

**Public Health  
KYFACE KY9404301  
Date: 2 August 1994**

**To: Carl Spurlock, PhD Director and Epidemiologist  
Kentucky Department for Health Services**

**From: Tim Struttman, MSPH Kentucky FACE Investigator**

**Subject: Part-time Farmer Dies After Tractor Leaves Public Roadway and Over-  
turns**

SUMMARY

A 58 year old part-time farmer, on route to his home, was killed when the tractor he was operating ran off the road and over turned. The victim was traveling west on state route 32 at approximately 1:15 pm on Saturday May 21, 1994. The victim had just completed plowing a neighbor's vegetable garden and was driving the half mile home to his farm at the time of the incident. The right front wheel of the tractor edged off the roadway on to the narrow shoulder and over an embankment. The tractor momentum and the steep embankment caused the tractor to turn over on to the victim. The KY FACE investigator concluded that, to prevent similar occurrences tractor owners and operators should:

**\*Contact their county extension agent, local equipment dealer or equipment manufacturer to see if retro-fit rollover protection and operator restraint systems are available for this equipment.**

INTRODUCTION

On May 21, 1994, a 58 year old part-time farmer died after the tractor he was operating rolled over on top of him. On June 3, 1994, the Kentucky FACE investigator traveled to the scene. The county coroner, EMS personnel, a neighbor, the state police, and the victim's sister in law were interviewed. Photographs were taken of the scene and the tractor. Photographs taken by the coroner were also reviewed.

The victim was a part-time farmer. He had worked full time as a carpenter for 16 years and farmed part-time. He purchased the Ford 601 Work Master tractor about five years prior to the incident. The tractor was not equipped with ROPS. He used the tractor primarily to plow his vegetable garden.

INVESTIGATION

The victim completed plowing a neighbor's garden about 1:00 pm on Saturday. He drove the 1953 Ford tractor, with plows attached, Westward on State Route 32 to return to his house. About 500 feet from his farm driveway, the tractor's right front wheel left the roadway. The rear wheel followed and the tractor went down a 33 degree slope along the edge of the road. The tractor turned over one half turn, wheels in the air, and came to rest on the victim. The victim was found lying with his head underneath his chest and the tractor seat on his left shoulder blade. The incident was not witnessed.

The first persons at the scene pushed the tractor over making a complete rotation the rest of the way. No pulse or respirations were noted. Emergency Medical Services was called at 1:26 pm. At 1:45 the coroner arrived and pronounced the victim dead. An autopsy was not performed.

Road conditions were dry, clear, smooth black top. Road surface measured 20 feet across plus 1.5 feet on each side as shoulder. The embankment sloped 33 degrees downward from the edge of the road. No obstacles were present. The sun was shining and about 85 degrees. No other vehicles interfered with the tractor.

The tractor was a 1953 Ford 601 Work Master with fluid filled tires. The brakes and clutch worked the day of investigation. The hour meter read 9001.0 The tractor was equipped with a brush guard. A single plow was attached to the three point hitch. The wheel base measured 80 inches. Front and rear tires were spread to the same distance (53 inches) The tractor was not equipped with roll over protection nor did it have a Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) sticker.

## RECOMMENDATIONS/DISCUSSIONS

Recommendation #1: Tractor owners and operators should contact their county extension agent, local equipment dealer, or equipment manufacturer to see if retro-fit rollover protection and operator restraint systems are available for this equipment.

Discussion #1: The tractor in this incident, manufactured in 1953 was not equipped with a ROPS or an operator restraint system, which protect operators in the event of a roll over. These safety features were not required on tractors until 1976, when OSHA standard Number 1928.51 went into effect. This standard is applicable in work places where an employer-employee relationship exists. However, the majority of agricultural operations are exempt because they employ less than 11 employees. Since 1985 manufacturers have voluntarily equipped new farm tractors with ROPS. Retro-fit ROPS and operator restraint systems are available for some older model tractors. Tractor owners should contact dealers, manufacturers or county extension agents for information about ROPS sources. Additionally, tractors that are used on public highways should have a

SMV sticker.

#### REFERENCES

Standard Number 1928.51 Subpart C US Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration, OSHA CD-ROM (OSHA A94-2) February 1994.

US Department of Health and Human Services, PHS Center for Disease Control and Prevention NIOSH UPDATE January 29, 1993

National Safety Council Data Sheet 1-622 Reaf. 85 1978.

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FATALITY ASSESSMENT AND CONTROL EVALUATION PROGRAM

The Kentucky Department for Health Services through cooperative agreement with the University of Kentucky Department of Emergency Medicine and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), conducts investigations on the causes of work-related fatalities. The goal of this program, known as the Kentucky Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (KY FACE) is to prevent future fatal workplace injuries. KY FACE aims to achieve this goal by identifying and studying the risk factors that contribute to workplace fatalities, by recommending intervention strategies, and by disseminating prevention information to employers and employees.

KY FACE also collaborates with engineering, occupational and preventive medicine, and agricultural engineering faculty at the University of Kentucky to identify technological solutions to the hazards associated with workplace fatalities.

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Additional information regarding this report is available from:

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