

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

FACT SHEET #6

THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

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PPE for you and me

On average, 113 people are killed and at least 1,500 are hospitalized for farm-related incidents in Canada each year reports the Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program. In 2006 alone a total of 13,801 Canadian farms reported one or more medically treated or lost time injuries, reports Statistics Canada. The most frequent causes of farm-related injuries include the unsafe use of equipment or material-handling practices, followed by fatigue, trying to save time and miscommunication between workers, says the Census of Agriculture 2001. And common sense tells us: an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

“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).

“The message in the theme may sound obvious, however the numbers speak louder than the words,” says Greg Stewart, FCC President and CEO. “Canadian producers are still suffering injuries and fatalities – and many of these incidents could have been prevented if personal protective equipment was available and used properly.”

PPE is equipment, such as respirators, gloves, aprons, and fall protection worn by a worker to minimize exposure to specific occupational hazards. Using PPE is only one element in a complete safety program that would use a variety of strategies to maintain a safe and healthy occupational environment.

Hazards exist in every workplace so strategies to protect workers are essential. Controlling a hazard at its source should be the first choice because this method will eliminate it from the workplace altogether or isolate it from the worker. This "safe place" approach may require substitution of a material with non-hazardous ones, isolation of hazards, addition of safety features to existing equipment, redesign of the work processes, or purchase of new equipment. When the hazard cannot be removed or controlled adequately, personal protective equipment is the last line of defence if the work process is to continue.

There are three elements that must be considered in the development of any PPE program: protection of workers; compliance with applicable laws, regulations and internal company standards; and, technical feasibility.

A good comprehensive strategy considers the hazards, evaluates all possible control methods, integrates various approaches, and re-examines them frequently to ensure a safe work operation. It does these things by requiring that conscious decision-making, evaluation, and re-evaluation be done at various stages throughout the program.

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!*” For more information on developing your own PPE safety program visit www.ccohs.ca.

- 30 -

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

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To download a copy of this article, visit web sites www.casa-acsa.ca or www.cfa-fca.ca

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