Round Bale Rolls And Crushes Rancher



A rancher died from suffocation and internal injuries received when he was crushed by a round hay bale. The 1,000-pound (453-kilogram) bale rolled out of the front-end loader bucket mounted on the tractor he was driving. The tractor was not equipped with a general purpose enclosed cab, rollover protective structure or seatbelt. The victim was attempting to back the tractor with the front-end loader elevated when the hay bale came off the bucket and rolled onto him. A witness called for help and assembled several men and another tractor to remove the hay bale approximately 40 minutes after the incident occurred. An ambulance arrived approximately 15 minutes later and took the victim to a hospital 24 miles (39 kilometers) from the scene, where he was pronounced dead.

The investigators advice applies to farms and many other workplaces:

- Follow manufacturer’s recommendations and safe work practices when operating equipment.
- Only use equipment that is designed for its intended use and properly maintained in a safe condition.
- Ensure that tractors are equipped with rollover protective structures (ROPS) and seatbelts.
- Inspect work areas and equipment before performing a task to identify actual and potential hazards and determine adequate controls.
- Make use of safety training materials and opportunities.