



**F**atality  
**A**ssessment &  
**C**ontrol  
**E**valuation

## Prevention through comprehensive research and investigation

### INVESTIGATION/RESEARCH

### CASE# 03MI202: SLIPPERY CLUTCH PEDAL

- In 2003, 87-year-old male farmer died while backing his Oliver Super 77 tractor with an attached 5-foot cut rotary mower into a storage area in an old barn. Running the length of the storage area was an enclosed round feed auger, which was 71 inches from the ground.
- It is likely that the left rear tractor wheel tire traveled over a portion of a doorframe on the ground and raised the tractor.
- Victim ducked his head to avoid the ceiling beam or he did hit his head on the barn beam and then had difficulty engaging the clutch to stop the tractor.
- Sitting in the tractor seat, he was pinned between the enclosed auger and the tractor steering wheel.

### IN ORDER TO PREVENT SIMILAR INCIDENTS IN THE FUTURE

- Consider adding roughness to smooth clutch or brake pedals by using a 4-inch portable grinder or welding a bead of metal on the pedal, or cover the pedal with a non-slip surface for added foot pedal control.
- Use boots or shoes with aggressive tread to help maintain contact on worn-smooth clutch and brake pedals on older tractors with no aggressive pedal surfaces.
- Keep floor areas where equipment is stored clear of objects that might impede the positioning of stored equipment.
- When available, retrofit an older tractor with a rollover protective structure.
- Agricultural equipment operators should recognize the potential human factor limitations of advanced age.
- Consider carrying a reliable 2-way communication device for emergency communication in case of injury and emergency situations.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- 33 Michigan agricultural sector work-related deaths occurred in 2003
- 21 of 33 deaths were tractor-related
- 15 of 33 deaths were to victims over 60 years of age
- A ROPS/seat belt for an Oliver 77 tractor is listed as available in the ROPS directory
- Half of the farm tractors in the US don't have a ROPS
- FRS radio operation does not require a FCC license (GMRS or FRS/GMRS radio operation does require a FCC license)

Full MIFACE investigation report #03MI202  
[www.chm.msu.edu/oem](http://www.chm.msu.edu/oem). Click on MIFACE icon

Find out if your tractor can be equipped with a ROPS:  
[www.marshfieldclinic.org/nfmc/rops/default.htm](http://www.marshfieldclinic.org/nfmc/rops/default.htm)

Find out about 2-way portable communication units:  
<http://wireless.fcc.gov/services/personal/family/>

8/7/04

**TO REPORT A NEW WORKPLACE  
FATALITY TO MIOSHA**

**1.800.858.0397**

**MICHIGAN FATALITY ASSESSMENT &  
CONTROL EVALUATION**

**INFORMATION: 1.517.353.1846  
E-MAIL: [debra.chester@ht.msu.edu](mailto:debra.chester@ht.msu.edu)**