RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Social Marketing of Power Take-Off Shields

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Purpose/Objective:
On farms, machinery entanglements are among the top three causes of work-related injury. Power take-off (PTO) injuries make up the largest subset of these entanglement events. With 60% of PTO entanglements leading to non-fatal injuries, and a large portion of amputations, these injuries are not only costly to the medical system, but can also lead to life-long disability.

Past efforts aimed at encouraging farmers to replace damaged and missing PTO shields have not been considerably successful. The current intervention initiative will utilize social marketing practices to motivate farmers to replace missing and damaged PTO shields.

Methods/Efforts:
To effectively establish a social marketing campaign, researchers must have a thorough understanding of the target population’s views on PTO shielding. In order to achieve this understanding, 38 qualitative interviews were conducted to identify the barriers and motivators to replacing PTO shields. In addition, phone surveys were conducted to identify the populations in which a social marketing intervention would be most useful. On-farm audits were conducted to determine the accuracy of the telephone surveys and confirm the rate of shielding in New York.

Results from the qualitative interviews were used to develop 14 print messages. Ten focus groups were held to gather feedback on these messages. In addition, marketing strategies were tested in a separate, written survey. Results from these surveys will be used to finalize promotional materials and strategies for use in a PTO shielding social marketing campaign.

Results/Findings:
Previous negative experiences with PTO shields have limited farmers’ interest in shielding. High cost, low durability, and difficulty of use are the most prominent reasons why PTO shields are often not replaced.

Telephone surveys with 1,014 New York farmers suggested that 90% of farm implements were adequately shielded. On-farm audits of PTO equipment on roughly 200 farms, however, demonstrated that only 56% of 1,480 implements were adequately shielded. Shielding rates were fairly consistent between different commodities and farm sizes.

Using concept development focus groups, four top messages were selected for the final social marketing campaign. Marketing surveys have also suggested that farmers prefer to use the method of purchase currently available which involves calling a toll-free hotline to order parts. Together, conclusions from the concept testing and marketing surveys will be used to formulate final messages.

Application to Field Research:
Though the social marketing campaign has not yet been implemented, researchers have gained a wealth of knowledge about PTO shields and the decision to install them. Ideally, this information will be useful in identifying ways to motivate farmers to replace PTO shields.

This research is intended to identify and address the key barriers and motivators to installing PTO shields. Ideally, this campaign will encourage farmers to shield PTO drivelines, thereby making PTO entanglements less likely. In turn, this will result in reduced risk of fatal and non-fatal injury on farms.