

Hazard Alert



Forage Harvester

Hazard Summary

In fall 2021, a farmer was seriously injured while in the process of sharpening the blades on the forage harvester he was operating. To perform this task, the forage head was removed to allow the cutter blades to rotate in reverse. In an attempt to clear debris, the farmer's right hand was caught by the moving blades resulting in a serious hand injury.



Contributing Factors

The following factors contributed to this workplace incident:

- The equipment was not turned off before clearing debris.
- A push stick should have been used to clear debris from rotating blades.
- Inadequate time and attention was given to the task in order to perform it safely.

Best Practices

The following best practices found in Section 5 of the PEI Farm Safety Code of Practice - General Safety

Precautions, state:

- Ensure machinery guards are not removed until the machine is stopped and isolated with a tagged lock-out switch, and all sources neutralized.

Legislated Requirements

In Prince Edward Island, all provincially regulated workplaces, including farms, must comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Legislated requirements under the OHS Act related to this hazard include:

- Section 12(1)(a) - an employer shall ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect the occupational health and safety of persons at or near the workplace.

Recommendations

- Common hazards associated with farm equipment and machinery include pinch points, crush points, entanglement and pull in points, and shearing or cutting points.
- Ensure operators are made aware of the of the hazards by providing proper information, instruction, training and supervision prior to operating equipment.
- Identify hazardous areas on equipment and stay away from moving parts. Attach safety warning decals as needed.
- Inspect equipment regularly to ensure guards are in place and secured. Have guards designed and fitted for older machinery if needed.
- By physically and mentally fit when operating machinery, as fatigue and stress can distract from safely operating equipment. Take frequent breaks.
- Develop and follow safe work procesures for maintenance and repair of all machinery and equipment.

Before performing maintenance

- ✓ Shut off power to the equipment
- ✓ Be aware of possible stored energy left in the equipment that may suddenly release when an obstruction is cleared

During maintenance

- ✓ Follow the manufacturer's recommendations when performing maintenance
- ✓ Use a push stick to safely remove debris
- ✓ Be aware of fatigue limits that can impair judgment

