



Taking Action... for a healthy and safe workplace

March 2005 Update

Farming and ranching are some of Saskatchewan's most hazardous occupations. Each year, 18 deaths and over 250 hospitalized injuries occur, on average.

Much more needs to be done to improve the health and safety of persons on farms. Reaching persons on farms with information on how to prevent injuries and illnesses is a constant challenge. Recently, the Farm Health and Safety Council and Saskatchewan Labour developed an action plan of key prevention strategies.

Let's consider five reasons WHY taking action is so important. Let's look at what's happened in the province's agricultural industry over a 12 year period.*

1. **200 persons were killed while doing farm work**
 - 8% were children under 10 years old
 - 9% were young people 10-19 years of age
 - 44% were adults 20 to 59 years old
 - 39% were adults 60+ years old
2. **3,043 persons were hospitalized due to injury while doing farm work**
 - 5% were children under 10 years old
 - 9% were young people 10-19 years old
 - 57% were adults 20 to 59 years old
 - 29% were adults 60+ years old
3. **74% of fatalities and 49% of the hospitalizations involved farm machinery**
4. **34% of fatalities and 24% of the hospitalizations caused by machines involved a tractor**
5. **2,447 workers in agricultural workplaces were injured seriously enough to be off the job ***



*Note: Farm injury and fatality information is based on unpublished Canadian Agricultural Surveillance Program data for the 12-year period 1990-2001. Injury data for workers in agricultural workplaces is based on WCB data for the three-year period 2001-2003.



Agriculture Saskatchewan – a safe and healthy place to live and work is the vision shared by the provincial Farm Health and Safety Council and Saskatchewan Labour. Council members include representatives who operate or work on a farm. The *Action Plan for the Agricultural Sector* focuses Council's and the Department's efforts to reduce work-related injuries and illnesses.



**Saskatchewan
Labour**
Occupational Health
and Safety

Why are so many people dying or being injured in agriculture?

Those committed to agricultural health and safety see accidents to be predictable and preventable. There is a story behind each tragedy. Although the details will vary, there are common reasons why so many are injured or even die.

Way of life – or not – on our farms, at our workplaces and in our communities, health and safety is not always the priority it should be. Recognizing and reducing risk must become a bigger part of our farming culture.

Standards – far too often we don't understand or practice the health and safety standards that have proven to prevent injuries or poor health.

Support – we need to have a better understanding of how work conditions, processes and substances affect health in the short and long term. We need to know how to eliminate or at least minimize the risks from these hazards.

Training – everyone, especially the young and inexperienced, needs proper instruction and supervision to be safe and work safe in agriculture.

Responsibility – we must embrace our shared responsibility for our own safety and the safety of those around us. Those with the most authority have the most responsibility.

Taking Action ...

Our collective goal is to improve health and safety. The initial target set in 2005 by the *Action Plan for the Agricultural Sector* calls for a 20% reduction of injury and illness over the next four years. Initiatives will include:

- More public awareness messages about the importance of farm safety
- More education and training, focusing on groups at risk
- More technical support through testing, presentations, and publications to help better identify and control hazards
- More field visits and workplace inspections to increase knowledge of health and safety standards
- Helping worker/employer occupational health committees, where applicable

We have much more to do. Check out our website for:

- More information on the *Action Plan* initiatives and
- Practical ways on how you can include safety in your day to day activities

“Protecting the health and safety of persons in agriculture”

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