In September 2016, a 45-year-old truck driver died when he was struck by two potato conveyor belt tables that fell from a flatbed trailer. He had worked for the multi-state potato harvesting and transport company for about four months. On the morning of the incident, the victim arrived at around 7 a.m. and began loading four tables onto a lowboy flatbed trailer so they could be transported to another site. Each table was 41 feet long and weighed approximately 3000 lbs. The surface of the lowboy trailer was 38 in. from the ground and was arched slightly at the center. The semi-truck was parked in a location with a slight grade, and there was a 3-degree slope from the front of the trailer to the rear. It is not clear why the victim attempted to load the tables onto the trailer by himself. Company procedure was to call at least one other worker for help when loading this kind of equipment. He had done the same task the day before with the help of other workers. This morning, however, the victim worked alone with a forklift to place a stack of two tables on the driver’s side of the trailer. Next, he loaded the second stacked pair on the other side, offset toward the rear of the trailer. The position of the table wheels on the flatbed were straight in-line with the trailer surface. He did not chain or chock the wheels of the tables to keep them from moving. After loading the tables, the victim parked the forklift and went back to the trailer and began laying out equipment to tie down the load. Company procedure would have been to leave the forklift in place to support the stacked tables while the wheels were secured with chains. Around this time, a truck driver from another company drove onto the site. He saw the victim get out of his cab and walk around behind the loaded trailer. As the truck driver went past the victim’s trailer, he noticed that a stack of tables had fallen onto the ground. When he walked over to see what had happened, he saw that the tables had fallen onto the victim’s back. He and another worker used a forklift and a front-end loader to lift the tables off the victim, and then called 911. The victim was pronounced dead at the scene.

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