



FACT SHEET #3

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Workplace Safety and Wellness

Agriculture has long been one of the most dangerous industries in Canada. Broadly speaking, two out of three farm fatalities (60.2%) tend to be the owner-operator. The remaining farm fatalities tend to be: a child of the owner-operator (15.0%); a hired worker (11.6%); a relative – perhaps a brother or parent (8.2%); or the owner-operator's spouse (2.9%), with the remaining (2.1%) being other visitors, according to the Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program.

These are shocking statistics that demonstrate the importance of making workplace health and safety part of the overall business strategy for every farm and ranch. It is important to realize farm safety is a choice, not an act of fate. One of the critical aspects of agricultural hazards is that they are almost always predictable; and if something is predictable, it is also preventable. With this in mind, all workers – whether hired or family – need to be informed and trained about safe choices on the farm. It's up to the owner-operator to make sure this training happens. Here are a few suggestions:

1. As owner-operator you must lead the way by showing that safety is a priority on your farm. Always set a good example of safe practices. As you are doing various jobs explain the dangers and why things are done in a particular way to make the situation safer. Encourage workers to ask questions.
2. Get the information you need from a credible source. If you need information on fire prevention, go to your local fire department. If you need information on welding safety, take a course, read a book or go on the Internet to get more information. If you need information on farm safety, visit Web sites, www.cfa-fca.ca or www.casa-acsa.ca.
3. Acknowledge and specify your current safety practices to all workers and clearly indicate the expectation for worker compliance. Simply state – and always show by example – the safe practices expected, like blocking wheels on wagons, turning machinery completely off before working on problems, never allowing extra riders, and telling someone where you will be working and what time you expect to be back.

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Workplace Safety and Wellness –2.

4. Likewise, ask workers if they see hazards on your farm that you have not noticed. Recognize their contribution to your farm's safety by fixing the hazard if possible, or by formulating a safety plan on how you and your workers will deal with this hazard.
5. Do a 'Farm Safety Audit' on your farm. There are many farm safety audit resources available on the Internet by doing a Canadian *Google* search of "Farm Safety Audit" or visit the CASA Web site at www.casa-acsa.ca .
6. Put your new farm safety plan into action by providing education and awareness to workers through skill building and training, and by investing the time and resources to make the necessary safety improvements in your workplace.
7. Safety and workplace wellness is an on-going challenge. Always know that there is room for change and improvement for both short-term and long-term goals. A seasonal review of your audit will help you gauge what is working and what is not, to better prepare you and your farm workers for safety and wellness on your farm.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture along with the Farm Credit Canada, the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada want to remind Canadian farmers and ranchers that "*Farm Safety Means Farm Safely*".

- 30 -

For more information call:

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