

DAWG TRACKS SAFETY NEWSLETTER

MS Agricultural & Forestry Experiment Station
MSU Extension Service



Crazy how fast last year went by and that we now have to remember to write the numbers 2026!

When starting fresh after the holidays, take a little time to reflect on last year's accomplishments while recognizing processes and tasks that could use improvement.

Ask yourself or even discuss with your group of co-workers:

- What worked great and needs repeating?
- Do you have adequate tools to work with?
- Is time lost looking multiple places for a single item?
- Are you working on equipment/facility more than using it?
- Is there something you need to learn so your job tasks are more efficient or safer?

Avoid going down the road of just complaining when reflecting; start the year with a positive mindset. Come up with solutions, workable options, not just problems.

- What are the resources you have available?
- Who is there & willing to help?
- Get ideas from other universities, companies, or trades with similar hurdles?

A wise person once said, "Learn from the mistakes of others, you can't live long enough to make them all yourself." So in light of that, let's look at five types of accidents that occurred multiple times within DAFVM in 2025 & how to help avoid them in 2026.

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1. **FALLS** – Usually not from heights for DAFVM, thankfully, but still not good from ground level. Folks slipped in the mud and on wet floors, got tangled up in markers in the field, were tripped up by rugs and holes, and simply misstepped along sidewalks and stairs.
 - ✓ Footwear that fits the job task & conditions.
 - ✓ Drainage mats around sinks or wet interior spaces.
 - ✓ Pre-planned clear, escape routes.
 - ✓ Maintain pathways & watch your step, not your phone.
2. **STRAINS** – Mostly backs and a few shoulder pains came from frequent rides in rough conditions and picking up/pushing/pulling heavy items alone.
 - ✓ Take frequent breaks & improve ergonomics.
 - ✓ Get help from another person or use equipment.
3. **DEBRIS IN EYE** – Suspecting this occurs more often than reported, it's usually from material getting blown around – potting soil, harvest debris, sawdust.
 - ✓ Position yourself or equipment discharge away from yourself.
 - ✓ Wear safety glasses, with foam edges.
4. **CUTS & PUNCTURES** – Yes knives, but don't forget all the fish research and their fins.
 - ✓ Use a sharp knife & cut away from your body.
 - ✓ Handle objects that can potentially cut or puncture with a tool/equipment or wear appropriate gloves.
5. **KICKS & BITES** – Cows and wildlife are the animals around here that quickly cause injury to their handlers.
 - ✓ Keep the animal minimally stressed.
 - ✓ Follow procedures & protocol.
 - ✓ Restrain, restrict, & have an escape route for yourself.