

Case 355. 46-year-old beef cattle farmer died when he fell from the blade of a John Deere HLT bulldozer and was run over when the bulldozer moved forward.

A 46-year-old beef cattle farmer died when he fell from the blade of a John Deere HLT bulldozer and was run over when the bulldozer moved forward. The decedent, two family members and two contractors were working together to replace damaged weather curtains on a cattle barn. The 30-foot wide by 450-foot long cattle barn had a metal roof and open framing (no permanent walls). Running the entire length of the east side of the building there was a short (approximately 2-foot high) cement retaining wall. The incident occurred on the east side of the building. Utilizing a John Deere HLT bulldozer to work from, the decedent and his work crew were installing replacement curtains that had been damaged. The tarp-like curtains were approximately 50- to- 60-feet in length and had an aluminum pole at the base so they could easily be rolled up or down based on the weather. The curtains were installed by nailing them to the barn's header with 2x4s. The decedent positioned the bulldozer parallel to the barn. He left the operator's seat with the engine running and the parking brake disengaged. He stood on the 8-foot wide, 36-inch tall blade to hold up and nail new curtains in place. One of his family members and one contracted employee were inside the barn holding up the curtain to be nailed in place. The other contracted employee was standing on the bulldozer's fender near the operating controls. It was unknown if the bulldozer slipped into gear or was bumped causing it to lurch forward. The decedent lost his balance and fell between the blade and track. He was run over before the dozer could be stopped. Emergency response was called and he was declared dead at the scene.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued **one Serious** citation at the conclusion of its investigation.

Serious: MICHIGAN OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT, ACT 154, P.A. 1974, AS AMENDED, SECTION 11 (a):

The employer did not furnish to each employee employment, and a place of employment, which was free from recognized hazards that were causing, or were likely to cause, death or serious physical harm to the employee:

(In that the employee left the engine running and did not engage the parking brake, then climbed onto the top of the blade of John Deere 650HLT bulldozer as means to gain elevation at the Cattle Barn).

Among one feasible and acceptable method to correct this violation would be to utilize aerial devices or erect a compliant scaffolding system for employees to perform barn maintenance and/or repairs at heights more than 16 inches.