FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**[Co-op Name] urges farmers to take time to reap safe harvest**

[CO-OP HEADQUARTERS CITY] – It is an exciting and exhausting time, the culmination of a season of hard work. However, the rush to harvest can also yield tragic outcomes. Each year, dozens of farm workers are killed and hundreds are injured in accidents involving power lines and electrical equipment.

“Things get very busy this time of year on the farm, and it is all too easy to forget the danger that may be just overhead,” says [CO-OP SPOKESPERSON OR SAFETY COORDINATOR].

Review with all workers the farm activities that take place around power lines. Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance. Keep equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines – above, below and to the side – a 360-degree rule.

“Take the time to lower grain augers before moving them, even if it’s only a few feet,” says [LAST NAME]. “Also use extreme caution when raising booms or buckets on equipment.”

[CO-OP NAME] encourages farm workers to take these steps to ensure a safer harvest season:

* Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
* Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines. Do not let the spotter touch the machinery while it is being moved anywhere near power lines.
* As with any outdoor work, be careful not to raise any equipment such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination.
* Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path!
* Don’t use metal poles to break up bridged grain inside bins. Know where and how to shut off the power in an emergency.
* Use qualified electricians for work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

Operators of farm equipment or vehicles must also know what to do if the vehicle comes in contact with a power line: Stay on the equipment, warn others to stay away and call 911. Do not get off the equipment until the utility crew says it is safe to do so.

“If the power line is energized and you step outside, high-voltage could flow through your body,” [LAST NAME] said. “Stay inside the vehicle unless there’s fire or imminent risk of fire.”

If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together, without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment. Some electrocutions have occurred after the operator dismounts and, realizing nothing has happened, tries to get back on the equipment.

It is very important that all farm workers and seasonal employees are informed of electrical hazards and trained in proper procedures to avoid injury.

For other tips on how to be safe around electricity visit [CO-OP URL OR www.everydaysafe.org] or call the efficiency experts at [CO-OP NAME AND NUMBER].

[CO-OP NAME] is a consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric utility that serves more than [METER COUNT] meters in [COUNTIES SERVED]. Learn more about [CO-OP NAME] at [URL].

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