

SAFETY BREAK

Fall 2018

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Produced by Alberta Farm Safety Program, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry



Eat nourishing food and stay hydrated with plenty of water throughout the day.

AVOID HARVEST-RELATED FATIGUE

With harvest in full swing this time of year, farmers need to be aware of the risks associated with worker fatigue.

“Too many farmers push themselves, especially during the really busy times,” says Kenda Lubeck, farm safety awareness coordinator for Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. “Too often, it’s a case of, ‘I’m going to finish that field tonight no matter what.’ Health and safety is a worker’s most valuable asset – nothing should come before.”

Many times, fatigue creeps up on a person which makes it difficult to recognize. In addition to feeling sleepy and tired, some common symptoms of fatigue include:

- Headaches, dizziness, blurry vision.
- Slow reflexes and reactions, poor concentration.
- Feeling irritable, moody and short tempered.
- Aching, weak muscles.

“We often see safety as being all about equipment and guards,” says Lubeck, “but the most important safety tool a person can have is their attitude and subsequent decisions. It could mean taking a 20 minute snooze when you are exhausted, or having another person lined up to spell you off.”

Lubeck offers the following suggestions to ward off fatigue:

- Get adequate sleep. Park your worries at the bedroom door and get a good night’s rest on a regular basis.
- Eat nourishing food to keep your mind and body sharp.
- Stay hydrated with plenty of water.
- Incorporate some healthy activity in your day’s work. Many times fall work equals long hours, operating the same equipment. If you find yourself in the cab of a tractor for hours on end, be sure to stop periodically and go for a walk to stretch out your muscles.
- Plan for physical and mental demands. It may mean adding workers to your team to alleviate the demands of harvest work. Keep a promise to yourself that you will take a well-deserved break after a set amount of time and not make critical decisions while you are weary.

“Although the human factor is a significant cause of farm-related hazards, your safety is about the choices you make,” adds Lubeck. “It just takes a moment to make a decision that could literally be the difference between life and death.”



A successful and bountiful harvest also means having a safe harvest.

WORKING SAFELY THROUGH ANOTHER HARVEST SEASON

COURTESY OF CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL SAFETY ASSOCIATION

At harvest, everyone wants to help. Hauling grain, fixing breakdowns, combining, driving to town for parts and supplies and fixing meals to eat in the field are all important tasks during harvest. Harvest is a time where we spend a lot of time apart from our families but all work towards the same goal — a successful and bountiful harvest. However, a successful harvest also means having a safe harvest.

A major component of having a safe harvest is making sure that everyone that helps is trained, competent, and performing tasks according to their skill level. (And don't forget age-appropriate.)

It's relatively easy to make sure young people aren't in over their heads. Understanding that children aren't miniature adults is the first step. A child might be tall enough, strong enough and smart enough to operate a piece of equipment, but are they emotionally mature? It's hard to sometimes be neutral when assessing the skill level and emotional maturity of our own children, so that's why tools like the Ag Youth Work Guidelines (formerly North American Guidelines for Children's Agricultural Tasks) are so handy. These guidelines help parents and kids determine skill levels and tasks safe to do. Visit cultivatesafety.org for more information.

As difficult as it is to curb the enthusiasm of children who want to help with harvest, it is much harder to curb eager helpers who fall into the "senior" category. However, it's just as necessary. The most up-to-date Canadian Agricultural Injury Reporting (CAIR) data of agriculture-related deaths shows that older adults (60+ years) consistently have higher fatality rates than children and adults.

The good news is these deaths are preventable.

For instance, senior farmers may sometimes use older tractors and worn-out equipment that are more prone to malfunctioning. Older tractors often have no seatbelts or rollover protective structures (ROPS), so rollovers are frequently fatal. Maintaining tractors and machinery properly and retrofitting seatbelts and ROPS on older tractors would help reduce the incidence of injuries.

If an older farmer must work alone, make sure he lets you know his whereabouts and his schedule, and then takes a cell phone or other two-way communications device that includes a geographic positioning system (GPS).

As we age, we need more light to see clearly. Try to ensure that senior farmers are using their skills before dusk outside rather than in a dimly lit shed. Or increase lighting levels in barns and other buildings to accommodate their vision needs.

There's more. How's his hearing? Senior farmers who have difficulty hearing words or sounds may not be able to detect warning signals, such as the sounding of an automobile horn or the approach of a fast-moving animal. Agree to use hand signals that everyone can understand.

Senior farmers have much to contribute. They have the wisdom and experience that many younger workers lack. And, with your help, they can use that enhanced judgment and skill to compensate for the decreases in reaction time and muscle strength that are inevitable, and stay healthy and safe.

From all of us at CASA have a safe and successful harvest!



A new farm and ranch safety grant will help producers offset some of the costs to comply with upcoming OHS requirements.

GRANT PROGRAM SUPPORTS HEALTH AND SAFETY ON FARMS

A new farm and ranch safety grant launched Oct. 15 to help eligible agriculture employers comply with new occupational health and safety requirements.

The grant will help offset some of the costs employers may incur in complying with the new regulations. Up to \$6 million is available through the program during the next three years.

On Dec. 1, the Occupational Health and Safety Code (OHS Code) will apply to farms and ranches that employ waged, non-family workers. This means Alberta farm and ranch workers will have similar health and safety protections as workers in other industries and other parts of Canada.

“Together with industry, we can continue to promote and deliver programs that support sustainable growth in the sector and foster a culture of safety on the farm. The Farm Health and Safety Producer Grant Program is just one way our government continues to support producers and ensure safe and healthy workplaces across the province.” Oneil Carlier, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry

“Albertans value the contributions of Alberta’s farm and ranch communities and care about the health and safety of their workers. This program will help farm and ranch employers continue their work to create healthy and safe workplaces and comply with the OHS Code.” Christina Gray, Minister of Labour

“Through grants like this, government is helping to support a culture of safety on the farm. AgSafe is positioned to be a champion for agriculture in Alberta and a vital partner in advancing the implementation of farm safety.” Kent Erickson, chair, AgSafe Alberta

Farm Health and Safety Producer Grant Program

- Applications open Oct. 15, 2018 and the program runs until March 2021.
- Farms and ranches with waged, non-family workers and a WCB account may apply for the grant.
- The grant covers up to 50 per cent of eligible safety expenses to a maximum of \$5,000 per year or \$10,000 over the life of the program per eligible applicant. Expenses going back to Jan. 1, 2018 are eligible under the program.
- Eligible expenses (with receipts) include things like:
 - First aid kits, fire extinguishers and warning signage.
 - Respirators, eye and hearing protection.
 - Health and safety programs, courses, education and training.
 - Seatbelt installation, warning lights and auger guards to improve equipment safety.
 - Education, training and consultant fees.

For more information and forms, go to www.agriculture.alberta.ca/farmhsggrant.



A PTO is a common method used on a farm to transfer power through a rotating shaft from a tractor to another implement. They are often the cause of many farm injuries and deaths.



Parent Alert: Grain can be deadly. For safety's sake, keep children away from all flowing and stored grain.

For more information on this and other farm safety topics, visit agriculture.alberta.ca/farmsafety.

A NEW TOOL TO TEACH YOUTH ABOUT PTO SAFETY

This summer, the Alberta Farm Safety Program introduced a power take off (PTO) display. This resource will help farm safety event organizers to educate children and youth on the dangers of rotating PTO shafts.

“We are excited about this resource because it teaches children safety through a hands-on simulated entanglement scenario,” says Janice Donkers, farm safety youth coordinator for Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. “It has three educational components that provide an overview of the importance of safety around PTOs: an entanglement demonstration, a reaction time activity, and discussion points for conversations about potential risks and safety precautions.”

A PTO is a common device on the farm used to transfer power through a rotating shaft on a tractor to another implement such as an auger, baler, or mower. Contact with a PTO can cause serious injury or death because of the speed with which it rotates.

Donkers says, “With an average reaction time of less than a second, a person caught in a PTO spinning at 1000 RPM would be wrapped around the shaft six times before they knew what was happening.”

Donkers encourages farmers implement the following safety strategies:

- Wear close fitting clothes, remove draw strings from sweatshirts and jackets, and tie up long hair. These items can easily become entangled in a rotating PTO shaft.
- Make sure all guards and shields are securely in place and in good working condition at all times.
- Keep young children a safe distance away from a spinning PTO. Designate a safe play area with structured boundaries (i.e. fence) to eliminate risks.
- Ensure workers engage and disengage the PTO from the tractor seat only. (Do not reach up to engage the PTO while standing behind or beside the tractor.)
- Under no circumstances should anyone step over a PTO. Always walk around.
- Anyone operating a PTO should receive proper training. A training activity provides information and instruction to improve performance or help achieve a certain level of skill and knowledge to safely operate a PTO.

The PTO Display is one of many educational resources, displays and publications available free of charge from the Alberta Farm Safety Program. Please email farm.safety@gov.ab.ca for more information.

PARENT ALERT: THE HAZARDS OF GRAIN

There are many hazards associated with grain and grain storage. Whether it's respiratory hazards, fall hazards, fire hazards or grain entrapment, it's important to understand the dangers of grain handling. With children's curiosity, flowing grain can become mesmerizing in both sight and sound. It takes less than 5 seconds to become trapped in flowing grain, and 10 seconds to become completely buried. To reduce children's susceptibility to injury and death involving grain, consider implementing the following safety strategies on your farming operation.

- Supervision is key to keeping kids safe around grain. Young kids have short attention spans and are curious by nature, which means they are here one minute and gone the next!
- Always look for children before, during, and after unloading activities.
- Never leave a wagon or truck unattended.
- Lock all doors, gates, and discharge chutes on grain bins, trucks and wagons.
- Ensure ladders and grain elevator legs are high enough that children cannot climb them.