



Dairy farmer John de Leeuw is preparing to develop a lockout plan to comply with new agricultural regulations taking effect in 2005.

Lockout protects farm workers

By Jeffrey Rotin

When farmers need to brand or handle a bull, they take precautions to use restraining equipment such as a squeeze chute with a headgate and anti-kicking device. That protects workers from serious injuries if the bull makes any sudden violent movements. What they are doing, in effect, is controlling the power – or energy – of the bull.

The same principle applies to locking out machinery and equipment on a farm or ranch to prevent injuries to workers when they are clearing obstructions or doing maintenance work on the machinery. Currently there are few safety regulations on lockout in the agricultural sector. However, when the Regulations for Agricultural Operations are consolidated into the WCB Occupational Health and

Safety Regulation in January 2005, agricultural employers will be required to consider the need to isolate energy in order to protect workers.

Lockout basics

Any energy source that could activate moving parts on machinery and cause injury or death to workers is considered hazardous energy. In a farm or ranch setting the most prominent hazardous energy sources are mechanical: motor-driven equipment such as tractors, forklifts, conveyors, compressors, mixers, fans, skid loaders, augurs on feeders, and sump pumps. Farmers may also perform tasks that involve potential energy sources such as suspended, elevated, or coiled equipment, which could strike or pin them if it isn't safeguarded.

Lockout usually involves the use of a lock (or several) to render machinery or equipment inoperable. The purpose is to prevent an energy-isolating device – such as a switch, circuit breaker, or valve – from being accidentally or inadvertently operated while workers are clearing obstructions or doing maintenance on or near the machinery.

Before locking out equipment and machinery, the energy must be removed from it. This is called de-energization.

Implementing lockout can be as simple as taking the key out of the ignition of a truck or tractor or piece of equipment that you're operating (de-energize), and keeping it in your pocket (lock), or unplugging a piece of equipment from the power source.



Lockout is required if any of the following apply:

- Machinery or equipment is shut down for maintenance or repair.
- Machinery or equipment is in use for normal production and the worker is at risk of injury from movement of equipment or machinery or exposure to a source of energy if not effectively safeguarded to protect the worker from risk.
- Machinery or equipment has moving parts or exposes a worker to a source of injury if appropriate and effective safeguards are not in place to protect the worker from risk.

Steps to lockout

The Occupational Health and Safety Regulation requires an energy source to be isolated and controlled if machinery or equipment could unexpectedly activate.

Before working on machinery or equipment, apply the following five steps:

1. Identify the machinery that needs to be locked out through a hazard analysis and risk assessment.
2. Shut off the machinery or equipment. Ensure all moving parts have come to a complete stop. Be sure that shutting off the equipment does not

cause a hazard to other workers.

3. Identify and de-activate the main energy-isolating device for each energy source, for example, the master power switch.
4. Apply a personal lock to the energy-isolating device for each energy source. Ensure all parts and attachments are secured against inadvertent movement.
5. Test the lockout to make sure it is effective and to verify that each energy source has been effectively locked out. Before testing, ensure all workers are in the clear and that no hazard will be created if the lockout is not effective.

New requirements

The new lockout regulations for agriculture will take effect January 1,

2005 – when agriculture comes under the protection of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation – but will not be enforced until January 2006. This will give farmers time to become familiar with the requirements and implement lockout procedures on their equipment and machinery. During that time, if WCB safety officers visit a farm they will point out where lockout is required.

The WCB is collaborating with the Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Association (FARSHA) to educate employers and help them comply with the new regulatory requirements, which also offer protection from repetitive-strain injuries, fire and explosion hazards, pressurized-substance hazards,

Continued on page 14

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