

# Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
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EXTENSION  
OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH  
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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**Notes:** The crash-cause figures come from the oft-cited so-called "Hurt Report," officially known as "Motorcycle Accident Cause Factors and Identification of Countermeasures," prepared in 1981 by the University of Southern California Traffic Safety Center for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Find it here: <http://isddc.dot.gov/OLPFiles/NHTSA/013695.pdf>. "Motorcycle Notes" is published by the Victorian Motorcycle Advisory Council in Australia, where riders face such added road hazards as kangaroos, vegemite and kangaroos that have eaten vegemite.

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**Q. Dear Twig: Can animal poop on the road cause a crash? I read about a motorcycle accident. The driver said he wiped out when he drove through some manure!**

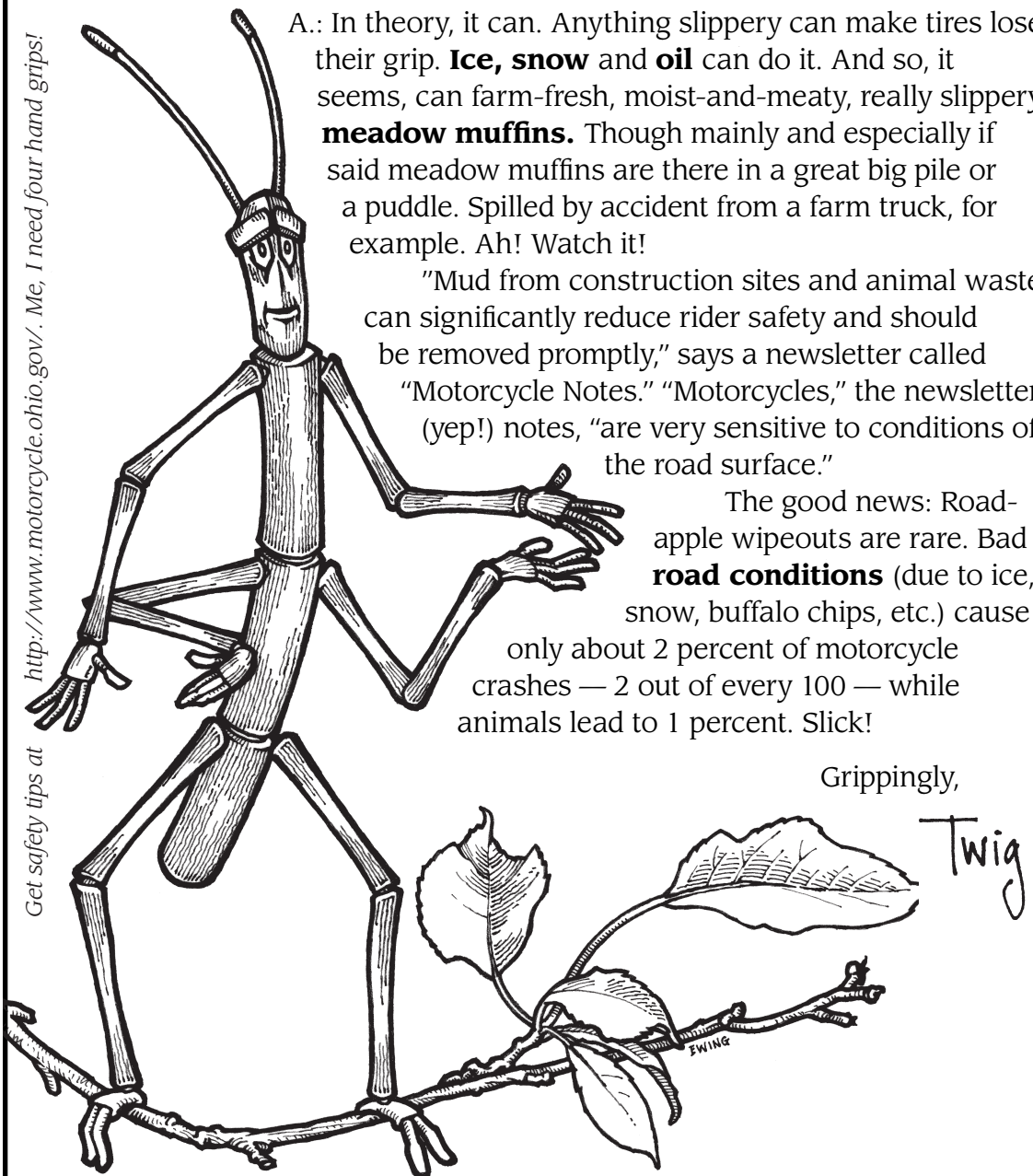
A.: In theory, it can. Anything slippery can make tires lose their grip. **Ice, snow and oil** can do it. And so, it seems, can farm-fresh, moist-and-meaty, really slippery **meadow muffins**. Though mainly and especially if said meadow muffins are there in a great big pile or a puddle. Spilled by accident from a farm truck, for example. Ah! Watch it!

"Mud from construction sites and animal waste can significantly reduce rider safety and should be removed promptly," says a newsletter called "Motorcycle Notes." "Motorcycles," the newsletter (yep!) notes, "are very sensitive to conditions of the road surface."

The good news: Road-apple wipeouts are rare. Bad **road conditions** (due to ice, snow, buffalo chips, etc.) cause only about 2 percent of motorcycle crashes — 2 out of every 100 — while animals lead to 1 percent. Slick!

Grippingly,

Twig



http://www.motorcycle.ohio.gov/. Me, I need four hand grips!

Get safety tips at

From your scientific friends at The Ohio State University — specifically, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center ([www.oardc.ohio-state.edu](http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu)) and OSU Extension ([extension.osu.edu](http://extension.osu.edu)).