



ANR-1262

ALABAMA A&M AND AUBURN UNIVERSITIES

Farm Safety Series

Hazards of the PTO on Farm Tractors

The power take-off (PTO) on farm tractors is an essential part of farming operations. The power transfer shaft that connects to the PTO, while essential to many farming operations, can be a safety hazard to workers in close proximity. Tractor operators are always taught to never step over a rotating PTO shaft, but to walk around the tractor instead. In an effort to save time, many workers have broken this important rule. There have been numerous farming accidents involving the PTO shaft. Clothing and long hair can easily get caught on the shaft, resulting in severe injury or death to the worker. The rotating PTO shaft has caused more farm workers to lose arms and legs than any other single farming accident.

If a worker saves 5 seconds by stepping over the PTO shaft, a total of 10 such risky maneuvers would save less than 1 minute. Keep in mind that there are

seldom any other farm workers around to turn off the PTO should an accident occur. Even if there is a worker ready to turn off the PTO, severe injury can occur in less than 3 seconds. Never be tempted to step over an operating PTO shaft; the time gained is never worth the risk.

The PTO needs to be turned off before the operator conducts any work around the tractor that requires the operator to come in close proximity with the PTO. Many farm operators have lost limbs by not following this simple rule. Clothing, such as a shirt sleeve or pants leg, can be caught by the rotating PTO, which can cause severe injury quickly.

Remember that the tractor PTO is useful, but can be extremely dangerous.



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For more information, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county's name to find the number.

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