

Canadian
Agricultural
Safety Week
Mar. 8-14, 2006

FACT SHEET #5

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Code of Practice for Farm Safety

In our global market place agricultural producers across Canada rely on standards, guidelines and regulations to ensure that their commodities are produced and distributed in a manner that is acceptable to our international trading partners. To address both international expectations as well as protection of our local farm workers, a Code of Practice for Farm Safety has been developed.

While worker safety has always been important, the new Code of Practice for Farm Safety has the potential to evolve as a standard for industry practices to reflect due diligence for occupational safety and health on all Canadian farms. So even though not all provinces have occupational safety and health regulations in agriculture, producers will be able to develop their farm management practices to reflect these industry standards.

"Farm safety is MY business." is the theme of this year's Canadian Agricultural Safety Week (CASW) campaign, March 8-14, 2006. The campaign emphasizes the personal and professional responsibilities of farm managers for their own safety as well as for their workers and gives a special focus on youth aged 15 to 29 who make up a significant portion of new farm workers. CASW is delivered by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) and Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) in partnership with Farm Credit Canada (FCC) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

"The Code of Practice is not itself a law," explains Glen Blahey, Chair of the CASA. "However, standard industry practices are often used a bench mark for determining acceptable performance levels should litigation occur as a result of a workplace incident. Regardless of the presence of occupational safety and health legislation, primary agricultural employers do have an obligation to take "every reasonable precaution" to ensure the health and safety of their workers."

Some of the key practices outlined in the Code state that farm employers must:

- provide and maintain machinery, equipment and materials in a safe condition;
- provide adequate safety information, instruction and training to workers;
- ensure workers are adequately supervised;
- ensure workers are familiar with the task at hand;
- ensure workers are familiar with the proper use of all devices, equipment and clothing required for their protection;
- consult with workers about health and safety matters.

The Code also outlines the need for a designated safety representative if there are between 5-19 regular employees and a safety committee if there are more than 20 regular workers (meaning people hired for more than 12 weeks).

more...

Code of Practice for Farm Safety...2.

The need for a Code of Practice for Farm Safety stemmed from growing concerns at the frequency of farm incidents resulting in injuries and fatalities. On average, 115 people are killed and another 1,500 are seriously injured each year in farm-related incidents in Canada, and there are countless minor injuries that are never even reported.

Farming holds the unenviable status as one of the most dangerous occupations in Canada. In an effort to address the concern, the Code was developed in Prince Edward Island by producer groups in partnership with safety authorities to provide practical guidance and advice in meeting the requirements of that province’s soon to be adopted Occupational Health and Safety Act.

The CFA along with CASA, FCC and AAFC want to remind Canadian farmers that “*Farm safety is MY business.*” means that you are responsible for your safety and that of your workers.

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For more information call:

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Table 1: Workers’ Compensation Provincial Comparison of Voluntary vs. Mandatory

| Province | Voluntary | Mandatory |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| British Columbia | | X |
| Alberta | X | |
| Saskatchewan | X | |
| Manitoba | X | |
| Ontario | | X |
| Quebec | | X |
| New Brunswick | X* | X** |
| Newfoundland | | X |
| Nova Scotia | X | |
| Prince Edward Island | X | |

* With less than three workers.

** With more than three workers.

Table 2: Provincial OH&S Acts – Provincial Farm Exemptions vs. Mandatory

| Province | Voluntary | Mandatory |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| British Columbia | | X |
| Alberta | X**** | |
| Saskatchewan | | X |
| Manitoba | | X |
| Ontario | X***** | |
| Quebec | | X |
| New Brunswick | | X |
| Newfoundland | | X |
| Nova Scotia | X | |
| Prince Edward Island | | X* |

* By January 2006.

**** Except mushroom farms.

***** Implementing change to make mandatory.