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## **AG SAFETY S.T.A.T. – SAFE TACTICS FOR AG TODAY**

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### **THOUGHTS from the EDITOR – FIRE EXTINGUISHERS NEEDED DURING BALING**

**Dee Jepsen, State Safety Leader**

Baling season is in full swing. Whether it's hay or straw – be on the alert for fires. Fire safety includes fire prevention. Having a fire extinguisher available is one of the best strategies – keep one in the field either in the tractor, or mounted on the baler. And keep one in the barn. A functional and fully charged extinguisher is a minimal expense considering the protection it offers the equipment, facilities, commodity, and lives.

### **SAFETY QUOTE of the MONTH**

*“Accidents hurt – safety doesn’t.”*

### **LAST CALL for SUN SAFE HATS!**

Last call for ordering Sun Safe Hats for the outdoor sport enthusiast, water lover, farmer or gardener in your office or family. They are also great to wear on C-deck to those first few OSU football games! These hats have a wide brim, are light-weight, and quick drying. They have an embroidered OSU Extension logo. One-size fits all – and available in two colors, sage (light green) and fossil (lighter khaki). The cost is \$25.00. (Mailing/shipping to your office is an additional \$3.00 per hat). The order deadline has been extended to Wednesday, July 14th, 2010.

If you are interested in purchasing a hat, please contact Kathy Henwood at [henwood.13@osu.edu](mailto:henwood.13@osu.edu) or 614-292-0622 for an order form.

### **MOLDS AND VERMITOXIN HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**Dee Jepsen, State Agricultural Safety Leader and Mary Fleming, Ag Health Nurse**

Harvesting wheat and baling straw has generated a discussion about the conditions of moldy grain and its affects on the human body. This is especially true in areas hit hard by wheat head scab. While it is true that moldy wheat can contain high levels of vomitoxin, it is not certain what this organism does to the body (no empirical evidence exists to confirm the risks).

However, we do know that exposure to endotoxins (spores found in moldy grains like wheat and corn), does have negative effects on the human body. Respirator protection is important. Here is an article cross-published in the C.O.R.N. Newsletter July 2010:

#### **DUST MASK PROTECTION FROM WHEAT DUST:**

Besides the adverse marketing opportunities, moldy grains can also be problematic to the health of the farm operator. Grain that has gone out of condition can contain multiple types of molds and mycotoxins. It can also

contain insect parts, aerosols from soil particles, and chemicals. Similar to an allergic reaction, grain dust can trigger different reactions in different people – some are just more susceptible to dusts and molds than others.

Over accumulation of grain dust is also hazardous to the performance of the human lungs. As a person continues to accumulate agricultural dusts over multiple seasons, the less effective their lung capacity becomes. Compare the human lungs to a shop vac – a person’s lungs can only tolerate so much dust before it starts to become slow and inefficient. Agricultural dusts come in multiple sizes, and it’s the fine grain dust that can penetrate deep into the lung cavity and cause the blockage.

Protection from wheat harvest dust is important for everyone. Respiratory protection provides a barrier from the molds and mycotoxins, as well as the other particles that compose grain dust. The good news is that this recommended respiratory protection is not complicated to find or even use. It’s a dust mask.

There may be several dust masks available at the local farm supply or hardware stores, however not all of them are recommended for agricultural use. The best protection is provided by the two-strap dust masks that are labeled as N95. They should also be identified as NIOSH or MSHA approved (National Institute for Occupational Safety Health and Mine Safety and Health Association). The N95 models mean that 95% of the smallest particles - ones that can get into the lungs where they cause damage - are prevented from going through the mask.

Wearing a mask requires the body to breath differently, and often times can cause trouble for the user. Also, wearing the mask in hot weather can add additional strain on the user. To alleviate some of these problems, manufacturers have added an exhale valve. Look for this feature on the N95 dust mask.

Not all workers can wear a dust mask. Some individuals may already have lung disease and find it impossible to breath through a mask. A person with facial hair cannot obtain an adequate seal around the face, and would need a powered air supply (not self contained). Likewise, persons with glasses need to adjust the straps so they don’t compromise the seal around the nose and cheeks. A physician evaluation will assess the ability to wear a mask, and the trained physician or a nurse can do the fit testing.

Wearing the mask in high exposure areas is recommended. The mask will need replaced after several hours of use in high dust situations, or it may last several days in low dust use. Store the mask in a clean area when not in use – a ziplock plastic bag offers good storage space.

The N95 respirator will protect workers from most of the common agricultural dusts. Like other farm chores, wearing the respirator may take some adjustment. The wearer may need to pace themselves and take more frequent water breaks. However, the initial extra strain it places on the body is a trade off for the protection the mask is offering to the long-term health capacity of the lungs. Protection from molds and dusts is more of an immediate concern than the inconvenience of wearing the mask.

## **SAFE SUMMER TRAVEL**

### **Theresa Calip, Amish Transportation Safety Program Coordinator**

In many ways, summer is all about travel. Whether it’s a day-trip for the family to the zoo, or a multi-state road trip to see the sights, getting to and from your destination safely is the most important goal. Because the days are longer and sunnier, people often overlook preparation for warm weather travel. Here are a few tips to make your next trip a comfortable and safe one:

#### **Prepare Your Vehicle**

1. Checking the oil level before a trip is a standard task that most people pay attention to, but don’t forget to check other fluid levels. Check the level of coolant and bring along extra just in case. It might be worth your while to have the entire cooling system checked and flushed beforehand and avoid the hassle of having to pull over with an overheated car.

2. Make certain that your tires are inflated to the correct pressure. If you haven't invested in one, keep a tire gauge handy in the glove box. Remember that both over and under-inflated tires can affect your gas mileage. Before a longer trip, check the wear on your tires, and replace any that are worn down to an unsafe depth.
3. Look under the hood and inspect the condition of belts and hoses. If they show any obvious signs of wear, remember that running at high temperatures will further shorten their lives. Replace any that need to be replaced.
4. Don't forget the wiper blades. Driving in a summer downpour with substandard blades can be not only nerve-racking but dangerous. If your blades aren't worn, it still might be a good idea to bring along an extra pair along with extra windshield fluid.
5. Make certain that your AC system is operating efficiently. This is not only a matter of comfort for you and other passengers, but one of health. Infants, small children, and the elderly are usually more sensitive to the effects of heat exposure.

#### **Prepare Yourself and Your Passengers**

1. If you are traveling with children, make certain that they are protected with the proper restraint system for their age and weight. Check the straps of all infant seats, car seats, and booster seats for wear and proper fit.
2. As the driver, stay alert and well-hydrated. It's a good idea to carry extra drinking water for everyone. If the situation allows, rotate driving duties. Allow yourself and your passengers plenty of breaks, not only to use the restroom but to move and stretch outside of the car.
3. Plan your route ahead of time. Have a good idea of travel times and the location of places to rest. If possible, also check ahead for possible roadway changes, such as construction. Make certain any maps you have are up-to-date.
4. Don't push your vehicle or yourself to "make good time." Speeding and fatigue are the cause of many summertime accidents. If you are tired, pull over. Keep realistic expectations about arrival and departure times. The time one gains is simply not worth the risk - to yourself or your passengers.
5. Make certain that your car insurance and any roadside assistance program you belong to is current.
6. Keep a charged cell phone handy. While you should never talk and drive, have easy access to a phone for roadway emergencies. Add the toll-free Highway Patrol numbers for the state(s) in which you will be traveling to your cell phone.
7. Stay safe by staying calm. Don't let frustration with say, weather conditions or other drivers, impact your decisions and your driving. Make the journey, not simply the destination, an enjoyable part of your summer.

## **SINK or SWIM, SUMMER SWIMMING SAFETY**

### **Tim Butcher, OSHA Program Coordinator**

Nothing beats the heat of summer like a dip in the pool or pond, but fun can turn to tragedy when swimmers do not heed some simple precautions. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death for people between the ages of 5 and 24. Consider their suggestions to help prevent drowning:

**SUPERVISION.** Designate a responsible adult to watch young children while swimming or playing in or around water, this includes the bathtub. Supervisors of preschool children should provide "touch supervision," be close enough to reach the child at all times. Adults should not be involved in any other distracting activity (such as reading, playing cards, talking on the phone, or mowing the lawn) while supervising children near water.

**BUDDY SYSTEM.** Always swim with a buddy. Select swimming sites that have lifeguards whenever possible.

**AVOID ALCOHOL.** Avoid drinking alcohol before or during swimming, boating, or water skiing. Do not drink alcohol while supervising children.

**LEARN TO SWIM.** Formal swimming lessons can protect young children from drowning. However, constant, careful supervision and barriers such as pool fencing are necessary even when children have completed swimming classes.

**LEARN CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION (CPR).** In the time it might take for paramedics to arrive, your CPR skills could make a difference in someone's life. CPR performed by bystanders has been shown to improve outcomes in drowning victims.

**DO NOT USE AIR-FILLED OR FOAM TOYS.** Do not use air-filled or foam toys, such as "water wings," "noodles," or inner tubes, in place of life jackets (personal flotation devices). These toys are not designed to keep swimmers safe.

## **INJURY PREVENTION – SAFETY for the SENIOR FARMER**

### **Kent McGuire - Ohio AgrAbility Program Coordinator**

There are several reasons older farmers are remaining active on the farm; good health, desire to remain active, increased financial stability, or enjoyment of life on the farm. The average age of farmers in Ohio is 56. However farming is traditionally a labor-intensive profession that can involve physically demanding work. For older farmers, this can present problems in the form of health or safety issues. Many farmers may not be aware of gradual changes in their sensory systems that may occur as they age. Some common sensory areas that diminish over time include:

- Reaction time
- Balance
- Musculoskeletal strength
- Respiratory fitness
- Hearing
- Vision

To reduce the risk of injury because of limited sensory systems follow these simple guidelines:

- Minimize machine or background noise
- Get regular vision exams.
- Use sufficient lighting in darkness and reduce glare in extreme brightness.
- Avoid crossing between dim areas and brightly lit areas.
- Exercise caution when working in extreme hot or cold temperatures.
- Be alert and focus on the task at hand, because sense of touch can diminish with age.
- Keep walking and working surfaces dry and free from obstacles or debris.
- Maintain 3 points of contact when mounting or dismounting equipment use 1 hand & 2 feet--OR--2 hands & 1 foot.
- Anticipate changes in ground elevation or rough terrain.
- When increased efforts are needed, ask for help or use mechanical means.
- Organize work areas to avoid reaching above shoulder level or from an awkward position.
- Minimize repetitive tasks and avoid prolonged standing.
- Make an effort to minimize vibration when using tools or equipment.
- Be cautious of physically demanding activities that are not performed routinely.
- Set a pace and take breaks while performing work tasks over a long period of time.
- Use Personal Protective Equipment when appropriate (ear plugs, safety glasses, gloves, etc.).

For more information about the Ohio AgrAbility Program, please contact Kent McGuire, OSU Agricultural Safety & Health, at [mcguire.225@osu.edu](mailto:mcguire.225@osu.edu) or 614-292-0588.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TIP of the MONTH: SUMMER FIRES**

### **Aletha I. Reshan, Emergency Management Planning and Education Program Coordinator**

Summer is a season of outdoor living! We tend to do as many activities outside as possible during this time. Two of the most popular summertime outdoor activities are grilling and fireworks. Both of these activities pose fire risks and therefore demand extra precautions to ensure the safety of people and property.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), "in 2003-2006, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 7,900 home fires involving grills, hibachis or barbecues per year, including an average of 2,900 structure fires and 5,000 outside fires. These 7,900 fires caused annual average of 10 civilian deaths, 120 reported injuries and \$80 million in direct property damage." While grills are used throughout the year, June and July are the peak months for grill fires. Of the grills involved in fires, 70% were liquid propane (LP) gas.

Fireworks are another summertime fire safety concern. In fact, "in 2006, fireworks caused an estimated 32,600 reported fires, including 1,700 total structure fires, 600 vehicle fires, and 30,300 outside and other fires. These fires resulted in an estimated 6 civilian deaths, 70 civilian injuries and \$34 million in direct property damage" ([www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)). The 4th of July is the peak day for fires with fireworks accounting for 50% of those fires!

Please follow these grilling and fireworks recommendations to help ensure a safer summer!

NFPA cites the following safety tips for using grills:

- Propane and charcoal grills must be used outside, never inside.
- Keep grills away from house, railing, eaves, and overhanging branches.
- Keep children and pets away from grills.
- Maintain grill by removing grease buildup from grates and drip pan.
- Never leave grill unattended.
- Check the propane tank hose annually by applying a light soap and water solution to the hose. Bubbles indicate a leak that must be repaired.
- If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department - Do not move the grill.

In Ohio, only sparklers, fireworks, and novelties are permitted by law to be ignited (<http://www.americanpyro.com>). NFPA reminds us that the most cautious handling of fireworks is to leave them to the experts and enjoy a public fireworks display. Even sparklers pose safety risks because they burn at 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit, which is hot enough to cause third degree burns. The Consumer Product Safety Council (<http://www.cpsc.gov/info/fireworks/index.html>) makes the following recommendations for the safe handling of fireworks:

- Read and follow all warnings and instructions.
- Never allow children to handle fireworks.
- Be sure the area is clear of people.
- Light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface away from houses, dry leaves, and flammable materials.
- Never try to relight fireworks that have not gone off.
- Have water nearby in case of malfunction or fire.

For additional information on grilling and fireworks safety, please visit the websites listed above. In case of emergency, clear the area and call 911.

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*Ag Safety S.T.A.T. - Safe Tactics for Ag Today* is an e-mail newsletter prepared by Dee Jepsen, Extension Agricultural Safety Specialist and team members from the State Safety Office, in the Department of Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering at OSU. The primary goal of this monthly newsletter is to help you stay connected to everyday safety news and activities that may be used in your own newsletters or programs. If you have safety-related questions or program ideas that you would like to share, please contact Dr. Jepsen at [jepsen.4@osu.edu](mailto:jepsen.4@osu.edu)  
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