



FARM AND HOME SAFETY workshops and rescue demonstrations are performed all over the state for rescue workers, farmers, school children, medical technicians, and firefighters. The programs, led by program coordinator Dale Dobson, often include dramatic mock-rescue demonstrations that are riveting for the general public and good instructional practice for the professional rescuers.

FARM AND HOME SAFETY IS A LONG-STANDING KDA PRIORITY

Fatalities fall further as safety program continues

Nothing is as valuable to Kentucky agriculture as the farmer, and one of the main priorities of the Department of Agriculture is a reduction in the number of farm-related deaths.

The occupation of farming exposes farmers and their families to the hazards associated with livestock, machinery, tools and chemicals daily.

From 1983 through 1991, 396 Kentuckians died as a result of farming accidents. In 1997 alone, 21 full-time farmers and another 10 part-time or retired farmers lost their lives through farming accidents in the Bluegrass state.

Three years ago, Agriculture Commissioner Billy Ray Smith established a Farm and Home Safety Program and hired as its coordinator Dale Dobson. A lifelong Larue County dairy farmer who has devoted several years and countless hours toward farm and home safety programs, Dobson is state certified in the areas of emergency medical technician, rescue and fire fighting.

Dobson travels the state, putting on education programs for groups as diverse as school students, farm organizations and veteran rescue workers.

Dobson's motivation is very personal. Having found his own father entangled by a PTO shaft, Dobson is highly qualified both by training and experience to teach rescuers how to save farmers from an accident involving machinery.

He also teaches rescuers how to take apart farm machinery in order to extricate an accident victim. Sometimes, he said, it may be better and faster to take apart a piece of machinery rather than cut into it.

The number of Kentucky farming-related

Dobson's motivation to spread the gospel of farm safety is highly personal: He once rescued his father from entanglement in a PTO shaft. Farm deaths were down again in 2000, 19 percent lower than the previous year.

deaths fell 19 percent in 2000 compared with the previous year. Seventeen people died in farming accidents in 2000, down from 21 in 1999 and 65 percent lower than the recent high of 48 deaths in 1995. Of those 17 people, 13 were 50 years old and over, and four were 80 and over. None were younger than 20.

Dobson's ultimate goal, he said, is zero farm fatalities.

Farm equipment remains the leading cause of farming-related deaths. In 2000, equipment caused more deaths (nine) than all other incidents combined.

Now available, both in print and online on the Department of Agriculture's Web site (www.kyagr.com), is a fill-in-the-blank emergency planner for the farm and home that might save a life during a time when every second counts. The checklist serves as a written emergency plan that, when time counts, will give the farmer a by-the-book, prioritized guide to avoid injury or perhaps even death.

To schedule an appearance by Dobson or for a printed copy of the safety plan, contact KDA's Division of Public Relations and Communications at (502) 564-4696. The plan may be downloaded from the Web site.