Anti-Roll Bars May Make Tractors Safer

More safety for the tractor operator may soon be built into tractors. International Harvester Company is testing a protective frame called an anti-roll bar at its Equipment Research and Engineering Center at Hinsdale, Ill.

Remote controls permit new model tractors to be driven at high speeds along a 42-degree bank and rolled at will. Electronic equipment records location and force of impact on the frame.

Strain gauges are cemented on the protective frame at various locations and connected to a radio transmitter. Sound is transmitted through radio telemetry on impact of the frame with the ground. The tone change occurring is read by a receiver and recorded on tape.

In the laboratory, tape is played back into an analyzer which translates the tone into forces exerted on the frame. The test also checks on design and mounting of the frame itself.

Such tests help researchers design and build a frame to give the operator maximum security should an operating tractor tip.

So-Called Fire Resistant Plants Are Not

Two Californians are warning home owners via a new publication not to rely on “fire-resistant plants” for protection during the brushfire season.

Such so-called fire resistant plants do not exist according to Joe R. Goodin, University of California agronomist at Riverside, and Richard Maire, Los Angeles County farm adviser. Any plant, they say, will burn if subjected to enough heat.

The larger a plant grows, the more potential fuel it produces, and the greater the fire hazard. As soil becomes dry, a plant takes up less water and has a lower moisture content. Irrigating can make the difference between an extremely flammable plant and one which will not burn as readily. Thus, the main protection is management.

Goodin and Maire pointed out that well-pruned, cleanly maintained, and irrigated areas did not carry fire during the California Bel Air conflagration of 1961. Sprinkler systems offered further protection.

Name of the new publication, soon to be released, is “Landscape for Fire Protection.”