

AG SAFETY S.T.A.T. - SAFE TACTICS FOR AG TODAY

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Thoughts from the Editor – Helping Family Farm Markets Promote Good Safety Images

Dee Jepsen – State Agricultural Safety and Health Leader

I recently talked with colleague who worked in an agricultural labor organization, outside of Ohio. He told of his experience at a local produce market where the farmers displayed a poster-sized photo of their family operation. The family was proud of their operation, and used this photo as a way to engage with their customers. However the photo contained several safety infractions that clearly portrayed an operation that disregarded safe work practices. Children were shown riding on the fenders of the tractors and the machinery was missing safety features. He also described several dogs running through the produce fields – which would be a health violation for larger producers. He asked me how the small farm safety exemption (an exemption from government departments of labor) saved lives; he also asked how this family farm photo would be received amongst Ohio farm market consumers who wanted to buy healthy produce to feed their own families.

After our conversation, I really thought about his questions. I thought about ways we could work with farmers to use better market strategies when it came to highlighting their family farm. And I wondered if family farms understood the image they portrayed when they put workers – even family workers – in high-risk situations.

As a farm wife and mother, I understand how difficult it is to “walk the line” to maintain safety rules. And I certainly understand the heritage and pride farmers take to teach young workers the value of work ethic and responsibility. True, our small farm culture is a way of life. But can our way of life also respect safety and health practices that are required on large farm operations? I wouldn't want to appear to go against the grain of our farming community by challenging the status safety quo... or would I challenge all of our Ohio small farmers to think about the image they portray when they show a general disregard for safety?

My friend finished our conversation by saying he wouldn't buy the produce from a farm that didn't show respect for their workers, or put their own children in high-risk situations. This statement, while very bold, made me think about ways to help Ohio's family farmers/farm markets, show their best image when it comes to advertising. Perhaps these tips can also transfer to the farm blogger and social media post person.

Tips for Good Safety Photos of your Farm Operation:

Do Not include photos of tractors without a Roll-Over Protective Structures (ROPS)

Do Not show tractors or machinery with missing guards or being used inappropriately

Do Not show children riding on adults' laps or children riding with other children on tractors, lawn tractors, or All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)

Do Not show individuals riding in unsafe manners on any farm machinery or in the back of pickup trucks

Do Show photos of workers in clean, uncluttered work environments

Do Show photos of workers wearing proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Do Show livestock in good health and contained within proper fencing

Do Show young workers doing supervised age-appropriate tasks

For more information about general safety and health practices, please visit our Ag Safety and Health Web site at <http://www.agsafety.osu.edu>. Dee Jepsen can be reached at jepsen.4@osu.edu



SAFETY RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT – Lightning Safety Resources



Summer months brew up the prime conditions for lightning because of instability and moisture in the atmosphere, for detailed information on lightning safety visit the National Weather Service at <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/>.

OHIO AGRABILITY – Don't let arthritis or chronic pain stop you from gardening: Choosing the right tools and equipment

Laura Akgerman – Disability Services Coordinator for Ohio AgrAbility

If you have chronic pain or physical limitations, having the right tools and equipment for gardening is vital, and may make the difference between completing a task, and being forced to stop because of pain and exhaustion. Before choosing tools, consider your strengths, and your limits. If you have trouble kneeling, bending, or stooping, long handled tools and a garden cart with a seat are essential. If you have hand pain, stiffness, or weakness, look for ergonomic tools which allow your hands and arms to stay in a neutral position, and require little grip strength to use.

There are many attachments and add-ons which can convert your current tools to adaptive tools. This list highlights some common tools, and links to examples of the tools. Although specific tools and vendors are included in this article, Ohio AgrAbility does not endorse, support or benefit from any of the vendors listed, this list is merely to show examples of the tools discussed.

Tools with padded grips make tools more comfortable to hold, and a thicker handle doesn't require as tight a grip as a hard plastic or wood handle. Handles can be thick and solid, or have contoured surfaces for fingers. Choose tools that feel good in your hand, and fit your grip comfortably. [You can also purchase a wrap for the handles of your current tools.](#)

New grips can be attached to the handles of your current tools, making the tool ergonomic and comfortable to use. The [RoboGrip](#) is designed for you to use with one hand, it has a cuff which wraps around your forearm, and a grip handle to keep your hand and wrist in a neutral position, reducing strain on your hands, wrists and arms, and allowing you to hold the tool with less grip strength. A [ProHandle](#) can also be used, it attaches to the handle of the tool, and requires use of both hands. It can be attached anywhere on the handle, and is designed to save strain to your lower back.

Tools with ergonomic grips or handles allow you to keep your wrist and hand in a neutral position, and are available with [long handles](#) or [short handles](#). A [Gripez Glove](#) can also hold your hand in a neutral position, and securely grip a tool or handle with minimal grip strength.

Cutting and pruning tools which require minimal strength save your hands and wrists, and are available in a variety of handle lengths and grips. [Long handled pruners](#) allow you to cut and trim without crouching or stooping, and minimize jarring impact when cutting. Short handled pruners with [Easy Action spring-action design](#) gently opens blades after each cut to reduce hand strain

A [rolling work seat](#) allows you to sit and work, eliminating the need to kneel, bend or stoop, and can be used to store and transport tools. Some garden carts have a tall handle for steering and moving the cart, eliminating the need to bend and push the cart. Other carts have handles on either side of the seat, which are useful if you need support to rise to a standing position.

[A harness attachment](#) can support the weight of power tools, taking strain off your shoulders and neck if using the tool at chest level or higher. Be careful not to strain your neck or shoulders when reaching overhead, or tilting your head back to see what you are cutting.

If you can, store your tools and equipment in or near the garden. A small garden shed, or locking storage box would eliminate the need to carry your tools and equipment between the house and the garden.

Water hoses can be heavy and cumbersome to drag around the garden. Lay a [soaker hose](#) in your garden at the beginning of the season, and keep your garden irrigated without the effort of hauling the hose out to the garden every day. If a soaker hose won't work in your garden, use a [lightweight collapsible hose](#), they are lightweight and easy to carry, and are compact and easy to store. For watering hanging plants a [watering wand](#) is an easy way to water high or hard to reach plants with minimal effort or strain on your back and shoulders.

Garden water faucet handles can be hard to turn, the [Foxtail sliding handle faucet](#) fits over a standard wheel faucet, and requires minimal grip strength to turn the water on or off.

Check back next month for an overview of Universal Designs solutions for storage, raised beds and container gardens, and modifying your work tasks.

For more information please contact Laura Akgerman, Ohio AgrAbility & OSU Extension Disability Services Coordinator, at Akgerman.4@osu.edu, or 614-292-0622.

INJURY PREVENTION – Preventing Heat Stress Illness

Kent McGuire – OSU Ag Safety & Health Coordinator

Although summer has started out with mild temperatures, we are approaching the time of year when hotter work environments can create potential health hazards. Working long hours in higher temperatures or non – shaded areas increase the risk of a heat stress illness such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke. These types of illnesses can occur when the body's temperature rises faster than it can cool

itself. At this point, the body cannot regulate its temperature and can very quickly become a serious medical emergency if precautions are not taken.

Planning ahead is essential to preventing heat related hazards. A primary indicator that can be used when planning to work during hot weather is the heat index. The heat index is a single value that takes both temperature and humidity into account to determine what it feels like to the human body. OSHA has developed a chart to help employers prepare and implement plans to protect employees when working in hot environments.

Heat Index	Risk Level	Protective Measures
Less than 91°F	Lower (Caution)	Basic heat safety and planning
91°F to 103°F	Moderate	Implement precautions and heighten awareness
103°F to 115°F	High	Additional precautions to protect workers
Greater than 115°F	Very High to Extreme	Triggers even more aggressive protective measures

Some precautions and measures to use when preparing for hot weather work include:

- When possible, strenuous work should be scheduled for the coolest time of day (early morning or evening).
- Dress lightly. Light-weight, light-colored clothing reflects heat and sunlight, and helps your body maintain normal temperatures.
- Take multiple short breaks in a shaded area or controlled environment, throughout the day.
- Use extreme caution when working around equipment or machines that will give off additional heat during operations.
- Provide ventilation to enclosed work locations with limited airflow, such as haymows.
- Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after strenuous activities. Cold fluids can also help cool the body. Plan ahead! Hydrating the body should start 24 hours before strenuous activity in higher temperatures.
- Do not work alone. Use the buddy system when working in isolated areas to monitor each other for signs and symptoms of heat stress.
- Avoid foods that are high in protein. These foods increase metabolism, increasing body heat and water loss.
- Avoid getting too much sun and use sunscreen. Sunburn makes reducing body temperature more difficult.
- Spend time in air-conditioned places, especially during periods of rest, which allow the body to recuperate.
- Provide training to employees about the hazards leading to heat stress and how to prevent them.

If heat stress is suspected:

- Get out of the sun.
- Lie down and loosen clothing.
- Apply cool, wet cloths. Fan or go to an air-conditioned room or vehicle, if possible.
- Take sips of cool water. If nausea occurs, discontinue water.
- Seek immediate medical attention if there is any question to severity of the heat stress illness.

More information about controlling heat stress illness can be found through The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/recommendations.html>

For more information about agricultural safety, visit <http://www.agsafety.osu.edu>, or contact Kent McGuire, Safety & Health Coordinator for the OSU College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, at mcguire.225@osu.edu or 614-292-0588.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – A Recipe for Recreational Safety at the Farm Pond

Lisa Pfeifer – OSU Ag Safety and Health Education Coordinator

The farm pond while often utilitarian in nature, can add the elements of both fun and danger to the warm days of summer. Allowing the fun to take center stage for your family, friends, and employees can be accomplished by establishing some safety protocols for swimmers. The National Safety Council states, “Not including boating incidents, on average about nine people die from drowning every day in the United States.”

To make your pond environment safe:

Test the water and verify it is free of contaminants and safe to swim in. Use the Ohio State University Extension Factsheets AEX-314, *Water Testing*, at <http://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/aex-314> and AEX-315, *Where to Have Your Water Tested*, at <http://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/aex-315> for resources.

Post permanent warning signs and a set of rules at the pond. Be sure to include phrases like:

- Do not enter unless you know how to swim
- No lifeguard on duty
- No diving
- Life jackets required
- Never swim alone
- No alcohol permitted
- Pond depth is X (feet)

Install a rescue post or keep rescue equipment near the pond.

Train in CPR.

Always provide adult supervision.

Remove submerged rocks and stumps from the pond.

Keep debris and trash cleared from the surrounding surface areas at the exterior rim of the pond.

Mow tall grass and weeds to maintain a well-manicured area for high visibility from all vantage points surrounding the pond.

For more information about OSU Ag Safety, visit <http://www.agsafety.osu.edu> or contact Lisa Pfeifer, OSU Agricultural Safety & Health, at pfeifer.6@osu.edu or 614-292-9455.

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 maybe 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
