Canadian Agricultural Safety Week
Mar. 8-14, 2006

FACT SHEET #7

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S.A.F.E. system reduces risks in workplace

Improved occupational health and safety means fewer and less severe injuries, better trained and informed employers and workers, improved morale among workers, and better efficiency and reduced costs for your business.

This can be achieved through a hazard management method called S.A.F.E. Minimizing risk is achieved by identifying hazards that could affect the safety and health of people at the workplace, assessing the degree of risk from those hazards, and then developing and implementing controls to minimize that risk.

See the hazard
Assess the risk from the hazard
Fix the hazard
Evaluate the results

"*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. This risk management theme has 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).

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.

See the hazards

Employers need a simple procedure for routinely identifying hazards in the workplace. This can most effectively be achieved by involving workers since they are generally more aware of the problems that exist. Also, if you involve workers in developing safety solutions, they will be more committed to making the solution work. This can be achieved by management and workers regularly inspecting the workplace and machinery and together identifying hazards. Once hazards have been identified, the next step is to assess the risk from those hazards.

Assess the risk from the hazards

'Risk' is a measure of the probability that an incident will occur and the probable severity of the injuries. The measure of the risk can be rated as high, medium or low. Once the risks have been assessed, employers can use the risk rating to prioritise the hazards that need immediate action from those that can be monitored and fixed later. Regular assessment also helps employers to budget time and resources towards repairs and maintenance.

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Fix the hazard

Once the risk has been prioritized employers, together with their workers must develop controls, or ways to minimize the risk. Risk controls must be considered in a specific order that addresses hazards at their source as follows:

Elimination:
Stop doing a high-risk task, or stop using high-risk equipment.

Substitution:
Use a less toxic chemical, or a less noisy piece of equipment.

Engineering:
Fit guards to a hazardous piece of machinery.

Administration:
Post warning signs, write safe work procedures, change timing of task, etc.

Personal protective equipment (PPE):
Provide workers with personal protective equipment, e.g. ear muffs, safety glasses, etc.

In reality, many controls are a combination of two or more control types. For example, a confined space may have engineering for ventilation, administration of signs indicating the dangers, and PPE kept nearby in case they are needed.

After putting controls in place, their effectiveness needs to be evaluated.

Evaluate the results

After the appropriate control measures have been taken, monitor the situation and inspect it regularly to make sure that the actions taken are working and not creating any additional risks.

"With the new planting season just around the corner it is important to keep safety top of mind," said Bob Friesen, CFA President. "See, Access, Fix, and Evaluate are words to live by."

The CFA along with FCC, CASA, and AAFC want to remind Canadian farmers that "*Farm safety is MY business.*" means that farm managers and workers must both be involved in maintaining a S.A.F.E. workplace.

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