Death by Strangulation

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A cattle farmer died from strangulation that resulted when his loose clothing caught in the rotating shaft of a conveyor belt.

The fatality occurred while the 53-year-old victim was in the feed shed adding cracked corn to ground corn that was then taken by conveyor belt to the outside feed bunk and a herd of 182 beef cattle.

The conveyors and controls in the shed were set up in a way that required the farmer to crouch down and crawl under the feed bunk conveyor several times during each feeding cycle. It was while ducking under the three-foot-high conveyor that the collar of his coat became caught in the exposed rotating shaft. The rotating shaft was one of many unguarded and dangerous pieces of equipment at the farm.

This victim was one of two (in 12 days) who died when his clothing became entangled in exposed rotating silage conveyor pulley shaft ends. The two nearly identical incidents illustrate why farmers and other lone workers must take extra precautions to ensure their safety including wearing appropriate clothing and keeping a two-way radio or cell phone within arm's reach. Clothing and accessories that could become tangled in equipment, including frayed or loose-fitting clothing, dangling drawstrings or jewelry should never be worn.

Source: Iowa Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program, Case Report: 04IA060