



# SafeFARM

Health and safety information for Alberta farmers

Summer 2012

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## Communicating safety responsibilities to farm visitors

*CASA*

As a farm owner/operator, you are responsible for the health and safety of everyone who sets foot on your farm – whether they are workers, suppliers, contractors, your children’s friends or a stranger asking for directions. Fulfill that responsibility with a written farm safety plan that everyone understands and follows.

To walk the talk, check out a new farm management tool called the Canada FarmSafe Plan developed by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA).

The Canada FarmSafe Plan supports the theme Plan • Farm • Safety, a three-year focus for the Canadian Agricultural Safety campaign. In 2010 the campaign promoted “Plan” with safety walkabouts and planning for safety. Last year, the focus was on “Farm”

including implementation, documentation and training. And this year, emphasis is on “Safety” including assessment, improvement and further development of safety systems. A download of Canada FarmSafe is available at [www.planfarmsafety.ca](http://www.planfarmsafety.ca).



*Explain to visitors the boundaries as to where they can and can’t go and any hazards they need to watch out for, particularly with regard to children and pets.*

“Producers have responsibilities that require many skill sets, and not everyone is comfortable with writing up a farm safety plan,” said Marcel Hacault, CASA’s executive director.

“We wanted to make developing a  
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## Farm safety tips

- Take time to regularly inspect personal protective equipment, or PPE. Check for stretched bands in hearing protection, worn tread on footwear and cracks or holes in gloves. Ensure your safety eyewear has no scratches as this weakens the lens. Replace worn or damaged items immediately to ensure optimum protection.
- Do you have employees working on your farm? Having a safety plan is an important first step to ensuring the safety of everyone on the farm. Discuss the plan with all workers to ensure they understand and adhere to all safety procedures.
- When moving large farm machinery between fields or on public roadways, check and double check the location of power lines. If in doubt, make arrangements with your energy service provider to create a safe passage with enough distance from live electrical wires. Never attempt to measure the height of a power line yourself.
- As a farmer there are things you can do to prevent wildfires this season. Ensure hay is dry before it is baled and stored to reduce the risk of spontaneous combustion. Surround animal feed reserves with a bare section at least five metres wide. You can also reduce flammable grass around farm structures by enabling livestock to graze in these areas.
- Slips, trips and falls around farm equipment can have dire consequences. Ensure proper techniques for mounting and dismounting equipment such as tractors and sprayers. Use the handrails, handholds and steps to ensure proper support. Follow the three-point system. Either two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand on the machine at all times.

# Minimize skid-steer risks through training

By Dean Ross

Source: Dairyherd Network, [www.dairyherd.com](http://www.dairyherd.com)

Skid-steer loaders are virtually ubiquitous on modern farms. These agile and powerful machines help farm operators accomplish a variety of tasks. And, by simply replacing the bucket with one of the many types of available attachments, the operational effectiveness of this machine is multiplied. It is difficult to find a more cost-effective or valuable piece of farm equipment these days.

Like many tools, the skid-steer does have drawbacks. Of primary concern would be the safety of both the machine operator and those working in the immediate vicinity of the skid-steer. There are many examples of fatalities associated with skid-steer operation to be found online without much difficulty. The ease with which these examples are found connects



*Skid steers are a powerful machine that require respect.*

back to how often skid-steer machines are involved in incidents.

Concern with skid-steer safety begins with understanding the hazards which operation of the skid-steer presents. Skid-steer loaders are complex and potentially dangerous machines to control. They require

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## Canadian farmers want more safety training, says 2011 FCC Safety Report Card

Source: CASA

Most of Canada's farmers see safety as a priority on their farms - and nine out of 10 farmers want to know more about how to make their businesses even safer.

According to the second Farm Credit Canada (FCC) Farm Safety Report Card, discussed at the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association's (CASA) annual conference in Vancouver recently, 34 per cent of Canadian producers want training in the basics of preparing a safety plan for their operations.

"Canadian farmers certainly have good intentions for keeping safe on

the farm, according to our research," says Rémi Lemoine, FCC Executive Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer. "Now what's needed is concrete action using tools like the ones created by our partners at CASA."

Nearly 1,000 primary producers across Canada from various sectors who are members of the national research FCC Vision Panel participated in the study.

"CASA is developing practical tools such as the Canada FarmSafe plan to help farmers improve their safety record," says Marcel Hacault,

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# Farm use of smartphone technology

By Nicole Hornett, ARD Farm Safety Coordinator

Statistics Canada reports that 78 per cent of Canadian households have cellphones with ownership highest in Alberta (87.9 per cent). We've come a long way since the first cellphone was introduced in 1973 weighing in at 1 kilogram. The market now has phones which truly are no longer 'just phones' because of their increased technological capacity. Most smartphones are well under 200 grams, making them extremely portable and convenient. Technologies that used to require entire rooms or specialized training now fit in the palm of your hand.

What are we doing with these technologies?

Aside from an important communication tool during remote tasks, could we also use our smartphones to think safety first when it comes to farming? Here are some suggestions:

**Alarm clock:** Set reminders to take scheduled breaks and try to get enough sleep. Farming can be hard on our bodies! It's important to eat healthy meals, drink enough water and sleep.

**Conversion calculator:** Convert units quickly for easier calculations. Don't run the risk of miscalculating a chemical mix or dilution because you were guessing the conversion formula.

**Decibel meter:** Not sure if you need hearing protection? A decibel meter can quickly answer that! Protection is recommended at anything over 80 decibels and mandatory protection is required at 100 decibels or higher.

favourites and suggest them to your employer for your next safety tail-gate meeting.

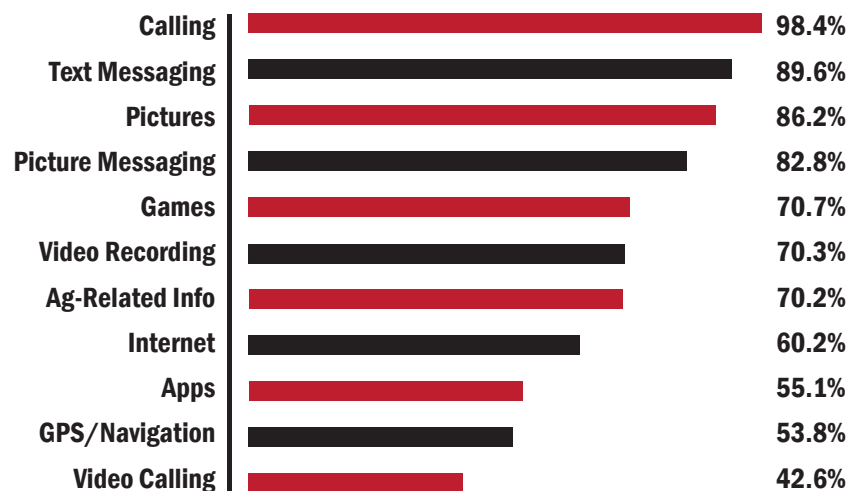
As with any tool on the farm, cell-phones and smartphones should only be used according to your employer's guidelines. While the technology is exciting to use, it can lead you to become unfocused. Distracted driving can happen easily on the farm too! An inattentive equipment operator could wind up causing hundreds of thousands of dollars in damages and potential loss of life.

The Canadian Agriculture Safety Association is in the process of developing a farm risk management tool that will help farmers identify and control safety risks on the farm.

Their app will bring the Canada FarmSafe Plan right to your fingertips! Canadian farmers can anticipate the app being available across multiple platforms in the near future.

There is only so much technology can do to keep us safe. Workers must still be alert and take training. Remember, hazards are rarely marked with a sign!

## Features available on farmers' phones



[www.agriculture.com/farm-management/technology/cell-phone-and-smart-phones](http://www.agriculture.com/farm-management/technology/cell-phone-and-smart-phones)

Findings with several surveys over the past year show that farmers increasingly are adopting the technology.

**First Aid refresher:** St. John's Ambulance has a free First Aid app, but it should never take the place of hands-on certified training.

**Maps:** Use the 'drop pin' function to e-mail or text your whereabouts to your employer. It may not be exact, but could get someone close enough to you in the event of an emergency.

**Weather:** Before heading out, check the weather by viewing hourly weather updates and meteorological maps. Your clothing or plans may change based on what's forecasted for your area.

**YouTube:** Watch videos from reputable sources. Mark good videos as



## Preventing rollovers saves lives Source: News Canada

Agriculture is one of Canada’s most important industries. It is also among the most dangerous. Governed almost entirely by voluntary workplace standards, farming demands the diligence of its workers to keep the work environment safe and accident-free.

According to the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association’s latest national report, nearly 1,800 farming fatalities occurred from 1990 to 2005. The number one cause? Machine rollovers, accounting for more than one-fifth of deadly injuries. The report sites statistics from the Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program (CAISP) in the section “Agricultural Injuries in Canada for 1990-2005.”

“Too often, farmers underestimate the dangers associated with equipment rollovers and other incidents,” says James Savage, executive vice president at Western Financial Group. “We advise them to make sure their insurance will cover any injuries or property damage should an incident occur. Even more importantly, we encourage them to follow

strict safety practices to prevent these accidents.”

What safeguards can you put into place?

1. Equip your tractor with seat belts and rollover protection structures. If the tractor is old, have it

the vehicle is designed to accommodate them.

7. Keep a safe distance from ditches and the sides of roads, and never operate or park machines on steep slopes.

8. Do not corner at excessive speeds.

9. Respect the tractor’s centre of gravity by adhering to manufacturer’s recommendations concerning towing capacity and hitching points. Also monitor the terrain conditions; conditions such as thick mud and ice can compromise towing capacity.

10. When dragging a tree, log or other object, be alert in case the object becomes caught.

11. Never attach a tow rope or chain above the level of the draw pin.

12. Don’t allow children to play near a vehicle.

13. Avoid long hours operating machinery and ensure that older farmers can safely perform needed tasks.

14. Keep a two-way communications system with you at all times.



retrofitted.

2. Maintain the brakes and electrical system.

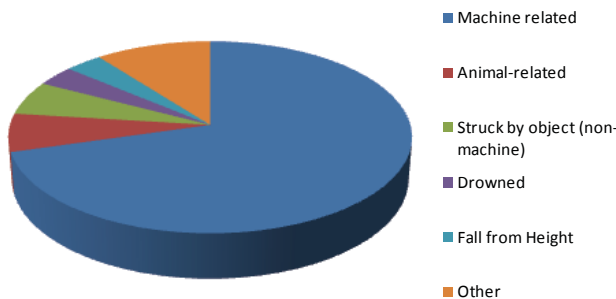
3. Make sure the engine is off and the transmission is in neutral or park before doing repairs.

4. Never start a tractor by short-circuiting its ignition system.

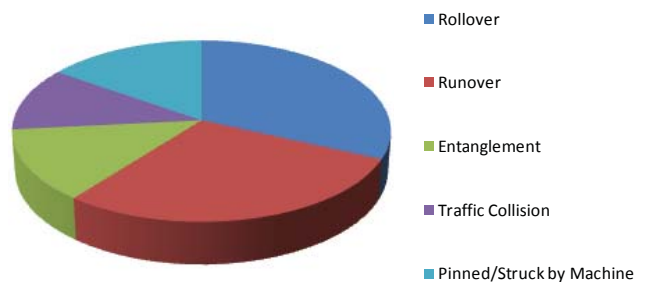
5. Remain seated at all times while operating the vehicle.

6. Do not permit passengers unless

**Leading causes of agricultural fatalities in Canada, 1990 to 2005**



**Leading causes of machine-related agricultural fatalities in Canada, 1990 to 2005**



**Communicating safety responsibilities to farm visitors** continued from page 1

written farm safety plan as easy as possible, so we developed the Canada FarmSafe Plan in a way that can be easily adapted to each unique operation. Writing the plan however, is just part of the equation – you also have to put that plan into practice every day.”

It is particularly important to make sure non-farming visitors are aware of the safety rules and practices in place on your farm, Hacault said. Here are a few things you can do:

- Establish clear visitation rules and post the rules in writing in a visible location.
- Upon arrival, explain to visitors the boundaries as to where they can and can't go and any hazards they need to watch out for, particularly with regard to children and pets.
- Ensure children are supervised at all times.
- Clearly establish safe on-farm attire such as shoes instead of sandals, long pants (depending on activity), no loose strings, frays, sleeves, etc. Provide water, insect repellent and sunscreen, if necessary.
- Show visitors where you keep the fire extinguishers, first aid kit, eye wash station, and other emergency supplies.
- Show visitors where the telephones are and post your farm's address and directions near each phone along with important emergency phone numbers.
- Inform guests of the location of all restrooms and hand washing stations on the farm.
- Place signs with short safety messages in and around areas where hazards are present.
- Post the names of any gases stored on the farm and signs prohibiting smoking in any storage area for portable compressed gas cylinders.

table compressed gas cylinders.

- Set up a safety bulletin board in a central area with seasonal safety reminders.

“A little thoughtful planning can prevent big mishaps,” Hacault summarized. “By following these simple steps, you can make your farm a safer place to work, live and play.”

*Safety is a cheap and effective insurance policy*

**Farmers want more safety training** continued from page 3

executive director of CASA. “We’ve put the basic plan on our website at [www.planfarmsafety.ca](http://www.planfarmsafety.ca) and we’re working with agricultural suppliers and provincial farm safety groups to put the plan in as many hands as possible. That’s mainly where farmers told FCC they look for safety information.”

The 2011 FCC farm safety snapshot showed there’s been little change in the perceptions and practices around farm safety since 2008.

**What’s going well?**

Producers are driven to action once safety directly impacts their family: 91 per cent of producers regularly take precautions for children, and a third (35 per cent) are interested in taking training on agricultural safety for children. When it comes to the individual, almost nine in 10 (88 per cent) producers report they would be interested in pursuing training in at least one safety topic.

**Where can we improve?**

Although the majority of Canadian producers (85 per cent) believe safety is a priority on their farm, less than one in 10 (nine per cent) currently have a written agricul-

tural safety plan on their farm or ranch. When it comes to accessing information, less than a quarter (24 per cent) of producers report having tried to access resources related to agricultural safety in the past year. Fifty-two per cent say they would go to agricultural suppliers to get more safety information and tools.

**Why is safety important?**

Producers explain that safety is a priority on their farms for three key reasons: the potential for financial loss due to incidents (largely through lost productivity), safekeeping of their family members and the need to keep employees safe.

“We will use the suggestions and testimonials in this new survey to help build new national farm safety messaging and create targeted educational tools,” Hacault adds. “Our goal continues to be a Canada where no one is hurt farming.”

To access the executive summary of the report, please visit [www.fccvision.ca/Research](http://www.fccvision.ca/Research).

## Minimize skid-steer risks continued from page 2

the combined simultaneous use of the hands and feet to operate most effectively. During use, the center of gravity shifts as the bucket or attachment is raised or lowered or when operated on a slope. Operators must be aware of the significant blind spots that are present and be aware of the crush hazard inherent in the lifting arms. Also, because the loader is a machine there are mechanical hazards related to the engine and hydraulic system that need to be considered. There are also significant hazards to those working around or near the skid-steer just due to the movement of the machine during operation. Fortunately, because these machines do present such a hazard, there is a great deal of information and training available to farm operators to use on the farm with employees and family members.

The tools to improve the level of safe operation of skid-steers on the farm are very much available with each new machine in the form of an owner's manual. Each manual has a section outlining important and useful operational safety information. A great deal of safety related information is also available on skid-steer loaders in the form of safety labels or stickers and serve to remind the operator that there are hazards

to be aware of. Manufacturers will also make safety training materials available online or through dealers for a reasonable price. These training materials can be used as part of an individual equipment training program or an across-the-board training that takes place at hiring or even as an annual training activity.

Another option available is to bring in training specialists. In much of the country, general industry is required to provide training and certification of employees using certain types of equipment. In many cases, agricultural operations may be exempt from this requirement, but that does not mean that these local training resources cannot be utilized on agricultural operations. Lastly, there are a variety of high quality publications addressing skid-steer safety that are free and appropriate for use as the basis for on-farm training.

The skid-steer loader will remain one of the most valuable tools deployed on our farms, even though it can be a dangerous machine to use. It requires knowledge and understanding to safely utilize its capabilities to the fullest. Please consider using one of the many available options to ensure your business is not the next to make the news.

## We'd like to hear from you

SafeFarm is intended to keep rural Albertans informed of best practices in risk management and farm safety. We would like to know your thoughts and suggestions on how well we are doing in meeting this objective and how you would prefer to receive it.

Notice of Collection: The personal information you provide on this form will be used to improve SafeFarm and to verify your preferred format. The information is collected under the authority of section 33 (c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and is subject to the privacy provisions of the Act. If you have any questions about the collection and use of your information, contact the Farm Safety Coordinator, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, 1201 10320-99 St. Grande Prairie, AB T8V 6J4, Tel: 780.538.5606.

- 1.** Does SafeFarm provide information you use?  Yes  No

If yes, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

- 2.** Please indicate specific topics you would like to see in SafeFarm. \_\_\_\_\_

- 3.** Would you like to receive SafeFarm by email?  Yes  No

If yes, please provide email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any other comments to help us build a better resource for your health and safety needs? \_\_\_\_\_

Send responses via email to  
kenda.lubeck@gov.ab.ca

Or clip this portion and mail the completed form to the Alberta Farm Safety Program 1201 10320 - 99 St. Grande Prairie, AB T8V 6J4. If we receive it by September 30 you will be eligible to win a farm safety first aid kit and toolbox. Please provide your name in your response to be included in the draw.

Name \_\_\_\_\_



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1201 10320 - 99 St.

Grande Prairie, AB T8V 6J4

[www.agriculture.alberta.ca/farmsafety](http://www.agriculture.alberta.ca/farmsafety)

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