

Cell Phones

A recent investigation of a truck roll-over accident revealed that the driver had sent 71 text messages during the day prior to the accident. Cell phones have become a big safety issue and driving hazard for our industry.



The end result of texting while driving. Decided not to show the photo of the driver who was cut in half with the cell phone in his hand.

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Cell Phone (continued)

Within the next two weeks you will be receiving a letter from the Meadowbrook/Star Loss Control Department. The letter will outline the company position on cell phone usage.

The best company policy that I have reviewed comes from a harvester in Minnesota. There will be one cell phone in the field at all times. That cell phone will be carried by the boss or field foreman. All other cell phones must be left in the bunk house during the work day. Anyone can call the field cell phone and messages will be given to employees.

If you are unwilling to take the cell phones out of your employee's hands during the work day, please enforce at least the following minimum standards: 1) No text messages sent. 2) No phone calls made or received while operating trucks or equipment.

A possible compromise—cell phones are kept in service truck and are allowed to be used during lunch breaks or other down time.

A side benefit to limiting cell phone usage—employees do not get as homesick. They are not constantly bombarded by messages about the parties and activities of their friends back home.

The distraction to safe operation of vehicles and equipment caused by cell phone usage has increased our claims count. It is not easy to take them out of your employee's hands, but safety may demand it. Obviously, it is much easier to enforce this rule if it is announced prior to hiring, or at the very least, prior to leaving for harvest. You need a cell phone policy before the lack of a plan causes a serious accident.

A hole has been found in the nudist camp wall. The police are looking into it.

The short fortune-teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.

Atheism is a non-prophet organization.

The roundest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.

New Immigration Policy

In a newspaper article released March 31, 2009, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials confirmed that DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano will order federal agents to target **employers** for arrest and prosecution rather than the workers who are in the country illegally. This change is keeping pace with comments made by President Barack Obama in his 2008 campaign in which he stated that past enforcement efforts have failed because they focused on illegal immigrants, rather than those who hired them.

For Florida citrus growers, this change means your concern for workforce stability should now shift to a concern for accurate employee records. Continuing to follow current labor laws and having required documentation readily available for government inspection is critical to your business under this new policy. You must have the new I-9 for and all applicable records on file.

(info provided by Citrus Mutual Newsletter and CHAPP newsletter)

She was only a whisky maker, but he loved her still.

A small boy swallowed some coins and was taken to a hospital. When his grandmother telephoned to ask how he was, a nurse replied, "No change yet."

A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.

Safety Tip from RT

End your worries about whether everything is getting properly greased. Purchase a 12 volt, battery-operated grease gun and double the hose length. The service procedure will be so much easier that your operators will gladly hit all the zerts every morning in the daily maintenance ritual.

I was wondering why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me.

When cannibals ate a missionary, they got a taste of religion.

A rubber band gun was confiscated in algebra class because it was a weapon of math disruption.

Header Claims

Last year was a disaster for headers and it looks from my chair like this year is brewing up the perfect storm for more of the same. Last year we experienced more header claims than in the prior 2 years combined and the cost tripled.

Now we are hearing reports of 10-15 bushel wheat that must be cut in Texas and Oklahoma to satisfy crop insurance demands. Of course the wheat is only 14 inches tall. So combines are going to cover the ground at the fastest speed possible with the header 3 inches off the ground.

Plus, I was looking at the new John Deere header and notice that the yellow guide bar at the end of the header is mounted on its usual spot on the snout. BUT, there is almost 2 feet of header sticking out beyond the guide bar—just waiting to take out fence posts, telephone poles and irrigation risers.

Additionally, because of low yields and need for speed, more of you are traveling between fields with the header mounted. That practice worked better when the headers were 20 feet wide—36 foot headers sure find a lot of things to hit while being roaded—mail boxes, bridge signs, even trees.

So please help out—most experienced operator will open all fields—I prefer to see the boss do it. Do not road equipment with header in place. Transfer liability risk to property owner for irrigation risers and well pipes by requiring the landowner to flag all obstructions in the field. Don't harvest fields in rock country which have not been rolled.

You have probably noticed that there are NO headers around to buy right now. If you wreck yours, that combine is going to be out of service. While it will be hard to turn down work early this year, be selective. If you lose your header, you will lose a lot more work than just that one job.

Two silk worms had a race. They ended in a tie.

The man who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran

Loss Report

The following losses have been reported since March 1, 2009. Seems like a lot of claims for this time of year.

IV turned sharply into gas station; bumper caught CV and pushed it into 2nd CV

Loading combine and it tipped over, falling on and crushing a header trailer

Truck fire of unknown origin

Back axle collapsed on combine. Cause unknown

Hit and Run on parked trailer

Backed Pickup **and** trailer into CV

Drove off edge of road and struck concrete bunker

Hail damage to 99 Pete

Goat leaving grove struck on-coming CV

CV talking on cell phone did not see IV stop and stop sign and drove into ditch to avoid collision

IV doing u-turn struck by CV

IV **backed** into utility pole

Tractor/trailer rig driving through construction zone, lost control on rough road, over-corrected and struck CV head-on

Cow collision caused truck/trailer to roll spilling load of fertilizer

96 Freightliner stolen

Sign on the lawn at drug rehab center: Keep off the Grass

Don't join dangerous cults: Practice Safe sects!

No matter how much you push the envelope, it will still be stationery

Final Word

Grain harvest season is upon us—citrus harvest is almost completed. Give thanks for the work that is available, don't over-stress on the jobs that have been lost to weather. There will be work—you may have to do things that you have not tried before.

Be safe. Stay focused on the task of safely providing for your family and employees.

