

**Canadian
Agricultural
Safety Week
Mar. 11-17,
2009**

FACT SHEET #5

THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

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Get a grip on farm safety

Hands are one of our most valuable, and vulnerable tools when it comes to performing our jobs. Ironically, these amazing parts of our bodies are also the most susceptible to injuries – injuries that happen all too often on farms and ranches.

“PPE only works if you use it!” is the theme of this year’s Canadian Agricultural Safety campaign with a focus on the use, fit and access of personal protective equipment (PPE) in agriculture. The yearlong campaign will be launched with Canadian Agricultural Safety Week (CASW), from March 11 to 17, 2009. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) and Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) deliver CASW in partnership with Farm Credit Canada (FCC) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

Aside from the head, hands and arms are the most exposed part of the body and can fall victim to an endless list of injuries. There are three main categories of injuries. First are traumatic injuries caused by an impact as when hands or fingers get caught, pinched, crushed or amputated.

Second, are contact injuries which occur when hands and arms are injured through contact with chemicals and other substances that can cause burns or injure tissue. And third is repetitive motion or musculoskeletal injuries which happen when hands and arms become injured by tasks that require repeated, rapid hand movements for long periods of time, resulting in strains and sprains of the upper extremities.

“Incurring hand and arm injuries can have devastating consequences,” says Greg Stewart, FCC President and CEO. “Most safety hazards are predictable – and if something is predictable, then it is also preventable. You just need to take the necessary time and precautions to work safely.”

With care, many hand and arm injuries can easily be avoided if you:

- Make sure all machinery has the proper shields and guards in place.
- Establish and follow lockout/tagout procedures.
- Ensure proper PPE is available at all times.
- Train employees on how to do the job, including the proper use and fit of any PPE needed.
- Ensure workers are aware of the safe work procedures and the consequences of non-compliance – then enforce the rules as needed.

PPE like gloves is the last line of defence for protecting your body, so care must be given to ensure that all other means of protection such as engineering, have been put into practice first. If PPE is still needed, then care must be taken to ensure it provides the protection expected.

Whether you are a business owner or worker, an injury can cause a loss of function or worse yet, loss a limb. This will affect everything from your personal functions to future employment opportunities to reduced over-all quality of life.

There are many reasons why people don't do things as safely as they should. Some people may feel pressured to be more productive or want to get done quickly; others let their attention wander - especially if tired, and yet others believe the tragic understatement, "I didn't think it would happen to me." This emphasises the need for each one of us to take responsibility for our safety.

How does *your* farm safety knowledge rate? Try taking the FCC Farm Safety Quiz at www.fccfarmsafety.ca .

The CFA along with FCC, CASA and AAFC want to remind Canadian farmers that "*PPE only works if you use it!*"

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*** Free photos and cartoons are available to accompany this article at www.casa-acsa.ca .

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