

**Canadian
Agricultural
Safety Week
Mar. 9-15, 2005**

FACT SHEET #8

THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

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Job safety analysis can help save lives on farms

Between April 1990 and March 2000, more than 3,500 Canadian farmers over 60 were hospitalized for treatment of agriculture-related injuries. During the same years, 433 senior farmers died because of their injuries.

“Much can be done to improve the safety of farmers, particularly senior farmers,” explained Glen Blahey, who chaired the ‘Making Farming Safe for Senior Farmers’ study by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association and supported by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in 2002.

“Many, if not all, farm-related injuries are preventable,” explained Blahey. He added in particular the highest-fatality activity, tractor rollovers, could be prevented if farmers used tractors equipped with rollover protection structures (ROPS) and wore seatbelts when operating their equipment.

“One of the best ways to determine likely hazards for farmers is to analyze the safety of various jobs they do every day,” explained Blahey. “Those most familiar with a job are best suited to evaluate the risks associated with it. They must consider it impartially and suppress thoughts about how it is done and focus on how the tasks should be performed to avoid injury or property damage.”

Blahey adds “when conducting a job safety analysis for a job a senior person is going to be performing, added consideration must be given to the possible limitations the person brings to the task.” This means taking into consideration things like poorer eyesight, decreased mobility, and lessened reaction time when completing the analysis.

An analysis can be completed either by a senior farmer who does a job or their supervisor or co-worker. “The process of conducting a job safety analysis is straightforward,” explained Blahey.

A job safety analysis involves six separate steps. These include

- Identifying a specific job to be performed;
- Breakdown the entire job into the individual steps;
- Identify the potential hazards associated with performing each task,
- Determine what actions or measures are necessary to eliminate or control the hazards of each step;
- Make the necessary changes to control the hazards by ensuring effective training and making changes in equipment or product used; and,
- Evaluate the success of the job safety analysis.

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By following this sequence of steps, Blahey says farmers should be able to effectively gauge the risks of their daily routine and help eliminate unnecessary risks.

The Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program (CAISP), which tracked agricultural injuries between 1990 and 2000, offers several suggestions to reduce injuries and fatalities for older Canadian farmers. Measures such as installing ROPS and seatbelts on tractors, properly maintaining all equipment, and ensuring guards are in place and in proper order on all power takeoffs (PTOs) and moving parts can do much to lessen or eliminate many risks which farmers unnecessarily expose themselves to.

In addition, the CAISP study suggests senior farmers avoid altogether certain risky activities, such as towing disabled equipment with tractors or dismounting tractors without shutting off the engine or setting the parking brake. They also suggest farmers observe “best practices” when handling larger livestock.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association, Farm Credit Canada, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada are urging farmers to analyze the risks and plan to work safely.

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