

Farm Safety Newsletter

Winter 2009

Now hear this...

**Canadian Agricultural Safety Week
March 11-17 2009**

The traditional picture of a farm as a serene and quiet workplace couldn't be farther from the truth. Machinery, motors, and even sounds made by animals, sometimes creates a noisy and often hazardous environment.

“Since the industrial revolution, noise is one of the most common occupational health hazards,” explains Marcel Hacault, Executive Director of the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA). “Noise-induced hearing loss is 100 percent preventable but once acquired, hearing loss is permanent and irreversible. Therefore, prevention measures must be taken by employers and workers to ensure hearing protection at all times.”

“*PPE only works if you use it!*” is the theme of this year's Canadian Agricultural Safety campaign with a focus on the use, fit and access of personal protective equipment (PPE) in agriculture. The yearlong campaign will be launched with Canadian Agricultural Safety Week (CASW), from March 11 to 17, 2009. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture



(CFA) and CASA deliver CASW in partnership with Farm Credit Canada (FCC) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

What is the difference between sound and noise? Sound is what we hear and noise is unwanted sound, so the difference depends on the listener and the circumstances. For example, certain music may be a pleasing sound to one listener but an annoying noise to another. Either way, it can be a hearing hazard if the sound is loud and the exposure long.

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Sound is measured in decibels (dB). A normal conversation takes place at about 60 dB, whereas a gun shot is above 130 dB and will cause pain. Most power tools operate at between 90 and 120 decibels, chickens inside a building are about 105 dB and a pig's squeal can reach up to 130 dB. Hearing protection should be worn if noise or sound levels exceed 85 dB.

The degree of hearing hazard is related to both the level of the noise as well as to the duration of the exposure. Here are two easy ways to determine if a noise is loud enough to damage your hearing. First, if you have to raise your voice to talk to someone who is an arm's length away, then the noise is likely hazardous. Second, if your ears are ringing or sounds seem dull or flat after leaving a noisy place, then you probably were exposed to hazardous noise levels.



The best way to prevent occupational hearing loss is to reduce noise at the source by engineering methods such as installing a muffler or building an acoustic barrier. If hearing protection is required because noise can't be reduced at its source, then a complete hearing conservation program should be implemented. A hearing conservation program includes noise assessment, hearing protector selection, employee training and education, audiometric testing, maintenance, inspection, record keeping, and program evolution.

The most suitable kind hearing protection depends on a number of factors including level of noise, comfort, personal preference, and the suitability of the hearing protector for both the worker and his environment. It is best to keep a variety of noise reducing earplugs and earmuffs available to suit all situations and preferences.

The CFA along with CASA, FCC and AAFC want to remind Canadian farmers that *"PPE only works if you use it!"*

How To Wear Soft Foam Earplugs:

- 1. Roll** the earplug up into a small, thin "snake" with your fingers. You can use one or both hands
- 2. Pull** the top of your ear up and back with your opposite hand to straighten out your ear canal. The rolled-up earplug should slide right in.
- 3. Hold** the earplug in with your finger. Count to 20 or 30 out loud while waiting for the plug to expand and fill the ear canal. Your voice will sound muffled when the plug has made a good seal.
- 4. Check the fit** when you are all done. Most of the foam body of the earplug should be within the ear canal. Try cupping your hands tightly over your ears. If sounds are much more muffled with your hands in place, the earplug may not be sealing properly. Take the earplug out and try again.

Calling all Farm Safety Stars!

With over 1800 members Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development's Farm Safety Kids Club continues to grow. The club is aimed at rural youth up to 12 years of age who receive a newsletter three times a year that is full of activities, coloring and games.

Children learn basic farm safety messages with the help of the club mascot, Farm Safety Star. Farm Safety Star flies high in the sky reminding kids to be safe on the farm and complimenting them on their good safety choices. Examples of topics covered in the newsletter include ice safety, animal safety, bale safety, hearing safety and sun safety. Messages are learned through a variety of activities such as true and false, multiple choice, matching, word search and puzzles.

Recent comments from the kids in the club include:
"I love to colour farm safety pictures. I love farm safety."
"I like the pictures, drawing and safety tips."
"It helps me to keep safe and reminds me too."
"I liked the warning about the ice because we skate."

When asked, "what do you like best about the newsletter?" –Sarah from northern Alberta replied "That you have fun while you learn about safety, while doing the activities."

Conner, age six, noted that his family "talks about what is safe and what is not, as well as explaining and discussing why."



When asked if they have made any safety related changes because of what they learned, Karen from southern Alberta responded by saying that "my parents and the people on the colony have decided to have the dugouts fenced off to keep the children safe."

Ida, a parent from Claresholm writes "As a parent I really like the safety booklets you put out. I have gone over them numerous times with my kids and don't think it can be improved. Keep up the good work!!"

If you would like your children to join the Farm Safety Kids Club you can:

- Send us a fax (780) 422-7755
- Send an email to: Julie.splawinski@gov.ab.ca
- Write to us at: Farm Safety Kids Club, Room 200, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6

Be sure to include name, address and age of all children who would like to join.

If you have any questions or would like more information please contact Raelyn Peterson at (780) 538-5633 or raelyn.d.peterson@gov.ab.ca



First Aid on the Farm offered to Alberta 4-Hers

Farm Credit Canada has again agreed to team up with Alberta 4-H to deliver “First Aid on the Farm” to rural Alberta’s youth.

The program, first offered in 2005, has been resurrected due to an increase in the desire to get farm-tailored first aid training out to Alberta 4-Hers.

“By teaching young people in rural Alberta ‘First Aid on the Farm,’ we hope to reduce the occurrence of farm incidents and injuries,” said Clem Samson, Vice President Western Operations for Farm Credit Canada.

The content of First Aid on the Farm was developed by St. John Ambulance. The program is a day-long session taught in a classroom setting aimed at children in grades eight and up.

“St. John Ambulance has tested the program and found that grade eight students have the maturity to understand the dangers on the farm and take on the responsibility of learning life-saving skills,” said Samson.

The program covers basic life-saving and first aid skills with an emphasis on identifying hazards on the farm and administering first aid in situations where emergency medical services are immediately available. Participants will be supplied with a booklet to complete a farm safety audit which will help to make their farm a safer place.

Upon finishing the course, participants will be given a ‘Certificate of Completion.’

The program will be offered to 4-H members across Alberta beginning in early spring. For more information on this program, contact your Regional 4-H Specialist.



For more information contact:

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To order resources or would like to be added

or removed from the mailing list, please fax:

(780) 422-7755 (attn Cindy) or

e-mail: cindy.kremer@gov.ab.ca

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