Tractor Hitching – Tow Chain Best Practices Fatality File



Ranch Employee Dies After Being Struck By Trailer

On October 28, 2003, an employee was towing a livestock trailer (Stoll Trailer, Model Number STGT, gross vehicle weight: 16,000 pounds) with a farm tractor (Zetor Tractor, Model Number 4340). The tractor was equipped with a front-end bucket, and had a tow hitch attachment located in the rear. The tow hitch attachment had a metal ball hitch onto which the trailer connected, but it did not have any attachment points in order to secure the safety chains of the trailer. The safety chains were secondary securing devices to hold the trailer in place in case the trailer became disconnected from the metal ball hitch.

While the employee was traveling on a dirt road, he inadvertently lowered the front-end bucket, which contacted the ground. The farm tractor suddenly stopped, and the tractor's rear end lifted in the air. The livestock trailer came off the tow hitch, and the trailer tongue rammed into the tractor and the back of the employee's seat.

The trailer tongue severed the employee's right foot, and crushed him against the steering wheel of the tractor. The employee was taken to a hospital, where he later died during surgery. The Medical Examiner's report listed the cause of death as being due to blunt force trauma to the chest and abdomen. The employee suffered fractured ribs and other internal injuries.

Source: *Osha.gov*