

Importance of Agriculture Safety Education

Although death rates from child and adolescent agricultural injuries have decreased by 39% in the last ten years, non-fatal injury rates have increased by 11% (Rivara, 1997). Survival after injury is not synonymous with recovery; injured youth may suffer life-long consequences in the form of permanent disability.

The four disabilities were chosen because of their prevalence among farmers and their associated economic and social outcomes. Available data support that youth are frequently injured using machinery. Tractor and power-take-off (PTO) use accounts for many of the injuries that result in permanent disability. Tractor roll-overs and falls from structures (barns, silos, etc.) may result in spinal cord injury. Becoming entangled in a PTO, either by stepping over it or getting clothing entangled, frequently results in amputation. Less frequently noticed is the subtle hearing loss that begins in childhood from exposure to noisy equipment and animals. Fifteen and 16-year-old youth who were actively involved in farm work have demonstrated mild hearing loss and early noise-induced hearing loss (Broste, et. al., 1989). The youth involved in developing these lessons brought to our attention how frequently they work in dusty areas and the coughing they experience after this farm work. Hypersensitivity pneumonitis (also known as Farmer's Lung) is destruction of lung tissue that results from repeated inhalation of organic particles. This disease begins in youth, but does not usually progress to the point of causing symptoms until the farmer is in his/her 40's and 50's.