

The power take-off system has revolutionized agriculture since the 1930s, but the dangers have also taken their toll on farmers.

The power take-off (PTO) is a powerful and commonly used item on today's farm. Used in the right way, a PTO transfers power from a tractor to other implements like augers, mowers, and choppers. Used in the wrong way, it can maim or kill.

PTOs operate by turning at speeds of 9 or 16 rotations per second. This speed makes the PTO very dangerous. A PTO entanglement is scary because you have no time to react. Machine shields or guards covering these moving parts prevent entanglements, but can be damaged or removed for maintenance.

Young children can be extremely curious and have little fear in situations where caution should be used. The spinning of an unshielded PTO may attract children's attention. It is important that they be kept at a safe distance.

Older youth are often asked to help out around the farm. Parents play an important role on the farm as supervisors of novice machine operators. As youth become independent and accept new duties, it is the responsibility of parents to provide proper training and positive reinforcement. And remember, youth often follow the work habits of adults, whether they be positive or negative.

A few simple rules could help prevent you or you or your family members from being hurt by a PTO:

- ▶ Wear close fitting clothing
- ▶ Remove draw strings from sweatshirts and jackets
- ▶ Tie back long hair
- ▶ Be sure PTO shields are in place and in good condition
- ▶ Start and stop the PTO from the tractor seat
- ▶ Walk around, NEVER over a PTO

Don't let the PTO harm you or someone you love because it was improperly maintained or used incorrectly.

A spinning PTO can be fascinating to a child. Always keep them at a safe distance.