

'Good housekeeping' a sign of good farm management



Slips and falls account for a significant percentage of accidents occurring in the farm workplace. Some of these incidents even result in fatalities.

Goodhousekeeping practices certainly pose a challenge to the farm manager. However, keeping things neat and tidy contributes to operational efficiency, as well as preventing pain and suffering.

Think about the following points next time you go to the barn or walk around the farm workplace. The need for a general clean-up may be evident.

1. Are buildings free of accumulations of trash and other objects that could start or feed a fire, cause falls, or generally get in your way.
2. Are stairs and ladders in good condition, with hand rails in place.
3. Are stairs clear of objects and slippery substances?
4. Have damaged floor boards and concrete defects been repaired?
5. Are ladder openings, hay chutes and poultry house clean-out openings protected with cages or railing?
6. Are nails removed from loose boards before the lumber is stacked?
7. Are passageways clear of tools, buckets, slippery substances, etc. that could cause falls?
8. Is building and yard lighting adequate?
9. Are light fixtures in storage areas containing combustible materials protected against breakage (i.e. explosion-proof fixtures)?
10. Is electrical wiring checked and verified as sound. Are repairs made promptly?
11. Can electrical equipment start switches be locked in the 'off' position?
12. Are portable equipment power cords and extension cords usually checked before each use?

13. Do major buildings have lightning protection systems? If so, are they checked annually to ensure proper grounding?

14. Are materials and supplies stored so that they will not fall on someone or collapse if a worker climbs on them? Stored items should not block passageways.

The Farm Safety Association has developed a series of self inspection checklists for workplace hazard assessment. This material can be very helpful for conducting 'clean up' programs, educating workers and family members, and establishing safety policy guidelines for your farm workplace.

Contact the Association's Guelph office for more information.