



Answers to questions about structures, ventilation, soil, water, waste, energy, machinery and safety.

Review those owners manuals

A large percentage of farm work accidents occur early in the spring. That's because workers lose familiarity with their equipment when they haven't used it for several months. Now is the time to pull out the owners manuals for your tractors and machinery and refresh your memory on how they work and the safety features they possess. Expect your children and hired help to study these manuals as well. Make time to answer any questions they have and provide hands-on training as needed.

I've found it useful over the years to put these manuals next to the chair where I relax, or use them for bedtime reading material. I constantly relearn about equipment features I'd forgotten about.

Another useful tool is a notebook and pencil located in the toolbox on each piece of motorized equipment. Use these notebooks to log any items needing repair on the equipment. Some breakdowns need fixing immediately, but many items can wait until overhaul time. You'll be amazed at how long the list can get after the whole season.

At overhaul time, these notebooks become invaluable in building a good preventative maintenance program because you'll have flagged potential breakdowns that otherwise would have been forgotten until the part actually broke. You'll also be able to build an inventory of parts, such as belts, bearings and shear pins, that fail most often, thus reducing expensive downtime during your busy season.