

INDUSTRY NEWS

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Safer safety lessons

Volunteers needed for study

Far too often, individuals learn the consequences of farm dangers the hard way. The lucky ones may survive run-ins with equipment and other hazards with a lost digit or limb, while many others die tragically on the farm every year.

Researchers at the Ohio Supercomputer Center (OSC) in Columbus are attempting to enhance farm safety training by developing computer-simulated environments using virtual reality (VR) technology.

"The benefit is that since it is simulated environment, there is no chance of bodily harm," said Don Stredney, director of OSC's Interface Lab.

"Farm safety will always be an issue because there are always new people entering the (farming) vocation, whether they are born into it or choose it," Stredney said.

Previous OSC studies have succeeded in creating realistic subconscious reactions in subjects. In one study, subjects

were placed in the seat of a tractor, where they drove down a virtual road and encountered numerous obstacles to

demonstrate just how quickly a rollover may occur.

Stredney has also been approached by Ohio State's Veterinary School to simulate an environment for working with large animals.

Stredney is about halfway through his current study, which creates a virtual simulation of a power take-off (PTO) hazard, and is in need of more volunteers. Volunteers must know what a PTO is to be eligible for the study. Pregnant women, individuals with blood and needle phobias or those who have experienced a PTO incident will be excluded.

Those who are interested in participating in the study can find further information and an eligibility form at www.osc.edu/research/Biomed/projects/pto_study or by contacting Stredney at Don@osc.edu.



A virtual view of a tractor rollover scenario