

TAILGATE TOPIC



TOPIC: Ladder Safety for Farm Shops and Operations (Step Ladders)

OVERVIEW: The use of step ladders in farm operations results in numerous injuries every year. By following specific procedures for the care and use of this equipment, many incidents can be avoided.

TALKING POINTS:

- The proper height ladder should be chosen to complete the work. Employees should be able to reach to the top of the trees without climbing past the third rung from the top of the ladder.
- Before use, the ladder should be inspected thoroughly to ensure it is in good condition. You should check for broken, loose, cracked, or missing parts. Rungs/steps should be in good condition and not worn smooth from use. It is important to check the spreader bar and where it connects to the ladder to ensure that bolts/rivets are not worn or loose. Rubber feet on the bottom of the legs should be in good condition.
- Mud, grease, and debris should be cleaned from the rungs before use.
- Any ladders found to have defects or in poor condition should be reported to the supervisor/crew boss and then tagged and taken out of service.
- When setting the ladder, both sides of the ladder need to be properly positioned. The spreader bar should be fully extended and locked into position. Never use a step ladder in the folded position; this could cause it to kick out.
- Before climbing, you should stand on the first step and wiggle the ladder to make sure it is not wobbly and that all four legs are in contact with the ground. The legs should be on solid ground so they won't sink.
- Always face the ladder when climbing up or down.
- Never jump from the ladder to get down.

- Do not over reach while on the ladder. Keep your body centered over the rungs. Move the ladder to get a better position to complete the task. Never step over to another area (straddle) to gain better access.
- When using tools, pre-place them on the ladder or carry them up on your belt. Get assistance if handling parts.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. It is okay to jump down from a ladder as long as it is onto flat, smooth ground. True or False. (False)
2. If you find a problem with a ladder during your inspection, what should you do? (Report it to the Supervisor and take out of service.)
3. Name the three steps in properly setting a ladder. (Set the sides all the way apart, make sure the spreader bar is fully extended, step on the first rung to check if the ladder is wobbly and on solid ground.)
4. It is okay to reach out from the ladder as long as it is securely set and you have a good hold on the ladder? True or False. (False)
5. It is okay to face away from the ladder as long as you have a good hold on the side rails. True or False. (False)

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