

**Case 371. 52-year-old tractor trailer driver died when he was struck by the pup trailer of another semi when maneuvering in a sugar beet field.**

A 52-year-old tractor trailer driver died when he was struck by the pup trailer of another semi (Truck 1) when maneuvering in a sugar beet field. The operator of a Terra Felis 2 was loading tractor trailers with sugar beets already harvested and placed in rows. The incident occurred at night and there was no auxiliary lighting in the field. Tractor Trailer 1 (TT 1) and Tractor Trailer 2 (TT 2) were in the field facing south, waiting to be loaded when the decedent arrived. TT 1 had its headlights off so the lights would not blind the Terra Felis 2 and a north-facing tractor trailer (Tractor Trailer 3 – TT 3) being loaded. Sugar beet samples were obtained for each tractor trailer load. Usually, there was an employee of the sugar beet growers present, but this employee had left the field to get fuel. The driver of TT 3 did not know how to obtain the samples, so the driver of TT 2 went to the Terra Felis 2 to get the sample items and took them to TT 3's driver. TT 2's driver went back to the Terra Felis 2 and watched the operator finish topping off TT 3 trailers. After TT 3 was full and had pulled away, TT 1's driver turned on the headlights, pulled straight ahead, and then looped around to the left to travel north to the loading position. The Terra Felis 2 operator loaded the front (lead) trailer from the truck's passenger side. When the lead trailer was loaded, the conveyor boom of the Terra Felis 2, equipped with auxiliary spot lights, swung to load the second "pup" trailer. As the conveyor boom swung, its auxiliary lights shown out into the field in the direction of where TT 1 looped around prior to being loaded. The driver of TT 2 and the operator of the Terra Felis 2 noticed a body lying in the field. The Terra Felis operator investigated and reported back to call for emergency response. The sheriff noted blood evidence on TT 1 driver's side of the second trailer 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> axle tires. The decedent was not wearing a reflective vest at the time of the incident.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following Serious citations to the decedent's employer at the conclusion of its investigation:

**SERIOUS:** FARM FIELD EQUIPMENT (REF 408.45301), AG PART 53, RULE 1928.57(a)(6):

At the time of initial assignment and at least annually thereafter, the employer shall instruct every employee in the safe operation and servicing of all covered equipment with which he is or will be involved, including at least the following safe operating practices:

- 1) Keep all guards in place when the machine is in operation;
- 2) Permit no riders on farm field equipment other than persons required for instruction or assistance in machine operation;
- 3) Stop engine, disconnect the power source, and wait for all machine movement to stop before servicing, adjusting, cleaning, or unclogging the equipment, except where the machine must be running to be properly serviced or maintained, in which case, the

employer shall instruct employees as to all steps and procedures which are necessary to safely service or maintain the equipment;

4) Make sure everyone is clear of machinery before starting the engine, engaging power, or operating the machine;

5) Lock out electrical power before performing maintenance or service on farmstead equipment.

A tractor trailer driver working in a sugar beet field did not receive adequate training in the safe practices during field loading operations, including making sure everyone, including himself, is clear of moving tractor and trailers and to exercise additional caution when loading and hauling operations take place during low light or dark conditions. Incident occurred on farm field near *(specific location removed)* MI, on the evening of *(specific date removed)* 2014, where a tractor-trailer owned by *(specific company name removed)*, ran over an employee of *(specific company name removed)*. *(MIFACE removed identifying information from this citation)*.