Art Gallery, Tel: (306) 966-4571, E-mail: [kent.archer@usask.ca](mailto:kent.archer@usask.ca).

*"I should have shut the machine down. The machine should have had a guard on it. Stress was definitely a factor - the stress of trying to get the job done, trying to make a living farming. If the stress was not there, I would have shut things down and done things properly. So I don't know whether you'd call it stress, or stupidity."*

On September 18, 1995, Don Zimmer's left hand became entangled in the roller chain of a square baler as he tried to grab a piece of twine caught in a knot. The incident happened shortly before supertime. He was able to pull his hand free but

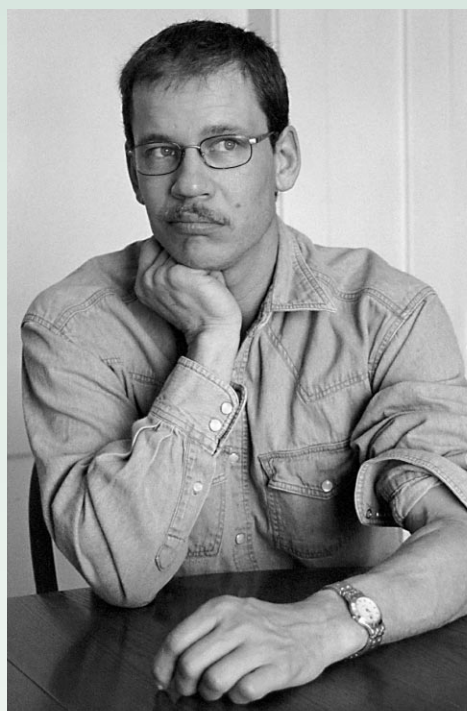


Photo by Paula Reban

sustained severe lacerations and tendon damage. Reconstructive surgery and three years of rehabilitation enabled him to regain partial use of the hand.

**From 1990 to 1996 in Saskatchewan, two people were killed and another 22 were seriously injured when they became entangled in balers.**

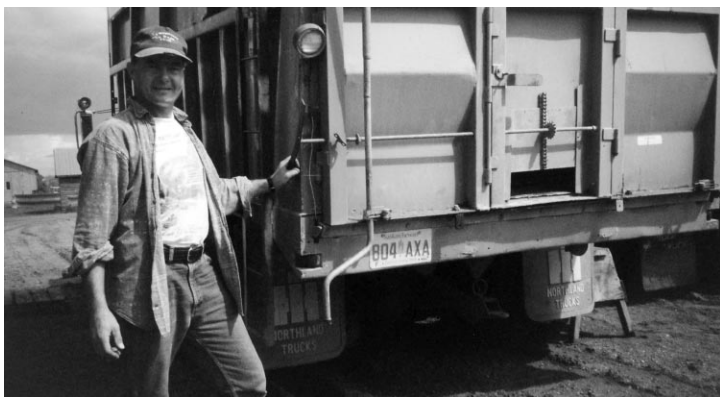
*Don Zimmer,  
Handel, Saskatchewan*

## Saskatchewan “Smarts”

*In this column, we highlight health and safety inventions by Saskatchewan farmers. If you are aware of such an innovation, please alert the Editor. Publishing product information does not necessarily constitute endorsement.*

James Gerspacher farms north of Watson where he grows wheat, barley, canola and flax on ten quarters of land. Harvest is a high pressure time at the Gerspacher farm, as it is on any grain farm where a year's income depends on a few weeks of intense activity. That's when accidents tend to occur - and tragically, they can strike down family members who are helping with harvest.

Loading and unloading grain may involve family from on or off the farm. It's a job that youngsters and seniors who want to help can take on, but it's more hazardous than many people realize. The Saskatchewan Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program monitors fatal and serious farm injuries in the province of Saskatchewan. That program reports that from 1990 to 1996, three people were killed and 170 people were seriously injured during activities that involved loading or unloading grain trucks on Saskatchewan farms.



*Jim Gerspacher demonstrates end-gate opener.*

## Third Annual Saskatchewan Farm Injury Control Summit

Mark your calendar now! The Centre for Agricultural Medicine invites you to attend the third annual Saskatchewan Farm Injury Control Summit. The Centre is hosting the one day conference in consultation with member organizations of the Saskatchewan Alliance for Agricultural Health and Safety. The event takes place on November 28 at the Sheraton Cavalier Hotel in Saskatoon.



The Farm Injury Control Summit was initiated in 1999 by the Centre for Agricultural Medicine to highlight the Saskatchewan Agricultural Injury Control Program whose goal is to eliminate deaths and injuries on Saskatchewan farms. The 1999 conference established a target of a 30% reduction in deaths and injuries over five years. This year's Summit takes place in conjunction with a week of academic and public events marking the Centre's 15th Anniversary.

Keynote speaker Martin Lesperance, a Calgary paramedic and firefighter, will speak from experience on the emotional and humorous side of safety and will offer practical tips on how to stay safe on the farm. Attendance at the Summit includes lunch and is free of charge.

*For further information or to register for the Summit, contact: Lori Lockinger, Centre for Agricultural Medicine, Tel: (306) 966-6643, Fax: (306) 966-8799 or E-mail: lockinger@sask.usask.ca* ◆

It was concern for family that led Jim Gerspacher to develop two devices that make loading and unloading grain simpler and safer. The first innovation is a box cleaner that reaches into the truck box from outside the end-gate and pulls the grain out. The device eliminates the need to have a person inside the tipped grain box shovelling grain toward the end-gate. When asked where he got the idea, Gerspacher said he'd seen something similar at the Farm Progress Show in Regina years ago, and decided to make one himself. The box cleaner consists of a piece of flatiron, 16 inches long and 5 inches high, welded to a five-foot long pipe handle. The unit works well to dig into the grain and get right into corner of the box. When asked to estimate how much it cost to construct, he laughed and said, "All it took was metal from the iron pile and about 15 minutes."

The second innovation is an end-gate opener that extends to the back outside edge of the box, so no one has to lean over the auger to open or close the end-gate. Gerspacher says he got this idea from looking at semi trucks which have a similar safety device. He has fitted each of his three grain trucks with openers, modifying the design as necessary. On the first truck, the original handle was removed from the end-gate. A pipe that extends to the outside edge of the box has been attached to the original linkage and a new handle attached. On the other two, a roller chain is welded on to the centre of the end-gate. A sprocket runs on the chain and is welded onto a shaft that extends to the outside edge of the truck box. A handle is attached to the end of the shaft; by turning the handle, the end-gate is raised or lowered.

This innovation took a little longer to create. Approximately two hours of trial and error were required to perfect the operation of the device. Once again, the components consisted of "metal from the iron pile."

Gerspacher brushes off any praise for creating the low-cost innovations that help keep the people who load and unload grain on his farm safe. "I've always had to make new ways of doing things. It's just part of farming," he says modestly.

*For further information, contact: Jim Gerspacher, Box 503, Watson, SK S0K 4V0 Tel: (306) 287-4048.* ◆

## Make Sinclair Harrison

### See Red!

At the March annual meeting, SARM President Sinclair Harrison agreed to sponsor an all-expense paid trip to Disneyland for a farm family from the Division that is first to have all its rural municipalities signed up in the Agricultural Health and Safety Network. A follow-up letter to RMs, with a map showing Network members in red, encouraged reeves, councils and administrators to "Make Sinclair Harrison See Red!"

If this sounds like a marketing gimmick, let's just say the contest was intended as an attention-getter. The message that SARM and the Centre for Agricultural Medicine want to convey is that membership in the Network, at \$2.90 per actively farming ratepayer to a maximum of \$1,000 per RM, is a tremendous bargain. Enrolment in the Network provides farm families with regular occupational health and safety information and services such as lung function tests, hearing tests and emergency preparedness training. The fees raised by a municipality barely cover annual mailing costs, with other expenses covered by grants and contributions from industry and government.

Since the contest was announced, 24 new municipalities have joined the Network, bringing the number of RMs in the Network to 114. Which goes to show that your mother was right when she pointed out, "You have to get someone's attention before you try to get your message across."

*For further information about Agricultural Health and Safety Network programs and services, contact: Lori Lockinger, Centre for Agricultural Medicine, Tel: (306) 966-6643, E-mail: lockinger@sask.usask.ca.* ◆

# Welcome new Network members!

|                             |                              |                            |                                     |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| R. M. of Cambria, #6        | R. M. of Kutawa, #278        | R. M. of Oakdale, #320     | R. M. of Waverly, #44               |
| R. M. of Milton, #292       | R. M. of Antelope Park, #322 | R. M. of Gravelbourg, #104 | R. M. of Keys, #303                 |
| R. M. of Viscount, #341     | R. M. of Moose Jaw, #161     | R. M. of Elfros, # 307     | R. M. of Mareposa, #350             |
| R. M. of Happyland, #231    | R. M. of Montrose, #315      | R. M. of Progress, #351    | R. M. of Harris, #316               |
| R. M. of Humboldt, #370     | R. M. of Loreburn, #254      | R. M. of Marriott, #317    | R. M. of Hudson Bay, #394           |
| R. M. of Chesterfield, #261 | R. M. of Winslow, #319       | R. M. of Douglas, #436     | R. M. of Last Mountain Valley, #250 |

## 2001 Network Scholarship Winner

Tracy Gerspacher lives on a grain farm north of Watson in the R. M. of Spalding, #368. The 17-year old won this year's SARM 90th Anniversary Scholarship by writing a winning essay titled, "Safety and Health Hazards on My Farm." She begins studies in the College of Agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan in September. Dr. James Dosman, Director of the Centre for Agricultural Medicine, awarded the \$1,000 scholarship to Tracy at the SARM Spring Convention in Regina. Proud parents, Jim and Valerie Gerspacher, were present at the award ceremony.

Tracy is the eldest child and only daughter in a family that includes brothers, Regan, 15 and Justin, 12. Being a girl hasn't let her off the hook when it comes to farm chores. In her application, Tracy wrote,

*"I haul grain and shovel and clean out bins. I have acquired skills in driving many types of vehicles and machinery. Stone-picking by hand and moving and burning flax straw are other tasks. I've harrowed, and have moved and cleaned machinery. I've planted and harvested garden vegetables, as well as planted and weeded countless trees. I have experience painting farm bins and buildings as well as building and repairing them. I've also rogued many seed crops and cut grass. I have also prepared many meals for the field."*

In addition to farming, Tracy's father, Jim Gerspacher, serves as a municipal councillor and her mother, Valerie, teaches Kindergarten at Watson Elementary School. Concern for the safety of their children and other family members who help on the farm led Jim to develop a number of safety innovations. (See "Saskatchewan Smarts," p. 2). Tracy's

essay makes it plain that her parents' safety-conscious attitude has been passed on. Her essay concludes:

*"The potential for problems will never be eliminated, but many things can be done to avoid them with some extra thought, time and effort on the part of the farmer and all who work with him. Farming can be a dangerous business; efforts to ensure safety are well worth it." ♦*



Dr. James Dosman; Network Steering Committee Chair, Bill Martens; Valerie, Tracy and Jim Gerspacher; and R. M. Councillor, Erwin Crone at the SARM Spring Convention

## 2002 Challenge

The Centre for Agricultural Medicine challenges rural Grade 12 students to enter the 2002 scholarship competition. Participants must plan to enter post-secondary education in the year 2002 in an agriculture or health related field of study. Application forms are available from RM Offices or the form can be downloaded at [www.usask.ca/medicine/agmedicine/aghealth/index.html](http://www.usask.ca/medicine/agmedicine/aghealth/index.html).

To enter, write a 1,000 word essay on one of the following topics: "The Importance of Safety and Health on Our Farm," "Safety and Health Hazards on Our Farm" or "What the Slogan 'Sow Safety, Harvest Life' Means to Me and My Family."

Mail the essay with your completed application form to:

**SARM 90th Anniversary Scholarship Contest  
Centre for Agricultural Medicine  
Box 120 RUH, 103 Hospital Drive  
Saskatoon, SK S7N 0W8**

Entries postmarked on or before January 4, 2002 will be eligible.

For further information or to receive an application form, contact:  
Lori Lockinger, Centre for Agricultural Medicine, Tel: (306) 966-6643,  
Fax: (306) 966-8799, E-mail: [lockinger@sask.usask.ca](mailto:lockinger@sask.usask.ca) ♦

# HAZARD ALERT!

Investigation of a tractor runover fatality has led John Deere to warn operators that the gearshift linkage on John Deere 7000 and 7010 series tractors with PowerQuad™ transmissions may be out of adjustment.

Tractor owners should contact their dealer to have new, safer parts installed. John Deere advises operators to **use the following safe operating procedure, before and after the dealer has completed adjustments:**

1. DO NOT leave tractor unattended with engine running
2. To park, position tractor on level ground, shut off engine, place gear shift in PARK and range lever in NEUTRAL.
3. To operate stationary equipment, place gearshift in PARK and range lever in NEUTRAL.

To receive a copy of the "Farmer Killed by Runover" Hazard Alert with further details from John Deere, contact:

**Occupational Health and Safety Division,  
Saskatchewan Labour**

Toll free: 1-800-567-7233 Regina  
1-800-667-5023 Saskatoon

**Walking along a country road . . .** a man comes across a farmer and a huge flock of sheep. He tells the farmer, "I will bet you \$100 against one of your sheep that I can tell you the exact size of your flock." The farmer thinks it over. It's a big flock so he takes the bet. "973," says the man. The farmer is astonished because the number is right, but he says, "OK, I'm a man of my word. Take an animal." The man picks one up and begins to walk away.

"Wait," says the farmer. Let me have a chance to get even. Double or nothing I can guess your exact occupation." The man agrees. "You are an economist for a government think tank," says the farmer. "Amazing!" responds the man. "You are correct. But



tell me, how did you deduce that?" "Well," says the farmer, "put down my dog and I will tell you." ♦

## Farm Response Courses

Learn how to act quickly and effectively in a farm emergency. For a course in your community, contact:

Lori Lockinger, Network Program Coordinator  
Tel: (306) 966-6643 Fax: (306) 966-8799  
e-mail: lockinger@sask.usask.ca



**Have you used the facts you learned in a Farm Response Course? If so, please call Lori at (306) 966-6643.**

## Thank you!

For support in publishing Network News, the Agricultural Health and Safety Network wishes to thank: **Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food**

### MOVED? PLANNING A MOVE?

Please fill out card below and send it to the above address.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

R.M.: \_\_\_\_\_ RM# \_\_\_\_\_

## Thanks to Aearo Canada Ltd.



for foam ear plugs donated to the Agricultural Health and Safety Network. Complementary plugs were issued to delegates who visited the Network display at SARM Spring Division Meetings.

## From the Editor

We welcome your comments and contributions. Send correspondence to:

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