

# The

# NETWORK News

Spring 2002



**I·A·R·E·H**  
Institute of Agricultural Rural and Environmental Health

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

## I.ARE.H Unveiled

### One-of-a-kind collaboration

SARM and the Centre for Agricultural Medicine (CAM) at the University of Saskatchewan have a long history of partnering to promote farm safety and health. In 1988, they created the Agricultural Health and Safety Network, a first of its kind in Canada.

The goal of the fledgling organization was to support the Centre's research; and, in turn, to convey the results of that research to Saskatchewan producers and their families. Six rural municipalities invited their farm families to join the Network for an annual fee of \$10 per family.

### An outstanding success

Since 1988, the Agricultural Health and Safety Network has grown steadily to one hundred and twenty RM's located in every region of the province. The annual membership fee, now paid by the RM, is \$2.90 per active farming family with a ceiling of \$1,000.

Ratepayer benefits include an annual Spring education package; Farm Response, a farm family emergency readiness course; a telephone enquiries service; respiratory and hearing screening programs on request; the opportunity to have a voice at the Network's annual meeting; and the twice yearly newsletter, *Network News*.

### Growth of CAM

In a decade and a half, the Centre has also grown. From a head count of five when it was established in 1986, the research centre now comprises eight faculty members, fifteen staff, and six graduate/post-graduate students. To reflect its broader interests and capabilities, CAM recently recast itself as a dynamic new institute designed to tackle a wider range of health and safety issues.

### New name and expanded role

The Institute of Agricultural Rural and Environmental Health (I.ARE.H) was launched in Saskatoon on November 28th at the third annual Saskatchewan Farm Injury Control Summit. The ceremony capped three days of scientific workshops celebrating CAM's 15th anniversary.

Dr. Jim Dosman, Director of the Institute, says, "I.ARE.H is a world-class locus for multi-faceted research in rural health issues. While the immediate effect of agriculture on farmers' health remains at the core of our research, there is growing recognition that simply living in rural Canada poses unique health challenges."

One researcher is studying the prevalence of asthma in rural school children and their access to appropriate care. Another researcher is working to improve the accessibility and quality of care for patients with Alzheimer's Disease in rural communities. Many safety and health issues have the potential to affect all rural residents; issues such as pesticide run-off into ground water; the environmental effects of large-scale livestock production; and the operation of farm vehicles and machinery on public roadways.

### Unique advantages

"We are a research institute with a difference," states its director. He points out advantages that will help the Institute become the world's leading authority on the health of rural, agricultural and remote people.

"I.ARE.H is located at the only Canadian university that has all five health sciences colleges - medicine, dentistry, nursing, veterinary medicine, and pharmacy and nutrition - and also an agricultural science complex of international stature."

"Beyond that," Dosman says, "we have tremendous links to the community. We have a close relationship with more than thirty foundations, cooperatives and businesses that support our work. And the Institute lies in the heart of Canada's most rural province, with 37% of its people living in rural areas and over 50,000 farm families." ♦



Masters student Josh Lawson and Faculty member Dr. Debra Morgan unveil I.ARE.H logo and mission statement.

# 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.

Jack Welsh was raised on a mixed farm near Crystal Springs, SK. He doesn't get involved in harvest much any more, but he's keen to make handling and storing grain as simple and safe as possible for farmers.

Welsh is president of the Twister™ company of Calgary, AB, the first North American company to provide caged ladders on its grain bins. Welsh says the initiative was the result of requests from offshore customers in Australia, England and Denmark.

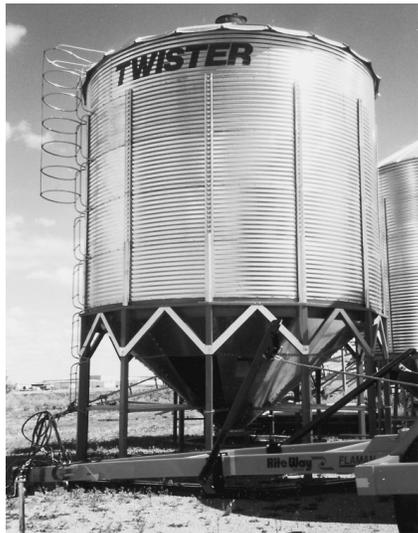
## Falls take a toll

Thirty Saskatchewan farmers a year wind up in hospital after falling from a height. And the injuries that take them there are major. As you'd expect, fractured arms and legs are common, but more serious harm can occur. Head and spinal trauma and internal injuries of the chest, pelvis and abdomen are not uncommon. Between 1990 and 1996, three Saskatchewan farmers who fell from heights died from their injuries.

These statistics were recently released by the Saskatchewan Farm Injury Surveillance Program in a report titled, "Fatal and Hospitalized Farm Injuries in Saskatchewan, 1990 - 1996." The numbers were an eye-opener. For most people the term "serious farm injury" invokes the image of a PTO entanglement or tractor rollover, but nothing as commonplace as a fall.

## Hazard location

The Saskatchewan Farm Injury Surveillance Program reports that "the most frequent location of falls from heights were grain bin roofs or ladders." This is not surprising given the increased dimensions of new grain bins. Fourteen-foot diameter hoppers can be over thirty feet in height, while nineteen and twenty-two foot diameter hoppers may stretch to over forty feet.



Caged ladder on Twister™ hopper.

## The "fall" season

While falls occur throughout the year, the Saskatchewan Farm Injury Surveillance Program reports, "A distinct peak was observed during August, September and October. This peak may reflect the increased exposure to heights such as grain bin roofs and ladders which occurs during the harvest season." Early morning and evening frost at that time of year compounds the hazard of slipping on metal surfaces.

## Who is involved?

People of all ages are involved, but falls account for one third of all hospitalized farm injuries in the 60 and older age group. Performance expectations and the simple logistics of who is there to do the job are partly to blame. Many farmers expect to do at age sixty (or seventy) what they did at thirty-five. But physical capabilities change. Like vision and hearing, sense of balance declines with age, while reaction time increases.

## Legislation

There would be a public outcry if construction, forestry or oil and gas industry workers experienced falls as frequent and severe as farmers do. In fact, employees are protected by occupational health and safety guidelines that pertain to working at heights. Ladder specifications and safe work practices for the use of ladders are outlined. Fixed ladders more than six metres (or nineteen feet) high must have platforms or cages. Fall arrest devices are required for work at heights where structural safeguards are not an option.

## Next time you buy a bin or hopper, add ladder safety to your shopping list

Twister™ offers caged ladders as an option on bins up to 22 feet in diameter and as a standard feature on larger bins. Jack Welsh says, "The incremental cost of providing the cages is very little, once the equipment to construct them has been purchased."

Other user-friendly features of Twister™ bins are the SAF-T-Fil bin level indicator and remote opening roof cap. Twister™ bins and hoppers are available through Flaman Industries in Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Southey and Yorkton.

For further information, contact Twister™ at Tel: (800) 363-9114, Fax: (403) 279-3758, E-mail: [twister@cadvision.com](mailto:twister@cadvision.com) ♦

# Farm Injury Control Summit

Martin Lesperance, firefighter, paramedic and best-selling author from Calgary AB, kicked off the third annual Saskatchewan Farm Injury Control Summit. His keynote presentation, "I Won't Be Working Today," used humour to relay the message that injuries are predictable and preventable.

Lesperance presented a Letterman-style "top ten" list of ways to stay safe, on and off the job:

- Pay attention to warning signs.
- Think about the repercussions of your actions: "How will I be affected if things go wrong?" and "How will others be affected if things go wrong?"
- Listen to your body.
- Learn from other people's mistakes.
- Drive with care.
- Protect your head.
- Beware of the weekend warrior syndrome: "The older I get the better I was."
- Watch the alcohol.
- Wear clean underwear. (Paramedics confirm your mother's advice!)
- If you notice a dangerous situation, fix it immediately.

The morning plenary session featured a Provincial 9-1-1 Update by Doug Line; Tim Hillier, on the First Responder's Program to train community volunteers in emergency response; and Patricia Lundy, on the Network's Farm Response Course to guide farm families in responding to a farm emergency.

Delegates viewed the OffGuard Photographic Exhibition, portraits and stories of farm injury survivors, before attending a luncheon to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Centre for Agricultural Medicine and the launch of its successor, I.ARE.H.

Afternoon break-out sessions featured farm safety inventions and community programs promoting farm safety and health. Delegates from 36 RM's and eleven Health Districts rated the day highly with comments like "Diversity of topics," "Fast moving" and "Even better than last year!"

The fourth annual Saskatchewan Farm Injury Control Summit will take place on December 4, 2002 at the Saskatoon Inn. ♦

# Safe Laundering of Chemical Contaminated Clothing

With spraying season around the corner, it's a good opportunity to review how to safeguard yourself from the harmful effects of pesticides and other agricultural chemicals.

The immediate effects of over-exposure to pesticides are well known - headache, dizziness, nausea and diarrhea. The long-term effects of agricultural chemicals may be more serious.

In epidemiological studies, certain tumour sites and types of tumour have been associated with farming as an occupation and/or agricultural exposures including pesticides, the group of chemicals that includes both herbicides and insecticides. Compared to the general population, farmers are at a higher risk of developing certain cancers such as prostate cancer, gastric/stomach cancer, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, leukemia and brain cancer.

Many agricultural chemicals are absorbed directly through healthy skin. Here are precautions to reduce the exposure of everyone in the family.

## Pre-Laundering Handling of Chemical Contaminated Clothing

- Remove chemical granules from cuffs and pockets outdoors in the field.
- Incinerate disposable coveralls.
- Incinerate any garment contaminated with a full-strength spill.
- Use plastic garbage bags for temporary storage of soiled clothing before washing.
- Wash protective equipment daily (hat, respirator facepiece, goggles, apron) with hot soapy water.
- Handle soiled clothing with unlined, chemical resistant gloves.
- Pre-rinse chemical contaminated clothing using one of the following methods:
  - soak in a suitable container (dump water on field)
  - spray or hose the garment outdoors, away from children and pets.
  - use the pre-soak cycle of the automatic washer.
- Pre-treat heavily soiled areas with a stain-removal product.

## Laundering Precautions

- Wash chemical contaminated work clothes separately to avoid contaminating other laundry.
- Place clothes loosely in washer - don't overcrowd them.
- Use HOT water setting (60°C/140°C) and FULL water level, even for a small load.
- Choose a heavy duty detergent (phosphate powder or liquid)

and use the full amount recommended by the manufacturer. If water is hard or clothing heavily soiled, use up to 1-1/2 times the recommended amount.

- For an oil-based emulsifiable chemical, use a laundry booster.
- Bleach and fabric softener may be used if desired.
- Use complete wash cycle (about 12 minutes)
- Re-wash clothing two or three times if heavily soiled.
- Run the empty washer through a full, hot wash/rinse cycle afterwards.
- Thoroughly line dry clothing so sunlight and air currents disperse any remaining chemical residues; and to avoid contaminating the dryer. ♦



*Protect yourself and your family from ag chemicals.*

## Canadian Agricultural Safety Week:

March 13 - 20

## 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.**

# “OffGuard” photographic exhibition visits Legislature



Farm machinery injury survivor, Bob Schmidt of Prud'homme, SK

A photographic exhibition of Saskatchewan people who have survived farm machinery accidents will be on display at the Legislative Building in Regina this summer.

The show opened at the University of Saskatchewan's Kenderdine Gallery in July 2001. It features studio quality, black and white photographs taken in kitchens, apartments, barns and machine sheds all over the province. Text panels provide a description of the incident, a personal statement by the survivor and a relevant

Saskatchewan farm injury statistic.

The “OffGuard” stories provoke both tears and chuckles - but most of all, a strong sense that farmers and their families have been left behind in the struggle to achieve workplace safety.

The show will be open to the public from June 18 to July 16 in the Cumberland Gallery at the Legislative Building, 2405 Legislative Drive, Regina. Make it a day with your family and tour the Legislature, too. Summer hours of operation are 8:00 am to 9:00 pm, seven days a week.

Single copies of the “OffGuard” catalogue are available free of charge on request from I.ARE.H. Tel: (306) 966-6647, E-mail: bidwellj@sask.usask.ca. ♦

## 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 Editor.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Town \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_  
R.M.: \_\_\_\_\_ RM# \_\_\_\_\_

## Welcome New Members!

The Agricultural Health and Safety Network is pleased to welcome the following new members:

R. M. of Mount Pleasant, #2  
R. M. of Piapot, #110  
R. M. of Fox Valley, #171  
R. M. of Langenburg, #181  
R. M. of Prairie Rose, #309  
R. M. of Mountain View, #318  
R. M. of Star City, #428  
R. M. of Turtle River, #469

## Cow Licks

1. What is a bull called when it is sleeping?
2. What do you call cattle with a sense of humour?
3. What does a yuppie cow drink?
4. How did the farmer find his lost cow?
5. What do you call a cow with no legs?
6. What do you call a cow with only its two right legs?
7. Why do cows wear bells?
8. Did you hear about the Irish cow?
9. Why did the cow stop running?
10. Where do Saskatchewan cows like to live?

- Answers to Cow Licks:**
1. A bull-dozer
  2. Laughing stock
  3. A half-calf double latte
  4. He tractor down
  5. Ground beef
  6. Lean beef
  7. Because their horns don't work
  8. It kept getting kicked out of barn(s)
  9. Because it had sore calves
  10. Moo-se Jaw, Moo-somin and Moo-enster

## From the Editor

We welcome your comments and contributions. Send correspondence to:

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