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# Illinois Farmer Injured in Lime Accident

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An Illinois farmer who was hurt unloading lime says he's lucky to have escaped greater injury.

Randy Sims had his morning all planned out.

Haul a load of corn. Get new tires on the semi. Pick up a load of lime. Unload the lime. Head home for lunch.

"I never got home to lunch," Sims said.

Instead he spent three days in Blessing Hospital in late July with a

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broken collarbone, bumps and bruises. He continues to recover after the truck and trailer he was driving tipped over while unloading the lime.

"I was sitting still in the truck, and evidently it knocked me out," the Liberty, Ill., farmer said. "I remember watching lime come out the back end. The next thing I know (my son) Darren is yelling at me."

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After unloading lime hundreds of times at the same spot in past the years without incident, father and son never expected a problem.

It's a reminder that accidents can and do happen on the farm.

Sims was one of the lucky ones.

"I'm going to be OK," he said. "Everything will be back to normal. That's the good news."

Statewide, farm-related deaths increased after experiencing record lows last year, according to Country Financial, the top insurer of Illinois farms. Twenty-one people died in farm-related incidents, with tractor rollovers or runovers claiming nine, from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014, and most victims were over age 50.

National Farm Safety and Health Week, which kicks off Sunday, focuses on a theme of "Safety Counts: Protecting What Matters." It's an annual effort to keep farm families, workers and everyone involved in agriculture safe and healthy heading into the busy harvest season.

"We need to continue to promote and evaluate effective means to reduce the injury rate," said Bob Aherin, professor and program leader at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in a release.

"Fatigue is a significant issue, as are the effects of medications on reaction time. We also need to encourage older farmers to operate tractors with ROPS (rollover protection structures) when doing activities that have a high rollover risk, such as mowing roadsides, ditches and fields with significant slopes."

Even routine farm tasks can carry unexpected risks.

"I don't know what I could have done any different," Sims said. "You've just got to be prepared at any time for anything."

On July 29, Sims had hoisted the trailer 20 feet in the air to unload, just like always, then headed back to the cab of the parked truck. This time, though, some of the powdered lime stayed in one side of the top of the trailer, which unbalanced the load.

"The G-forces as the bed was twisting just got to the point where it slammed the cab over," Sims said.

Darren Sims was taking feed inventory when he heard a loud crash outside.

"At first I thought he was slamming the tailgate like he always did, but looking back, it was probably louder than usual," he said. "It did make me come see what was going on. When I came around the corner, all I saw was wheels. I didn't see Dad at first."

As the truck flipped, Sims was thrown from the driver's seat across to against the passenger door, which was on the ground. Darren climbed up to the driver's side window, where he could talk to his dad while rescue crews removed the windshield to get him out of the truck.

"It was just one of them incidents," Darren said. "It just was odd. He was on perfectly level ground."

Farmers use the powdered lime to balance pH levels in the soil.

"Lime's got moisture in it, and we did not have a liner in the trailer. Supposedly liners help it from sticking, but we never had problems in the past," Darren said.

Now the Simses plan to avoid that potential problem in the future.

"We're getting a hopper bottom instead of a dump trailer with no hoist on it," Darren said. "We will not be able to haul lime, but we'll still be able to haul corn and soybeans."

They hope to be hauling plenty of corn and beans this harvest season as Sims continues to heal.

"Some muscles were pulled and bruised," he said. "That's the long part of healing, getting them back in shape."--Deborah Gertz Husar, [The Quincy Herald-Whig](#)

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