

New season dawns for farm safety

ESSENTIAL Energy has launched a safety campaign to promote safe agriculture practices around electricity to ensure farm workers return home safely to their families at the end of each work day.

To assist property owners to make their farms power safe, Essential Energy has a free agriculture safety kit available online, including fact sheets, safety stickers and a practical instructional electrical safety DVD urging workers to exercise extreme caution near overhead powerlines.

Essential Energy's regional general manager South Eastern region, Phillip Green, said awareness and preventative actions were crucial to minimis-

ing the level of risk associated with farming near electricity.

"This safety campaign will raise awareness of safe work habits and reduce the number of electrical incidents on the farm," Mr Green said. "After all, your family is the reason why you go to work each day – be safe, because they need you."

Essential Energy recommends assigning an onsite safety observer to each work team to guide machinery movements near overhead powerlines.

"Take caution when operating machinery measuring more than 4.6 metres in height as it has a high risk of making contact with overhead powerlines or electricity arcing to the

machine.

"These situations must be closely monitored to ensure minimum approach distances are maintained," Mr Green said.

"We also advise using caution when excavating as underground powerlines are often buried just 500mm below the surface."

Essential Energy recommends installing appropriate signage and visual indicators such as flag markers to warn workers on your farm of the presence of overhead powerlines.

Flag markers can be supplied and installed by Essential Energy for a small fee.

Farmers and workers can download Essential Energy's Electricity and Agriculture fact sheet

and practical instructional safety DVD free online or order safety stickers via the online form at www.essentialenergy.com.au.

If machinery does contact overhead powerlines or power poles, contact Essential Energy immediately on 13 20 80.

Essential Energy is the operator of Australia's largest electricity network spanning 95 per cent of New South Wales' land mass. Owned by the New South Wales Government, Essential Energy employs around 4,600 people and also provides water and sewerage services to customers in far western New South Wales.



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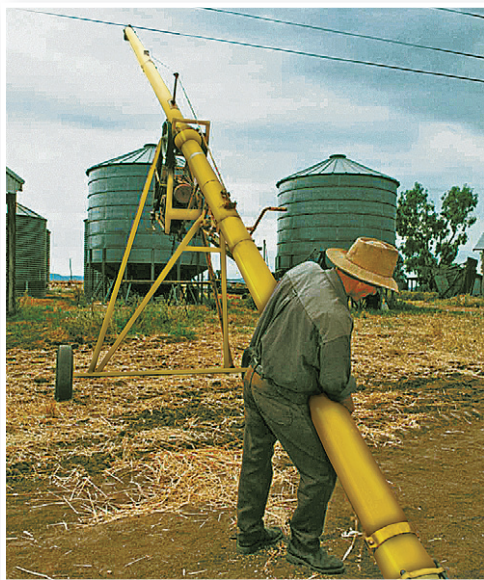
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LOOK UP: A farmer moving an auger, aware of the overhead powerlines on the property.