

A Safety Feature makes this Farm Machine Stand Out



Farming operations involving machines are similar to any mechanised industry. The only difference is that while factory employee's work in shifts at scheduled times, farmers do not work at any stipulated time. For them, it is completing the work as soon as possible that matters. Mr. Kamruddin Saifi from Uttar Pradesh, developed a fodder cutter machine fitted with automatic lock system. Fodder cutter machines are used practically everyday by farmers in north India to cut the fodder for feeding their livestock.

No support mechanism

Mr. Saifi said that the concerned company takes care of the workers if they hurt themselves, as a farmer operating any dangerous machine lacks the support mechanism in terms of financial back up if he meets with some serious accident. If a worker hurts himself, his company foots the bill for the treatment. If he dies, his immediate kin is given a job on compassionate grounds. But for farmers, both these facilities just do not exist. His family suffers if he hurts himself or dies. There is practically nobody to take care of his family if he is not there.

Mr. Ramesh Patel from Ahmedabad, Secretary of Sristi, said that compared to many agricultural equipment, the chaff cutter is considered quite dangerous, as there are reports of large number of people who have lost one or both their hands while working on it. If you visit the western tracts of Uttar Pradesh, one can get first hand information on the number of farmers and/ or their family members who have lost their limbs to the chaff cutter.

Manual feed

The cutter is a simple machine used to cut and remove the unwanted chaff from the harvested bundle. Farmers manually feed the harvested crop bundle into the cutting wheel and slowly push it on the blades for cutting. While doing this, sometimes the hand along with the bundle gets cut by the rotating blades that rotate at a high speed. As the rotational speed of the blades is very high with an electric or diesel powered cutter, it becomes almost impossible to take any protective measures once the hand gets trapped in the blades.

Personal experience

Mr. Kamruddin Saifi from Uttar Pradesh decided to use four-decade mechanical experience to try and develop a cutter that would stop immediately when the hand gets stuck. After months of toil and his own investment, he developed this cutter with a locking system. The machine consists of a simple mechanical clutch and a brake operated by a foot lever. When one presses the lever, the blades immediately get locked and disengage the power source from the cutter. To operate it again one needs to reopen the lock. He does not want to make and sell it commercially like a regular vendor but if anybody places an order, he can make it for them. The cost of the motor and all accessories could come to about Rs 15,000. Many developing countries are now undergoing a transition phase from employing labour to using machines. However India is still very backward in mechanising agriculture operations compared to many western countries.

Specific problem

Mr. Saifi addressed specific problems in their locality on their own initiative. Mr. Ramesh said that this is something that the Government or State must be doing. In the absence of any external funding or support these innovators are driven by their imagination to turn their dreams into a reality.

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